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BLOODY QUAGMIRE

U.S. assault on Falluja incites new uprisings

By John Catalinotto

The Bush administration and the Pentagon had hoped that the image their operations in Falluja would give to the world would be of an all-powerful force, decisive in battle, merciful in victory: a ground-war version of "shock and awe."

Yet despite the Pentagon's control of "embedded" reporters and the near absence of independent news sources in Iraq, the main image to come out of Falluja was the video of a U.S. Marine executing a wounded and helpless resistance fighter.

And, as of Nov. 17, the big news out of Iraq was that the active armed resistance had spread to Mosul, Beiji, Baquba, Ramadi, Tikrit, Iskandariya, Samarra and Baghdad, with police stations overrun and arms captured by anti-occupation fighters.

In Falluja itself, after nine days of battle, U.S. forces were still calling in air strikes. The resistance fighters, far outgunned and outnumbered, were still able to shoot back. Some resistance units are reportedly going back into Falluja to continue shooting at U.S. troops.

The offensive succeeded in showing that the U.S. military is overwhelmingly well-armed and destructive, but also cruel and frightened. Instead of demonstrating "shock and awe," it has shown the world Abu Ghraib II.

NBC correspondent Kevin Sites, who took the original video of the Iraqi prisoner being shot, was quoted by the Associated

Press on Nov. 17 as saying that U.S. Marines had killed three more unarmed and wounded Iraqi prisoners in a Falluja mosque on Nov. 12.

Comments across the Internet compared Falluja with other embattled cities of historic importance: Guernica, destroyed by Nazi bombers in the Spanish Civil War; Stalingrad, the Soviet city whose resistance marked the turning point of World War II in defeating German imperialism; Algiers, which the French could occupy but never completely control in Algeria's liberation war; and Hue in Vietnam, whose recapture by U.S. forces after the 1968 Tet uprising cost them the war as it came out that they had slaughtered 5,000 people.

No comparison can be exact, and the Iraqis will write their own history. Still, from each of these historic examples there are lessons that the Pentagon generals and the Bush White House seem incapable of learning.

Most Pentagon reports on casualties in Falluja claimed about 65 GIs killed and over 300 wounded, 200 of them seriously. In the course of the week, over 400 seriously wounded or ill U.S. troops were flown to hospitals in Germany. The Pentagon claimed its troops killed 1,200 "insurgents," which is what U.S. officials likes to call Iraqis who defend their country from invaders.

The U.S. military doesn't keep a count of civilians killed. Top

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Youth organizers from Fight Imperialism - Stand Together (FIST) sing The International as WWP's National Fightback Conference ends.

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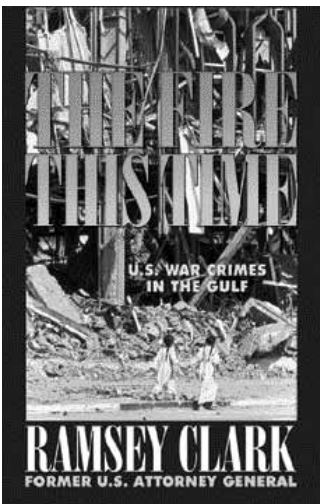
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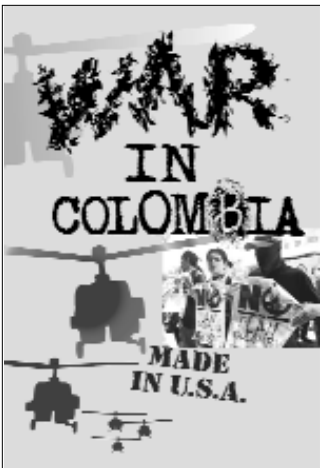
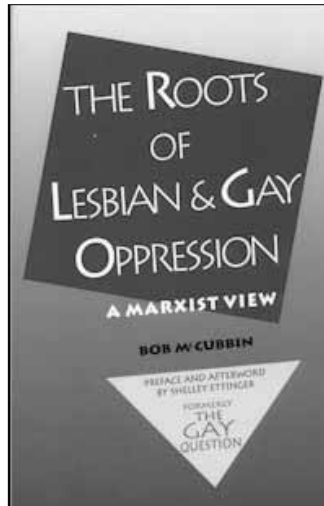
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 Fax: (212) 675-7869
 E-mail: editor@workers.org
 Web: www.workers.org
 Vol. 46, No. 47 • Nov. 25, 2004
 Closing date: Nov. 17, 2004

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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.



New Bush cabinet

Big Oil and military loyalists in key posts

By Fred Goldstein

At the very moment that the U.S. military is sinking deeper and deeper into the quagmire in Iraq, President George W. Bush is carrying out a purge of his administration and elevating precisely those forces within the administration who were the most vigorous advocates, supporters and defenders of this bloody colonial adventure and the “unilateralist,” “pre-emptive” strategy employed to carry it out.

In this purge, Bush and his vice president, Dick Cheney, who directly represent Big Oil and the military-industrial complex, are strengthening their stranglehold on the summits of the capitalist government—not only by appointing right-wing elements, but by positioning loyalists to their narrow governmental faction in key posts.

Secretary of State Colin Powell, the only high-level channel into the Bush administration open to the “multilateralist” imperialist moderates appealed to by John Kerry during his election campaign, was marginalized in the administration long ago. He has now been replaced by Condoleezza Rice.

Rice, an anti-Soviet cold-war intellectual who first came up with Powell during the administration of the first George Bush, is close to the current president and has had no real power in the administration as national security adviser. Washington’s policy was determined largely by Cheney and Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld, both of whom warred with Powell over military and political strategy. Rice deserted Powell in the inner struggle and came down on the side of the Cheney-Bush-Rumsfeld axis in all crucial struggles.

It was Rice who talked about the “smoking gun” being a “mushroom cloud” as the administration tried to stoke fear in order to justify the Iraq war. She said that aluminum tubes sighted in Iraq could only be used for nuclear weapons. And it was Rice who appeared on the talk shows every week pushing “preemptive” war. As such, she was a mouthpiece for the hawks. At the State Department, she will have the same relationship of dependence on Bush, Cheney and, to a lesser extent, Rumsfeld, that she had as national security adviser.

Stephen J. Hadley, her chief aide at the National Security Council, is taking her place as national security adviser to Bush. Hadley was chosen by Cheney to be Rice’s deputy. During the administration of Bush senior, when Cheney was secretary of defense, Hadley had been his undersecretary.

Hadley is most notable for two things. First, he has argued for the development and use of “mini” nuclear weapons. His policy speeches to this effect became the basis for the Bush administration’s notorious Nuclear Posture Review, submitted to Congress on Dec. 31, 2001, in which the use of nuclear weapons as integral to and continuous with conventional warfare was put forward as doctrine. The first-strike use of nuclear weapons against non-nuclear countries was also approved in that document. (rightweb.irc-online.org)

Hadley’s other service to the Bush administration was to take the rap for “not catching” the fact—which he knew from the beginning—that Bush was lying in his 2003 State of the Union speech when he

asserted that Iraq had purchased uranium in Africa during the run-up to the war.

Cheney and Hadley form the cutting edge of the influence of the oil giants and the military corporations inside the Bush administration.

Big Oil pulls the strings once again

Cheney, as former CEO of Halliburton, has formulated energy policy in collaboration with the oil industry and refused to reveal the nature of the meetings he had with the oil tycoons. The strategic position of Halliburton goes far beyond the fact that it is 153rd on the Fortune 500 list and that it has gained billions in no-bid contracts for Iraq. Halliburton, according to the Multinational Monitor of May 2001, operates in 120 countries and has 7,000 customers. That was three years ago. (See corporatwatch.org.uk/halliburton.)

The important thing is that those 7,000 customers include the giant oil corporations, from Exxon/Mobil to Chevron/Texaco and Shell—the very corporations that dominate the Gulf and the world imperialist oil industry. These are the corporations that wanted to get their hands on Iraq, with the second-largest oil reserves in the world. And Halliburton is the perfect nexus between Big Oil, the Bush administration and the Pentagon.

Hadley, a Cheney appointee, is not just a right-wing military intellectual. He is a principal in the Washington law firm of Shea and Gardner, whose clients include Lockheed Martin and Boeing. He serves on the board of ANSER Analytic Services, based in Arlington, Va. A think tank specializing in “threat assessment,” its trustees include former Pentagon and CIA officials along with “corporate officers from defense contractors such as Raytheon and Bellcore.” (rightweb)

The shift of Rice to the State Department and Hadley to become Bush’s national security adviser strengthened the hand of the most aggressive elements within the U.S. ruling class.

Bush also appointed his White House counsel, Alberto Gonzales, to replace John Ashcroft as attorney general. Gonzales was counsel to Bush when the latter was governor of Texas. As the chief White House counsel, Gonzales was the author of a memo declaring that the Geneva Conventions were “obsolete” and justifying torture of prisoners “on the authority of the President of the United States as the Commander in Chief.” He supported setting up concentration camps on Guantanamo as the appropriate place for captured prisoners because it was outside the jurisdiction of U.S. courts. ([Alan Berlow in www.slate.msn.com](http://www.slate.msn.com), June 15, 2004)

Before Gonzales learned to twist the law on behalf of Bush’s colonial adventures in Afghanistan and Iraq, he was inventing new legal concepts on behalf of Bush the executioner in Texas.

Gonzales helped Bush defy international law in the case of Ireno Tristan Montoya, a Mexican national accused of murder in Brownsville, Texas, in 1985.

Tristan proclaimed his innocence but did not speak English, had no lawyer when arrested, and signed a confession that he later said he thought was an immigration document. The Mexican government protested that its consulate had not been informed of his arrest in accordance with

the Vienna Convention, which the U.S. signed in 1969. It requires that foreign nationals arrested in any country be granted a lawyer from their own country.

On June 16, 1997, Gonzales, as Bush’s legal counsel, wrote a document to the State Department declaring that, since the state of Texas did not sign the Vienna Convention, it should not be asked to determine if the convention had been violated. Two days later, Tristan was executed.

It was hardly a skip and a jump from declaring Texas to be exempt from the Constitution, which says that all states are bound by treaties and conventions signed by the federal government, to declaring the Geneva Convention “obsolete.”

Goss purge of CIA

As the new head of the CIA, Bush has selected Porter Goss, Republican head of the House Intelligence Committee and a former agent in Latin America during the 1960s and 1970s when the senior George Bush was the CIA director. Goss is reported to have been involved in trying to save Nicaraguan dictator Anastasio Somoza from being overthrown by the Sandinistas. He later became a business executive and then a Congressperson from the Sarasota district of Florida. He has long connections with both George H.W. Bush, the father, and Jeb Bush, the brother and governor of Florida.

As head of the House Intelligence Committee, Goss came to Bush’s aid during the scandal over intelligence failures connected to Iraq and Osama bin Laden, publicly declaring the CIA to be “dysfunctional.” This was at the moment that Bush was trying to scapegoat the CIA and its director at that time, George Tenet, for all the false intelligence, failures of intelligence and lies that the entire administration had been spreading about weapons of mass destruction, the alleged Hussein-bin Laden connection, and so on.

Goss also initiated legislation on June 15 to allow the CIA to investigate and arrest U.S. citizens—a complete break with the established division of labor within the capitalist state that designates the homefront as the turf of the FBI. (Newsweek, Aug. 11)

This is part of the “reform” of the CIA as Goss carries out a purge of the anti-Bush forces within the agency. According to the Baltimore Sun of Nov. 14: “The agency is being purged on instructions from the White House,” said a former senior official who maintains close ties to both the agency and the White House. ‘Goss was given instructions... to get rid of those soft leakers and liberal Democrats. The CIA is looked on as a hotbed of liberals and people who have been obstructing the president’s agenda.’”

The closing off of the capitalist government to broader political and economic factions in the ruling class is bound to stoke discontent in the establishment. And rumblings are already being heard in the pages of the New York Times, the Washington Post, the Los Angeles Times and the San Francisco Chronicle, among others. But the moderate factions of the ruling class sat through the first administration. They whined and complained but, in the end, got behind the war. They are all now hoping that Bush will pull out a victory in Iraq, although they are rightfully pessimistic. If the Democrats, who so far

It is one thing to put a right-wing government in place and another thing to carry out a right-wing political policy at home and abroad. Right now, the fact is that Washington is facing resistance in Iraq, a strained military, demoralization among sections of the troops, an economy that is fragile, and large sectors of the population who are facing a cruel, cold, hungry winter—particularly in the African American, Latin@, Native and poor white communities.

have been completely quiet and passive, do start to fight back, it will be ineffective and will be because an opposition is developing in the ruling class.

The labor movement, the anti-war movement and community organizations must not wait for some ruling class opposition to come to the rescue. First of all, the ruling class has shown absolutely no inclination to really stop the Bush reaction. They are either for it or are taking a wait-and-see attitude.

In addition, it is one thing to put a right-wing government in place and another thing to carry out a right-wing political policy at home and abroad. Right now, the fact is that Washington is facing resistance in Iraq, a strained military, demoralization among sections of the troops, an economy that is fragile, and large sectors of the population who are facing a cruel, cold, hungry winter—particularly in the African American, Latin@, Native and poor white communities.

The movement must show that it is not intimidated by the mere appointment of right-wingers. Beginning mass mobilization to struggle against the war and for the needs of the people can change the entire political landscape and put the Bush-Cheney forces on the defensive. It takes determination and initiative but it can be done.

The Oct. 17 Million Worker March in Washington, D.C., showed in microcosm the unity of the labor movement, the anti-war movement, the community and the unorganized working class, including immigrant workers. The MWM approach should be expanded in the post-election period to encompass broader and broader layers of the workers and the oppressed, until the movement builds up the momentum it needs to push back the Bush program and stop the war. □

Hotel workers continue fight for decent contract

By Brenda Sandburg
San Francisco

Locked-out hotel workers in San Francisco face another crisis: Their health-care coverage is set to end Dec. 1.

On Nov. 8, the hotel bosses decided not to distribute funds from a joint hotel-union trust fund to extend health coverage by two months to the more than 4,000 people who have been locked out of their jobs for almost two months.

The hotel owners show no concern for the fate of their employees.

During negotiations in early November, the employers made a meager change to their contract proposal. Under their original proposal, some workers would have paid as much as \$273 per month for health care by the last two years of a five-year contract. The new proposal called for a single worker to pay \$40 per month and employees with dependents to pay \$79 to \$119 in the last two years of the contract.

All workers now pay \$10 per month for health coverage.

The owners continued to demand that employees work a minimum of 80 hours per month to qualify for health care—rather than the current minimum of 18 hours per month. The union says the change would leave more than 1,000 workers without coverage.

While employers are demanding that workers pay more for their health care, they are offering only a few pennies' increase in wages. They propose a 20-cent per-hour raise each year for employees who don't receive tips, and a 5-cent per-hour increase for those who receive tips.

The union wants a 55-cent per-hour increase for workers who don't get tips, and 45 cents for tipped workers, for each year of a two-year contract.

UNITE HERE Local 2 launched a two-week strike against four hotels on Sept. 29, to push for a decent



San Francisco hotel workers

PHOTO: UNITE HERE LOCAL 2

contract. Two weeks later hotel operators locked out workers at 10 other hotels.

The union is fighting to protect health and pension benefits, reduce work loads, and raise wages. It is also pushing for a two-year contract that would expire at the same time as union contracts in Boston, New York and other major cities—which would give the workers more bargaining power. The hotel bosses want a five-year contract.

On Nov. 15 UNITE HERE Local 2 worked out an agreement with Kaiser Permanente so that 3,500 hotel workers it covers will continue to receive health care benefits through the end of January. The two healthcare systems that cover the remaining 800 locked-out workers had not responded to Local 2's request to extend their coverage as of that night.

The hotel workers continue to receive strong support from other unions and community groups. In response to a call from Local 2, many unions have adopted a hotel's workers, sending their members to join the picket lines.

School bus drivers from United Transportation Union Local 1741 have walked in solidarity with hotel workers three times.

"Profit-making corporations are asking their employees who make very little money to shoulder the high cost of health care," said UTU member Shane Hoff. "In many instances, the workers won't be able to afford health care.

"It was an issue with the grocery workers who went on strike in Southern California, it's an issue here. And we expect it will be an issue in our upcoming contract negotiations," Hoff said. □

Victory in Chicago City College teachers' strike

By Eric Struch
Chicago

Seven hundred seventy-five teachers and staff at the Chicago City Colleges brought their 17-day strike to a successful end Nov. 6, ratifying a four-year contract with a 95-percent "yes" vote.

It was reported that fewer than 10 members crossed the picket line during the strike.

The teachers, represented by Cook County College Teachers' Union Local 1600, had been working without a contract since July. They were forced to strike on Oct. 20 by the CCC board's demand for a 50-percent increase in work load and a 400-percent increase in the cost of medical insurance.

The board also wanted to take teacher hiring out of the hands of the academic departments, creating a patronage system.

The new contract maintains academic control of hiring, holds the work load and class size constant during the life of the contract, and provides for a 3-to-4-percent annual wage increase. Health costs will increase, but less than the administration had threatened.

Although the administration cried poverty, CCC has \$96 million in unrestricted funds on a budget of \$250,000,000. Only 12 percent of this money goes to faculty pay and benefits. One-third goes to Central Administration. The CCC has the highest administration-to-full-time-faculty ratio in Illinois.

CCC Chancellor Wayne Watson, who makes \$216,000 per year, called Local 1600 members "greedy" for asking for a 6.25-percent raise.

James C. Tyree, chair of the Board of Trustees, who works for Mesriow Financial and makes more than \$150,000 per year from his CCC position alone, claimed that CCC teachers make an average of \$80,000 per year.

The truth is that the only teachers making close to that amount are 30-year veterans. Starting salaries

for full-timers are less than \$40,000 per year, and part-timers make from \$7 to \$9 per hour.

Local 1600 President Perry Buckley put it plainly: "Administrators are making Enron money and giving our workers Wal-Mart money."

Through the efforts of the Strike Solidarity Committee, a student organization based at Truman College, the Student Government Association came out in support of the strike. The administration threatened students who supported the strike with loss of financial aid and cancellation of bus passes.

Some, including this writer, were threatened over the phone with failing grades if they respected the picket lines and didn't attend class. On Oct. 25, a student was arrested at Wright College just for passing out a student-authored flier.

The administration strategy of division and intimidation backfired. A 300-strong rally in front of City Hall on Oct. 28 was the strongest showing of student-teacher unity yet.

The anti-war movement showed its solidarity with Local 1600 on Nov. 3 when a militant march of nearly a thousand people joined a candlelight vigil by the teachers and their supporters in Millennium Park. The 500,000-strong Chicago Federation of Labor also pledged its full support.

Solidarity forced the CCC board back to the bargaining table.

Although the administration now claims that the union agreed to increased work loads in 2008, there is no such provision in the contract. The CCC administration's demands were part of a broad attack on public education in Chicago. This includes moves to privatize schools, drive back unions, and convert high schools to military academies.

Victory in this strike is a good start in resisting the attack.

Struch is a student at Harold Washington College.

ON THE PICKETLINE
BY SUE DAVIS

Strike vote at US Airways

When a mail ballot of US Airways' passenger service agents was counted on Nov. 10, 86 percent voted to authorize a strike or other legal action if they aren't offered a decent contract. That vote shows the tremendous determination of the Communication Workers to fight for what's rightfully theirs against really difficult odds.

US Airways is now demanding more cutbacks in pay and retirement benefits and the right to contract out jobs, even after the federal court overseeing the airline's bankruptcy broke the union contract in October, forcing a 21-percent wage cut on the agents. Six percent of the agents were laid off.

The CWA negotiating team has proposed alternative cost savings that limit the hardship imposed on the workers. "The goal of the CWA negotiating team is to reach an agreement that maintains our living standard and that acknowledges the value that experienced, skilled and professional customer service brings to US Airways," read a Nov. 10 press release issued by the CWA bargaining committee.

Minimum wage hikes win

Huge majorities of voters in Florida and Nevada showed class solidarity with their low-paid brothers and sisters by approving referenda that boost the minimum wage in those states.

In Florida 71 percent voted for a constitutional amendment that ties the minimum wage to inflation. The hourly minimum wage in Florida would be raised to \$6.15—a dollar above the federal minimum. This would be a boon to millions of retirees who must work to supplement their skimpy Social Security checks.

In Nevada 68 percent voted to require businesses that don't offer health insurance to raise the minimum wage so their workers can afford it. Take that, Wal-Mart!

Teamsters' ranks swell in October

The Teamsters signed up large numbers of new members from coast to coast in October. For example, in Fort Lauderdale, Fla., 1,000 municipal workers joined Local 769 on Oct. 27; 700 Diamond Walnut workers in Stockton, Calif., joined Local 601 on Oct. 15; and 530 DHL Express drivers, ramp workers and clerical staff joined in three cities, along with 458 workers at several of the company's subcontractors.

The Teamsters also initiated an innovative health benefit: the union is setting up a program, in conjunction with the Dana-Farber Cancer Institute, affiliated with Harvard Medical School, to help truck drivers quit smoking and lose weight. The union cited lack of exercise and unhealthy food options on the road as contributing to drivers' health problems.

Retirees trump IBM on pensions

More than 130,000 retired workers will soon receive settlement checks from IBM totaling \$320 million. A federal court recently ruled that the way the company converted its pension plan violates federal pension law prohibiting discrimination based on age. The suit was initiated in 1999 when the company switched from a traditional benefits plan to a cash-balance plan.

Traditional plans pay a monthly sum determined by salary and years of service, which means benefits grow slowly at first, increasing later in the worker's career.

In cash-balance plans workers earn benefits at an even pace over the years. That means a 25-year-old stands to earn more under a cash-balance plan than a 55-year-old because he or she will have more time to amass benefits and compound interest. So when there's a conversion to a cash-balance plan, older workers see a 20 to 40 percent slash in payments.

"A pension is deferred compensation," Kathi Cooper, who initiated the suit, told the November 2004 AARP Bulletin. "We earned it, and [IBM] can't keep it or put in the pockets of younger workers."

Since the 1990s, several hundred major companies with millions of employees have switched to cash-balance plans because they reduce future pension costs and make the company's books look better, enhancing their profits.

Karen Friedman, policy director for the Pension Rights Center, told the AARP Bulletin that such conversions should be illegal. Fortunately, the successful suit against IBM—which could mushroom to a whopping \$1.4 billion settlement after appeals—has slowed the rush of such conversions. □

What we learned on campaign trail

Excerpts from a talk by WWP Secretariat member Teresa Gutierrez at the Nov. 13-14 National Fightback Conference.

For the last few months, the tidal wave of the bourgeois elections inundated the people of this country. Not much else dominated the news. Not the slaughter of over 100,000 Iraqis. Not the deaths of over 1,000 North American soldiers.

After the election, much was made about the huge voter turnout.

But if the war or a referendum for universal health care had been on the ballot, there would have been an unprecedented turnout. Because these are the issues people care about, not the so-called moral issues as Karl Rove would have us believe.

The choices at the ballot box—the lesser of two evils—had very little to do with what impacts people's lives. What appears to be a very democratic exercise is not.

Because the vote on Nov. 2 could not vote away the most undemocratic system of all: the capitalist economic structure. It could not vote away that tiny group of billionaires who own and control the wealth, those who really run society.

And this is exactly why WWP ran candidates, to say that—and to make the clarion call for the struggle to overturn the capitalist system and replace it with socialism.

Fortunately, John Kerry and George W. Bush were not the only candidates traveling the country these past months. And while there were a few other third-party candidates, there was only one presiden-



Teresa Gutierrez WW PHOTOS: G. DUNKEL

tial slate that ran a Black man and a Latina lesbian. Only one party that ran a lesbian of color for Congress in California. And that was Workers World Party.

On the campaign trail we learned a great deal about what is going on around the country. We learned about teachers who persevere in trying to provide quality education despite daunting conditions. About a college graduate in the South unable to find a permanent job and laid off from her temp job—from one day to the next—just because she had gone online during her lunch hour to pay an electric bill.

About a racist drive in Denver to get rid of middle- and upper-level jobs filled by Black city workers. And about a white-supremacist organization there also campaigning—a racist campaign to whip up violence against immigrants.

We learned about an ongoing struggle a community in Vermont is carrying out to shut down a nuclear plant. Across the country people talked about the gentri-

fication of entire neighborhoods where the poor and people of color are being viciously pushed out so that high-priced condos can be built. In Houston, these condos are maliciously replacing historic Freedmen's Town, a community where slaves settled after becoming freed.

Everyone we talked to expressed deep concern about job security. A cloud seemed to hang over everyone about this as well as health care.

All these issues and concerns we heard about are never seriously addressed by the bourgeois candidates—much less resolved by the government, once they win. Capitalist candidates may bring up an unemployed person here or there so everyone can feel sorry for them but only as a token, as a way to attack the other candidate.

And do these candidates ever talk about racism? Would they advocate reparations for Africans? Do they talk about freeing the thousands of innocent people who fill our jails? Or freeing people's leaders like Peltier, Mumia, or the Cuban 5?

Would they do anything to stop the deaths of the one Mexican a day killed on the job in this country? Or the deaths of 3,000 workers last year alone as a result of horrendous job conditions? Of course not.

Yet the Anybody But Bush syndrome still gripped the movement and made it a tough year for socialists. We saw a vivid example of ABB while campaigning in Albuquerque, N.M. We went to pick up tickets for the John Kerry rally, which we planned to "visit" the next night.

As we arrived at the parking lot of the

Kerry headquarters, we saw that the number of anti-war stickers on so many cars was incredible. It was a vivid example of how the anti-war movement was so dependent on the Democratic Party. Just like labor, they were so scared of Bush they were sticking to this capitalist party.

It did not matter that Kerry aimed to "get the job done" in Iraq just like Bush.

It did not matter, either, that there are many examples in history showing that the Democratic Party is just as much the party of war as the Republicans. That it was a Democrat who rained bombs on Vietnam. That it was a Democrat who invaded revolutionary Cuba, who dropped atom bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

When we began the campaign, I observed how some African Americans were especially stirred by the fact that a Black person was running for the highest office in country. It brought home to me once again how far the fight for self-determination still has to go in this country.

Representation is one of the simple but profound reasons why we ran the slate we did. Some may call it "identity politics." But when you back this gesture with Marxist revolutionary class politics—which we did—then you have the makings of a party that understands one of the most basic and fundamental questions for communists in this country: and that is the struggle against national oppression.

In the United States the concept that "the class struggle is primary but racism is NOT secondary" is especially true. We believe it. We live it. □

Iraq war and Bush victory: Prospects for struggle

Excerpts from a talk by WWP Secretariat member Fred Goldstein at the Nov. 13-14 National Fightback Conference.

Today the dominant political developments in the world are the war in Iraq and the Bush election. As Marxists, we must probe these events, their relation to one another, and the underlying class forces at play—and attempt to glimpse the future in order to better prepare for struggle.

Here we have a reactionary election victory and a reactionary war of conquest—and it is now once again truly a war to secure an occupation. How will they affect each other? Will reaction triumph now that the Bush administration has not only won re-election, but secured control over both houses of Congress, with a 55 to 45 majority in the Senate?

Will the forces of reaction that have triumphed at the political summits of society dominate capitalist society? Or will the class contradictions generated by this vicious colonial war burst through the surface of reaction at the commanding heights in Washington?

The last protracted colonial war, the Vietnam war, and the contradictions of the Lyndon Johnson administration are instructive. In office after the Kennedy assassination from 1963 to 1968, the Johnson administration was totally different from the present Bush administration politically.

Johnson came to office at the height of the civil-rights movement—during the sit-ins, the freedom rides, the mass resistance led by the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. Tens of thousands of African Americans, particularly youths and students, were challenging the bastions of segregation and legalized racism in all its forms—

—from ending white-only facilities to demanding the right to vote.

Johnson was the political leader from Texas who had once voted against an anti-lynching law. Under the impact of the struggle, he became the capitalist leader who made historic political concessions and signed the Civil Rights Act, the Voting Rights Act and the 24th Amendment to the Constitution that outlawed the poll tax he had once upheld.

The ruling-class factions behind Johnson were deeply concerned about the rise of the Black movement. They saw the possibility it would turn into a full-fledged liberation movement, an extension of the worldwide decolonization movement.

The bosses knew that to contain this movement would require more than conceding political rights. They would have to ease up on the colonial-type oppression and superexploitation of the African American population. They decided they would have to put resources into improving the deplorable conditions in the African American community and in other regions of deep poverty.

In March 1964, Johnson made a major speech about the "Great Society." It was the prelude to a whole raft of legislative proposals to put money into the inner cities and depressed areas. But in August 1964, Johnson and the Pentagon staged the Gulf of Tonkin incident and initiated a congressional resolution, something like the Iraq War resolution, authorizing an escalation of the war in Vietnam.

The U.S. ruling class was trying to stem the tide of struggle at home by making economic concessions—while at the same time trying to wage a colonial war to conquer Vietnam and displace the French as the colonial power.

And just as the Pentagon dreams of set-

ting up permanent military bases with which to threaten and dominate the Persian Gulf and the Middle East, so then the Pentagon set up military bases all over south Vietnam with the aim of threatening China and strengthening U.S. domination of the Pacific.

But instead of victory through escalation, the Johnson administration became bogged down in a quagmire. He had to send over 500,000 troops to Vietnam. The dreamed-of profits from the conquest of Vietnam turned into hundreds of billions of dollars in losses that the masses paid for.

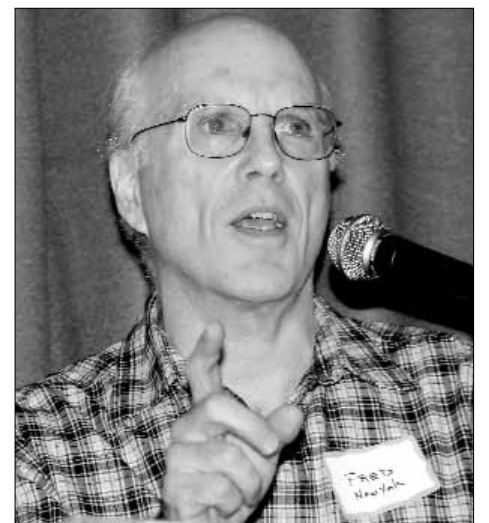
Johnson talked about the Great Society. Meanwhile he sent more and more money to the military and more and more troops to kill and be killed in Vietnam. Social contradictions increased. There were rebellions in the Black community, from Harlem to Watts to Detroit to Newark, as the funds for social spending were increasingly diverted to the war.

In 1968, when Martin Luther King Jr. was assassinated, there were rebellions in over 100 cities.

These rebellions resulted in affirmative action. The ruling class feared a war at home at the same time that they were trying to wage a war abroad. Affirmative action, while it improved the opportunities for Black people, cost the bourgeoisie nothing in social spending.

Thus the consequences of the Vietnam War, a losing colonial war, heightened the social and economic contradictions at home and led to massive urban rebellions.

The current administration is announcing its intention to raid Social Security and to make permanent the tax breaks for the rich on capital gains and dividends. Bush has a program of pushing back the workers; pushing the anti-union, so-called



Fred Goldstein

"right to work" of attacking overtime; cutting back health benefits; and generally pushing ahead with the transfer of income to the rich.

But the administration has an unwinnable imperialist occupation that it has already poured \$200 billion into, and it's going to ask for another \$70 billion. The attack on Falluja guarantees that they will have to expand the occupation.

Bush is going to try to make the working class and the oppressed pay for this quagmire, in blood and money. This war is going to intensify the class contradictions in the United States.

The working class as a whole is poorer than it was during the Vietnam era. It is more multinational. There are more women and more open lesbian, gay, bi and trans people in the work force.

Nothing in the election result showed that the masses of workers have shifted to the right. The reaction is at the top.

The prospects are for economic decline and more war. These are ingredients for challenging the Bush reaction in a real way—not just with protests but with struggle and resistance of the workers, the young, women, lesbian, gay, bi and trans people, immigrants, and all who are going to suffer the burden of the war and the capitalist economy. □

NATIONAL FIGHTBACK CONFERENCE

Workers, youths, anti-war organizers

By Deirdre Griswold
New York

It's one thing to meet and discuss strategies for fighting back against political reaction when everybody is doing it. It's quite another when a good part of the progressive movement is still despondent after having put so much fruitless effort into trying to defeat the Bush administration at the polls.

The hundreds of people who met at the Chelsea Auditorium here on Nov. 13-14 in a National Fightback Conference sponsored by Workers World Party were well aware of this prevailing mood. The speeches, workshops and discussion groups grappled with the internal struggles that erupted in the union movement after electioneering diverted resources from organizing; with the ferocious offensive just launched by the Pentagon in Falluja; and with the right-wing's tactic of whipping up bigotry against lesbian, gay, bi and trans rights in the election. In other words, those who came to this conference live very much in the real world.

But this didn't stop them from showing at every turn that they believe the answer is struggle, not retreat. Their enthusiasm spilled over again and again in cheers, standing ovations and impassioned but well-reasoned presentations, based on experience, expressing confidence in the capacity of the working class to organize and resist the billionaires' offensive at home and abroad. Every oppressed grouping in the multinational, diverse U.S. working class was well represented, both on the podium and in the audience.

The conference truly had a national reach. California sent people from San

Francisco, Berkeley, Los Angeles and San Diego. Strong, largely youthful delegations came from Southern states, flying from Georgia and South Carolina and driving from North Carolina, Virginia and West Virginia. The industrial heartland of the Midwest, where unions have been severely under attack, sent people from Chicago, Detroit, Cleveland, Pittsburgh and Buffalo.

The bulk of the attendees came from the heavily populated northeastern corridor that runs from Boston down through Rhode Island and Connecticut to the New York metropolitan area, then through New Jersey to Philadelphia, Baltimore and the area in and around Washington, D.C. Black, white, Latin@, Native and Arab workers and other oppressed peoples came from all these areas.

In addition, activists seeking to network with antiwar allies came from cities like Tucson, Ariz., and Denver, Colo., in the vast areas west of the Mississippi where the military-industrial complex casts its shadow over everything.

Larry Holmes, a member of the WWP Secretariat who worked closely with the leaders of the Million Worker March to build the Oct. 17 rally in Washington, D.C., opened the conference with a rousing talk. It ranged from support for the Iraqi and Palestinian resistance to colonialism, to an analysis of how dependence on the Democratic Party has held back the labor movement in the U.S., resulting in a crisis for the unions.

On the elections, Holmes said, "If all the bourgeoisie has to offer the masses is reaction and bigotry, then it's a sign of the decay of the system. When they go after our lesbian, gay, bi and trans sisters and

brothers, when they go after immigrants, when they go after Black and Latin@ and Asian peoples, it means we have to push back, we have to fight reactionary ideas with revolutionary ideas and tactics."

Holmes' talk led into a discussion later on of how to rebuild the antiwar movement, which has been weakened by pre-occupation with the election. Organizers from the International Action Center and the GI-resistance support group SNAFU joined WWP members in alerting everyone to the importance of building Stop the War Week, Dec. 3-11, and beginning to mobilize with other groups for the counter-inaugural in January and a world day of antiwar actions in March on the anniversary of the U.S. attack on Iraq.

Other Party leaders and candidates in the recent election spoke throughout the day, including presidential candidate John Parker, vice presidential candidate Teresa Gutierrez, congressional candidate LeiLani Dowell and Secretariat members Sara Flounders, Fred Goldstein, Deirdre Griswold, Gutierrez and Monica Moorehead. Shortened versions of their talks will appear in WW newspaper, beginning with this issue, and on the newspaper's web site, www.workers.org.

MWM leader says 'It was just the beginning'

Members of WWP were joined at the podium by invited guests from many struggle movements. An especially important and well-received talk was given by Brenda Stokely, a leader of the Million Worker March and, as president of AFSCME District Council 1707, the elected representative of thousands of low-wage workers in New York.

Speaking in the panel on "Building Working Class Solidarity," Stokely thanked Workers World Party for "all the material and political assistance that helped the Million Worker March take place." She also excoriated those in the movement who "stood on the sidelines" and said it was a waste of time engaging in polemics with them. About the MWM, she said it was "not just a march—this was the beginning of a very important movement." Stokely contrasted WWP with those who think that millionaire politicians can speak for labor. "You respect the right of workers to stand up and say what we want," she said, and concluded her fiery speech with: "We continue to build our ability to fight back ... to build the kind of movement in this country that has to smash the ruling class."

Another MWM organizer, Sharon Black, came straight to the conference from a jail cell in Baltimore, where she had been arrested along with other unionists for supporting a hotel workers' protest.

Invited speakers from other movements described how the misery caused by U.S. imperialism has stimulated resistance in the countries they came from—the Philippines, Iraq, Haiti, Korea and Venezuela. (See accompanying article about the panel on "Fighting Imperialism.") The whole body stood for a moment of silent but militant tribute to those who have put their bodies on the line in the Middle East and Haiti, as well as political prisoners in the U.S.—especially Mumia Abu-Jamal, Leonard Peltier and the Cuban Five.

A high point of the weekend was the first national meeting of FIST—Fight Imperialism, Stand Together. This new

International guests address conference

By Deirdre Griswold
New York

A nurse from Buffalo, a student from San Diego, an immigrant laborer from New Jersey—they and hundreds of others listened closely to a panel of international speakers who described the state of the struggle in their countries on Nov. 13 at the National Fightback Conference here.

The audience showed a hunger to learn what is really going on around the world. Technology has bridged the oceans and continents, and many workers are keenly aware that what happens far away impacts their lives profoundly. They also deeply distrust the commercial media, whose virtual monopoly on international news means that every liberation struggle gets presented here in a sinister light.

First up was Kadouri Al-Kaysi, who had spoken just that morning to his sister in southern Iraq. This was news you couldn't get on CNN. He passed on the information that Iraqi high school youth were trying to march to Falluja, the city under deadly siege by U.S. forces, to bring the people there medicines, water and food. The audience gave them an emotional standing ovation.

First Secretary Carlos Lazo of the Venezuelan Mission to the United Nations started his remarks with a "salute to the Iraqi comrades" in their struggle for self-determination and liberation. He



Dorotea Mendoza



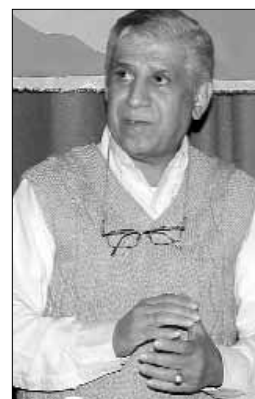
Carlos Lazo



Donatien Bukuba



Yoomi Jeong



Kadouri Al-Kaysi



Ben Dupuy

WW PHOTOS: G. DUNKEL

warned that the U.S. government is trying to split the non-aligned countries in the United Nations, and that it is also trying to create pretexts for intervention in Zimbabwe, Iran and Sudan. It was a thoroughly internationalist talk.

News of the Korean people's struggle for reunification came from Yoomi Jeong, deputy secretary general of the Korean Truth Commission. She emphasized that decades of U.S. nuclear threats had forced the Democratic People's Republic of Korea in the north to develop a nuclear deterrent for self-defense against a "pre-emptive" attack.

And she reported on a remarkable development. The president of South Korea, Roh Moo-hyun, told an audience in Los Angeles on Nov. 12 that North Korea had legitimate reasons for developing a nuclear deterrent. While buried in the U.S. media, Roh's statement sent shock waves through Washington and was immediately attacked by the pro-U.S. right-wing party in South Korea.

Struggles in a number of African countries were covered by Donatien Bukuba, including a possible general strike in Nigeria—since suspended when the government banned it but also lowered oil prices somewhat; France's intervention in Ivory Coast and the mass mobilizations there against its colonial troops; and the continued struggle in Zimbabwe for land and reparations.

Dorotea Mendoza, a leader of the Filipino women's organization Gabriela, which gained 100,000 new members this year, talked of resistance to the U.S. reopening its bases there and the growing repression in the Philippines, where human rights groups have counted 467 election-related killings. On an average day, 2,400 workers leave to work abroad; 60 percent of them are women and many are enslaved in the international sex trade.

Ben Dupuy, leader of Haiti's National Popular Party, announced that the political forces resisting a puppet government—imposed last February when U.S. Marines

forcibly removed elected President Jean-Bertrand Aristide from the country—are now building an army of national liberation. An important meeting on the struggle in Haiti will take place in Brooklyn, N.Y., on Dec. 5.

Colombian labor unionist Luz Ortiz said the situation in her country is complex as the "Yankee" president, Alvaro Uribe, continues to free right-wing paramilitaries involved in tortures and murders of workers and villagers.

In addition to these invited guests, WWP speakers Sara Flounders, Rebeca Toledo and Dustin Langley contributed to the discussion. Flounders urged everyone to become "resistance organizers" in the struggle against the war. Toledo spoke of Cuba's long struggle against the U.S. blockade and the movement here to free the five Cuban heroes held in U.S. jails. Langley talked about GI resistance to the war in Iraq. Workers World will run excerpts from their talks in a future issue. □

meet

youth organization affiliated with WWP has already been raising hell in struggles against the war and ROTC recruiting at campuses and high schools. In the first plenary session of the conference, FIST organizer Julie Fry of New York announced that the youth would be meeting that night to lay out their plans. The next day, Q Allen of North Carolina reported that the successful FIST meeting had laid the basis for expanded struggles in many areas of the country.

Toward the end of the conference, after those present had had a chance to hear Workers World Party's political analysis on a wide variety of issues and see how the Party makes it possible for those from the most oppressed backgrounds to realize their potential as leaders and organizers, a final panel discussed "Why a Revolutionary Party Is Needed in the U.S." This led directly into a special discussion group in the cafeteria for those interested in finding out how to join the Party. And it was packed. For WWP members attending, it was an emotional experience as they explained to eager questioners how joining the Party had been the most important decision of their lives.

Interspersed with all the talks were cultural performances ranging from the hard-hitting poetry of hip-hop artists — including Jaime Roundtree, Billy Martin, Kahlil Khan and Hussan Salaam — to ballads about freedom sung by Pam Parker. Translation was available during the meetings in Spanish and American Sign Language. □



Brenda Stokely, LeiLani Dowell and Brenda Sandburg, who chaired first session.

WW PHOTOS: G. DUNKEL

Welcome— are you ready to fight?

Excerpts from the welcoming talk by LeiLani Dowell at the Nov. 13-14 National Fightback Conference.

I have the extreme pleasure and honor of officially welcoming you to the National Fightback Conference sponsored by Workers World Party. Like the name says, we want this weekend's conference to be a springboard to a fightback like we've never seen before.

And there's a lot to beat back. It's been quite a year for the working class and the progressive movement. The war in Iraq continues. Two months after the 200th anniversary of the first successful slave revolution, the United States kidnapped President Jean-Bertrand Aristide from Haiti. Poverty rose in the United States for the third year in a row.

The labor movement, from hotel to grocery workers, faced an onslaught from bosses hellbent on lowering wages and slash-

ing health care. Immigrant communities faced raids in California, and laws excluding them from public benefits in Arizona. Eleven states voted for discrimination against lesbian/gay/bi/trans people.

And while many of us in this room knew that a victory for John Kerry would mean, well, not much at all—just kidding, of course it would mean something, but we knew that the struggle would have to continue if he was elected—what I'm getting at is that many in the progressive movement were diverted from the independent struggle and swept into "Anybody But Bush" fever.

Yet we would be remiss if we didn't note our victories as well. The resistance of the people of Iraq continues, to the degree that the United States is sweating to find "peace" for their sham January elections. With each week, more U.S. military personnel are refusing to be sent to kill and be killed.

The people of Haiti, facing the most extreme repression and the aftermath of a devastating hurricane, are fighting back. The people of Venezuela time and time again took to the streets to defend the Bolivarian revolution, beating back the reactionary, U.S.-backed forces there.

Anti-death-penalty forces were able to halt the execution of Kevin Cooper in California. The Million Worker March was organized, with a largely Black rank-and-file leadership, under the gun of official AFL-CIO opposition, weeks before the elections.

This year's elections showed conclusively that we are living in a time of reaction, when the forces of sexism, racism, and bigotry are being used to wage an outright war against our class. We're told by the press that the movement is running scared, is defeated, is leaving the country.

And for these reasons, the need for a

Continued on page 11

Forge a principled united front against war

Excerpts from a talk by WWP Secretariat member Larry Holmes at the Nov. 13-14 National Fightback Conference.

Welcome, comrades from all over the country. You have done such a wonderful job organizing against the war.

The leaders of the Million Worker March have told us how grateful they were for our party's sincere support. We played such a vital role in that movement. Our activists all over the country did everything they could to make that mobilization of workers and anti-war activists successful. That was when the "anybody but Bush" forces were directing everything into the election.

Not only that, we had our own election campaign at the same time. And we founded Fight Imperialism, Stand Together—FIST. It was a very, very healthy sign. It means we are doing the right thing.

The Palestinian struggle continues. You saw what happened yesterday when they took Arafat's body back to Ramallah. It was supposed to be a ceremonial thing, but the people turned it into a demonstration, saying, "You're not going to bury our struggle."

After the elections here, people were down. This election was a watershed because there was so much expectation, so much fear over the outcome. The movement will be thinking about it for a long time. I think there's more potential that another choice will be made by sections of the movement, who will break with the Democratic Party. It depends on the struggle.

We don't know how that will come about, whether people will support our candidates, whether there will be a coalition of revolutionary, progressive candidates or Black candidates, labor candidates. Something like that is bound to be considered, and if it comes up we will take a deep interest in it.

You cannot rely on fear to get the masses to come out and vote, fear of Bush or fear of anything. Fear is the bourgeoisie's thing. They rely on fear.

Strength and confidence and independence are always the way to go.

If all the bourgeoisie has to offer the masses is reaction and bigotry, then it's a sign of the decay of the system. When they go after our lesbian, gay, bi and trans sisters and brothers, when they go after immigrants, when they go after Black and Latino and Asian peoples, it means we have to push back.

We have to fight reactionary ideas with revolutionary ideas and tactics—including ultimately an alternative to capitalism.

We have so much to do in the coming months. We need to think about how we are going to fight the war.

This attack on Falluja is really the beginning of the second war on Iraq. Why? Because the first war failed.

The Iraqi people were not conquered. The resistance grew stronger. And that is why is U.S. imperialism and its military forces find themselves in this crisis.

They are desperately trying to "pacify" the country, which is another way of saying murdering thousands of people so they can hold phony-baloney elections in January. But the resistance is strong, and

it's not just in Falluja.

We have to make it clear that we are behind the resistance. And if anyone has disagreements with the leadership of the resistance, that's not the issue. The issue is that it's their country. The issue is U.S. imperialism.

The elections derailed the movement. The advanced sections have got to get it back on track. And we're up to the task.

Just as we played a central role in launching the first phase of the movement against this war, we have to do it again. Is the movement fearful that demonstrations will be small, so they don't call them? That doesn't matter. Even if we start with small ones, they'll get bigger and bigger.

Let's take up the question of the GIs who want to resist. Let's try to bring more workers in. The anti-war movement is a workers' movement.

What we need to do is forge an honest, principled, united front. An honest, aboveboard appeal to all who want to maximize our forces and stop the damn war.

There's Stop the War Week coming up in early December. Many organizations are coming aboard. There's the counter-inauguration in January, and the first anniversary of the war in March. Solidarity is key to our relationships with organizations around the world, and comes first. Differences are important but first comes solidarity.

We have talked about the workers' struggle a lot. Our class is in a crisis. Not enough workers are organized. The organized sector of the work force is shrinking. The AFL-CIO leaders put everything into beating Bush—money, resources, staff.



Larry Holmes.

WW PHOTO: G. DUNKEL

They wasted all that money on the election and they lost. The hotel workers are struggling and are locked out right now in San Francisco. It would have been terrific to have a one-day demonstration. The labor leaders not only ignored the Million Worker March, they organized against it. This crisis is exacerbating the struggle within the labor movement.

The Million Worker March showed us what we can do to get involved in this effort to radicalize the working-class movement. For many years the ruling class made concessions to certain sections of the working class to buy their loyalty. That's over.

The MWM has Black leadership. They've been around for a long time. They're tested, militant. And even though they've had issues with racism in the labor movement, they want to build a classwide movement. They sent invitations to workers of all nationalities.

It's just the beginning. There will be another Million Worker March and maybe a lot of other struggles in between. As Clarence Thomas said at the Million Worker March, "In 2005 the workers' struggle will come alive."

Workers World Party will be a central part of it. And will help push this movement forward to a higher level. □

Latin America's struggle against neoliberalism

Excerpts from a talk by Berta Joubert-Ceci at the Nov. 13-14 National Fightback Conference.

The peoples in the countries south of the Rio Grande are today building the strongest resistance to imperialism—more specifically, to U.S. imperialism.

With the advance of neoliberalism and its trade agreements in the region, the masses have responded with a sweeping upsurge of opposition, trying to take back their countries from capitalism.

Neoliberalism is a set of economic and political measures imposed by the financial agents of the oppressor nations—the International Monetary Fund, World Bank, World Trade Organization, etc. It is important to know some of these measures to fully understand the devastation that in turn has awakened a response among the Latin American masses.

First of all: privatization. Every national reserve and service must be privatized. Telecommunications, energy, health, education, water—they all have to go to private hands, to enterprises that are mostly transnational capital. This way the wealth of natural resources and the basic human services ceases to exist for the benefit of the majority of the people.

Another feature is the free flow of capital, the absence or reduction of tariffs, and elimination of subsidies for the country's products. This way U.S. financial capital can take over any service very cheaply without paying any penalty.

Neoliberalism also means eliminating social safety nets. Social security, pensions, etc., go on the chopping board. Also, deficits must be balanced. Money once

used to finance these governmental agencies now has to be diverted to pay the deficit and the huge external debt.

This leads to the destruction of economies, fewer basic services, decrease or elimination of social programs and pensions, increase of prices for the basic family basket, decrease of wages, unemployment.

Some statistics can illustrate these points. In Central America alone, 70 percent of its 35 million people live in poverty.

In 1980, some 120 million people in Latin America and the Caribbean lived in poverty. At the end of 1999, the figure was 220 million.

In Argentina, a country that was presented as the IMF model, the neoliberal policies carried out by President Carlos Menem (1989-99) and later by Fernando de la Rúa (1999-2001) left seven out of every 10 children in poverty. And 11,000 of these children die every year of preventable causes.

But the images that joyously prevail are of those who have taken up the challenge of fighting against neoliberalism. For example, the smile of Colombian Indigenous leader Luz Perly Cordoba, speaking of the struggle while confined in a women's prison in Bogotá. And the many trade unionists who defend with their lives the right to unionize.

The movement in Latin America is diverse. It is not uniformly for socialism yet, at least not in a well-defined way. But one common thread is that it is thoroughly anti-imperialist, since the struggle against neoliberalism has been the driving force in its awakening. We all remember the glorious beginning of the Zapatistas in

Chiapas.

In general, this is a new movement with different forces than in the past. We must also remember that state terrorism and military dictatorship have been responsible for the decimation of communist and socialist parties in the region. Latin America and the Caribbean as a whole is a region where even the attempt to reform has been paid for with the blood of thousands of its people.

In several countries, these new movements have forced the elections of presidents who at least on paper oppose neoliberal "free trade" agreements. This is the case in Argentina, Ecuador, Brazil, Bolivia and Uruguay. In Argentina, even though Nestor Kirchner was elected, trade unions, piqueteros, the Mothers of Plaza de Mayo and others continue organizing and resisting, and there have been attempts to take over factories.

These are just examples that show coordination of actions. Even though they are not revolutionary and the outcome was mainly electoral, they do show the potential of these new forces to organize and resist.

In Vieques, Puerto Rico, a U.S. colony, the united struggle of the people drove out the U.S. Navy, which for 60 years had used the island for military practices.

The struggle against neoliberalism is not only on the economic level. Imperialism uses the military to help open up the markets that it wants to dominate.

In Latin America we have Colombia to illustrate this process. The oldest armed insurgency on the continent are the Colombian Revolutionary Armed Forces (FARC) and the National Liberation Army



Berta Joubert-Ceci

(ELN). Despite repression by the government of Alvaro Uribe, a very close ally of the United States, mobilizations, strikes and actions in Colombia continue to expand.

Cuba and Venezuela offer the best avenues for and examples of dignity and hope. Cuba has always been a safe place for debates and conferences. Now Venezuela, with Hugo Chávez leading the Bolivarian Revolution, has broadened this space of debates.

To the Free Trade Area of the Americas, Venezuela has proposed the ALBA—the Bolivarian Alternative of the Americas. It is an anti-imperialist program of action against neoliberalism aimed to unite the countries and the popular movements of Latin America and the Caribbean. To that end, next month the second Bolivarian Congress of the Peoples will take place in Caracas.

The experience in Latin America and the Caribbean exposes the criminal voracity of capitalism very clearly. It cannot be reformed. It can only be replaced by a better system—socialism, which today is more necessary and valid than ever.

As Venezuelan President Chavez said last month, "We need to leave behind us the horrendous capitalist system."

¡Viva el Socialismo! □

A period of reaction but not defeat

Excerpts from a talk by WWP Secretariat member Deirdre Griswold at the Nov. 13-14 National Fightback Conference.

That you are here means you already agree that this is no time to be passive or in retreat. However, people are also very worried about the ultra-right, and for good reasons. They're afraid of the ultra-conservative tendencies of the Bush administration and its allies, who have opened up a war not only on countries that refuse to accept U.S. domination but also on the workers at home, on women, on the lesbian/gay/bi/trans community. They're whittling away at our right to join unions, to hold protest rallies and marches, to exercise free speech and even to vote.

Many who worked very hard for John Kerry did so not because they liked his



Deirdre Griswold

WW PHOTOS: G. DUNKEL

program but because they thought that another Bush victory would open the door to fascism.

Well, Bush won. Should we now be heading for the hills?

We don't think so. This is not to minimize the utter viciousness of this group of political servants of big capital. They are awful.

But this is not Germany in 1933. When Hitler came to power it was after a period of economic collapse and great turmoil. The Nazis came from outside the political establishment and even claimed to be "national socialists." But behind them, very much in secret, were the biggest German industrialists. Their victory marked a monumental and historic defeat for the working class and the whole progressive movement and paved the way to another horrendous world war.

What we're seeing now in this country is a period of political reaction coming very much from the traditional parties of big business and Wall Street. This has happened before in U.S. history. It happened after World War I and the Russian Revolution, when the newly formed FBI conducted massive sweeps in working class communities and deported thousands of so-called "Reds" who had been agitating for better wages and working conditions. They were called the Palmer Raids, after Attorney General A. Mitchell Palmer, and were a lot like the roundups today of Arabs, Muslims and South Asians.

Let's not forget that in those days, racism was open and the Democratic Party was the party of lynching and segregation in the South. In 1925, 40,000 uniformed members of the Ku Klux Klan marched down Pennsylvania Avenue in Washington, D.C. Nothing like that could happen today—not because the rich estab-

lishment isn't racist, they are, but because the people wouldn't allow it. Even Bush has to pretend he's for "diversity."

The 1950s were another period of deep political reaction as Sen. Joseph McCarthy and the House Un-American Activities Committee hounded leftists out of their jobs and out of leadership in the trade unions they had built. That happened during another war—the Korean War—and it was also a period of the deepening Cold War against the Soviet Union.

In the 1960s, when the movement started against the Vietnam War, the Johnson administration tried to activate HUAC again and investigate "subversives" in the anti-war movement. But thousands of young people, many of them high school age, lined up around the block to attend the hearings and disrupt them. They closed the hearings down after three days. As opposition grew to the war, there were many battles in the streets—like the police riot in Chicago at the Democratic National Convention of 1968. Eight anti-war leaders were later indicted. The Chicago Eight managed to put the war itself on trial, and although they were convicted, they won their freedom on appeal.

The government wanted to lock up the movement, but every time they tried to do it they made things worse for themselves, alienating the population even more and leading to the demoralization of the troops themselves.

During all these periods of reaction there was a struggle going on. The United States has never been a land of perfect freedom and democracy that suddenly is being threatened. That's a myth. This is a

Notice to the movement

The Workers World Party Secretariat believes it is necessary to publish the following clarification regarding personnel changes:

On May 16, 2004, four members of Workers World Party who were often publicly identified as WWP leaders—Brian Becker of New York, Richard Becker and Gloria La Riva of San Francisco and Preston Wood of Los Angeles—resigned from WWP and from all party leadership positions. In their resignation letter they emphasized organizational complaints and their criticism of party leaders as

their reasons for resigning.

Since mid-May 2004, the four people named above have ceased to represent WWP in their political work and in whatever organizations they have continued to be active.

At a WWP National Committee discussion of these resignations, it was noted that at this time, when the working class and the anti-imperialist movement have the responsibility of conducting a struggle against imperialist war, it is most unfortunate that any comrade would divide our forces. □

Why the workers need their own party

From a talk by WWP Secretariat member Monica Moorehead at the Nov. 13-14 National Fightback Conference.

Now that the elections are finally over, people are still asking how someone like Bush could have been re-elected. How could an outright war criminal have won the popular vote in a convincing manner?

We all know how Bush came into office in 2000 by sabotaging the votes of thousands of Black people and others in Florida, with the assistance of his brother, Gov. Jeb Bush. After 2000, the Republicans mapped out a strategy of how to capture the 2004 election in a more sophisticated manner.

This strategy included both legal and illegal machinations to discourage and marginalize voters of color on a much broader scale—especially the African American and immigrant communities—using the phony excuse of challenging voter “fraud” in urban areas like Cleveland, Philadelphia, Orlando, Fla., and in rural areas.

At the same time that this diabolical plan to disenfranchise voters was going on, the Republicans were strategically mobilizing their right-wing constituencies to go to the polls to oppose same-sex marriage and women’s right to choose.

These bigoted attacks did not begin with the Republican Party, but are tied to women’s oppression and lesbian/gay/bi/trans oppression that have been pillars of class oppression for thousands of years.

Despite the deep-seated disgust and hatred many people have for Bush, the Republicans showed that with an ideology and the program and organization that flow from it, you can overwhelm and defeat your opponents. The truth is that Bush didn’t win the election as an individual as much as the Republicans manipulated the outcome with vast resources and a well-thought-out plan based on a divide-and-conquer agenda.

The AFL-CIO leadership spent hundreds of millions of dollars trying to elect Kerry, instead of putting that money into

country that was built on slavery and the bloody suppression of the indigenous people. Women had no rights at all. Unions were illegal and the robber barons were warlords with their own private armies of strike breakers. It is only because the labor movement became too powerful that they had to abandon these tactics and today have created a global labor market to super-exploit workers in other countries.

Every right we have we fought for. Great mass movements have grown up and broken new ground—the abolitionists, the struggle for women’s suffrage, the labor movement, the civil rights and Black Power movements, the lesbian/gay/bi and trans movement, and the increasingly mass antiwar movements.

None of these rights were won by toning down the struggle in order to get the liberal imperialists on our side. That’s what is wrong with the “anybody but Bush” scenario. It assumes that the only effective way to fight the right wing is to hand over the struggle to the liberal capitalists and hope they don’t sell you out. Except they always do.

This problem will always be with us, until we get rid of capitalism itself. The ruling class will always have a soft spot for the ultra right and will try to trot them out when they need them. We just have to show them that repression breeds resistance. □

organizing Wal-Mart’s low-paid workers or filling thousands of buses to attend the Million Worker March. And look what it got them: nothing. This shows that having a lot of resources isn’t a guarantee for success if your political program is not independent of the bosses.

The unions are very important in winning economic concessions for the workers. But they are politically limited in challenging the entire system. A working-class party, on the other hand, is composed of class-conscious, dedicated people who agree on a common ideology with a program and organizational apparatus to carry out day-to-day tasks and initiatives.

Two parties of capitalist reaction

The Republican and Democratic parties are reactionary capitalist parties that have been around for over 150 years. Since their inception, their shared ideology has been to institutionalize racism and all forms of repression and oppression under the guise of being a model for so-called democracy.

Slavery, the genocidal extermination of Indigenous peoples, the land theft of Mexico and the exploitation of Chinese railroad wage laborers characterized the earlier period of capitalist growth before the epoch of imperialist expansion. The capitalist classes and the parties that represent their interests could not have carried out these despicable acts if they did not have an ideology to “justify” their

crimes and indoctrinate the vast masses of the people in the United States.

Despite having varied social bases, these parties have historically been the head and tail of the same coin—parties that represent capitalist expansion.

All the various capitalist administrations that have been in the White House have projected an image of representing the interests of the workers and oppressed people. This is just an illusion.

People’s movements, be they organized mass struggles or spontaneous rebellions, forced capitalist governments of both parties to the bargaining table, just as striking unions force the bosses to negotiate contracts.

Role of working-class party

It’s important for a working-class party to be involved in and help lead mass struggles, whether it is in the name of a coalition, a mass unit or its own name.

Every struggle should be viewed as a pre-revolutionary act of preparation for the great class battles to come. In order to realize our vision of a society based on meeting human needs—that is, socialism and communism—it will take a higher form of organization and a program based on revolutionary Marxist ideology to help lead the working class.

Could profound revolutions have taken place in the Soviet Union, Cuba, Vietnam, North Korea, China or elsewhere if they



Monica Moorehead

were not guided by a party with a working-class ideology, program and organization? The answer is no.

A party must be bold and tenacious in its tactics to help forward the struggle for national and class liberation—especially in times of great political crisis. Workers World Party, in the midst of the “Anybody but Bush” phenomenon, played a central role in organizing the main protest against the Democratic National Convention in Boston this past July when other parties were paralyzed.

When the AFL-CIO leadership did everything possible to undermine the historic Million Worker March, our Party helped to reach out to anti-war forces to support the rally.

In addition, our Party organized an election campaign in our own name to expose both Bush and Kerry and to speak in the name of socialism. So if you have been looking for a multinational party that has a Marxist world outlook and believes in the revolutionary potential of the multinational working class, you’ve come to the right place. □

Build a youth organization, build FIST

Excerpts from a talk by Julie Fry at the Nov. 13-14 National Fightback Conference.

Now that the presidential election is over, there is blame being thrown around at people who supposedly are responsible for the defeat of John Kerry. The worst of it is targeted toward the lesbian and gay community for daring to assert their fundamental right to equality during a capitalist election cycle—but there is also much head shaking and finger pointing at the youth of this country, who supposedly did not turn out in sufficient numbers on election day to ensure a Kerry victory.

We are being called apathetic, stupid, selfish. But what have we in the movement learned about youths during this last election cycle?

For one thing, we know that there were tens of thousands of young people in the streets this past summer, demonstrating against both the Republican and Democratic conventions.

Everyone here knows how strong the Anybody But Bush tendency has been over the last year or so—how it pulled so many thousands of progressives and activists out of the streets and convinced them that getting Bush out was more important than stopping the war, fighting for workers’ rights, fighting the oppression of the lesbian, gay, bi, trans community. But among those who rejected this so-called logic, among those who stayed in the streets and rejected both of the ruling class parties’ offerings, a large proportion were youth.

And this fact gives us a lot to be hopeful for. Consider that youths today have very little or no living memory of a time when the Soviet Union existed or when any of the great socialist revolutions took place just a generation or two ago, revolutions that

gave hope, inspiration, and guidance to the youths of that period. Consider that almost all youths today are taught that the fall of many of the largest socialist countries means that socialism is impossible—that it is at best naïve and at worst evil and wrong.

With the exception of a few wonderful examples provided by countries like socialist Cuba, young people today have little to look to in the way of alternatives to capitalism. Worse still, they are taught that capitalism is some sort of natural, indestructible process and that any attempts to change it are futile.

And yet we have seen a large, sustained youth movement now over several years. It is a movement that took on capitalist globalization, first through a struggle against sweatshops and then through open anti-capitalist battles in places like Seattle, Washington, D.C., Quebec, Philadelphia and many more.

This movement has given strength to the struggles against the prison-industrial complex through its strong solidarity with Mumia Abu Jamal, its anti-police-brutality initiatives like the Million Youth March, and through organizations like FIERCE, which is a lesbian/gay/bi/trans youth organization that has initiated several strong, militant campaigns against police attacks on LGBT youths in Greenwich Village here in New York.

Youth have fought and won the struggle against eliminating affirmative action in education through years of organizing and demonstrating. They have mobilized by the hundreds of thousands in the past few years to stop the war on Iraq. More and more, they are showing their solidarity with the Palestinian people.

One of the most significant things about all these struggles is that large sectors of the youths that take part in them are not



Julie Fry

just fighting for these concrete demands, as important as they are. They are fighting against the capitalist system as a whole. And they articulate this clearly.

So how can we move the struggle forward—the youth struggle in particular, which in some ways is already very vibrant and strong? The younger members of this party have already partially answered this question by creating a youth organization—Fight Imperialism, Stand Together or FIST—and we are very excited about it.

The purpose of FIST is to unite with young people in their existing struggles, assembling a group of dedicated youth organizers who will work to make the movement grow bigger and stronger. Second, we can use the party’s strong independent, anti-capitalist, anti-imperialist politics to push the movement forward—to unite youths with workers as with the Million Worker March, to build strong anti-racist solidarity in the youth struggle, and to combine the brave and militant tactics of youth activists with brave and militant politics as well.

FIST is the way to bring the strong politics and experience of our Party directly into the youth struggle. Build FIST! Build a workers’ world! □

Long live Palestine!

The death of Palestinian leader Yasir Arafat marks the beginning of a new stage in the struggle of a heroic occupied people who have faced incredible odds. The strategists for U.S. imperialism, along with Ariel Sharon and the client state of Israel, are doing everything they can to divide the Palestinian movement and frustrate its long struggle for national self-determination.

Progressives everywhere have a duty to defend the right of the Palestinians to choose their own leaders and conduct their struggle in whatever way they deem necessary. In that spirit, Workers World Party sent the following message of solidarity to the Palestine Liberation Organization on hearing news of Arafat's death:

"The National Committee of Workers World Party extends our heartfelt condolences to the Palestine Liberation Organization and the entire Palestinian nation on the death of Yasir Arafat, President of the Palestinian Authority, President of the Executive Committee of the Palestine Liberation Organization, and for more than four decades the leader and symbol of the Palestinian people's struggle for self-determination and national sovereignty.

"In all his years at the helm of the Palestinian struggle, years during which he faced hardship, siege, assassination attempts, unending efforts to silence him, President Arafat never wavered in his devotion to the cause. He showed great courage. All the world recognized

him as the personification of the Palestinians' determination to never surrender their rights as a people, no matter how mighty the force arrayed against them.

"That force—U.S. imperialism, via its proxy, the Israeli settler state, which the United States arms, finances, and sponsors—has waged a relentless war to defeat the Palestinians, to isolate them, and to drive a wedge between them and the other oppressed peoples of the Middle East and the world. All in the effort, as with the U.S. war on Iraq, to gain complete control of the region for the profits of Big Oil.

"That will never happen. Nothing can stop the Palestinian struggle. For nothing can crush the Palestinian spirit. Not occupation, not massacre, not racist vilification, not demolitions, not walls, checkpoints, curfews, mass arrests. There may be many organizations, many voices among the Palestinian people, but Palestine is a nation united. A nation whose will is unbendable. This is a nation that will struggle until victory—and this above all is what President Yasir Arafat's long service signified to all the world.

"Now, on the sad occasion of his death, and on behalf of every member of Workers World Party, we reaffirm our own determination to carry on our work in unwavering solidarity with the heroic Palestinian nation. We stand with you in the struggle, today and every day.

"Long live the PLO!
Long live Palestine!" □

Bloody quagmire

Continued from page 1

U.S. generals claimed that most of Falluja's 300,000 residents had left, and boasted they would kill few civilians. But at least 50,000 remained.

Humanitarian disaster

Humanitarian agencies, speaking to the few independent news reporters left in Iraq, gave a different assessment. "The Iraqi Red Crescent Society, which is supported by the Red Cross and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), has called the situation in Falluja a 'big disaster.'" (IPS reporter Dahr Jamail at dahrjamailliraq.com)

"Speaking on condition of anonymity for fear of U.S. military reprisal, a high-ranking official with the Red Cross in Baghdad told IPS that 'at least 800 civilians' have been killed in Falluja so far."

"Muna Salim, who managed to flee the city with her sister after the rest of their family was killed by U.S. bombs, said Falluja had turned from a battlefield to a ghost town in recent days," reports Jamail.

"Most families stayed inside their houses all the time," she said after reaching Baghdad. "We were always very hungry because we didn't want to eat our food or drink all of the water. We never knew if we would be able to get more, so we tried to be careful." She could not bring herself to talk of the killings.

"The Iraqi Red Crescent has several teams of relief workers and doctors, and truckloads of food waiting for the authorization from the U.S.-backed interim government and the U.S. military, but they have not been allowed in."

Sara Khorshid writes on IslamOnline.net:

"Those in Baghdad might be better off than Fallujans still locked inside their hometown, which is currently being razed to the ground by the U.S. Army. Everything is being wiped out. 'The residential areas, our houses, they are all destroyed. They bombed the hospital, the clinics, the doctors, the infrastructure, everything,' Abu Mohammed said.

"What Zarqawi? Where is Al-Zarqawi? Is he a ghost?" asks Umm Usama. "There is no Zarqawi in Falluja, no Arab fighters as they claim." In the name of Al-Zarqawi 1,200 people have been killed in Falluja according to the American military, which describes the victims as 'insurgents' and 'guerrillas.' Eyewitnesses say the dead are civilian residents.

"[Given this tragic situation], whoever believes that America has invaded and occupied Iraq to bring democracy and freedom is either stupid or in cooperation with the U.S. against the Iraqis," says Monther Yaakoub, another Fallujan in Baghdad.

"I am obliged to fulfill my promise to the Fallujans I spoke with and get their calls across through this article: Abu Mohammed calls upon the Western media to cover the horrific situation they are living in. Umm Waddah calls upon the Arabs, who view the Iraqi tragedy on Arab TVs, to act and help their brothers and sisters in Iraq. And Umm Usama asks us to pray for Falluja, and for Iraq."

Reports from the resistance itself can be found at freearabvoice.org. But even in the corporate media, one could find reports that the resistance had opened up armed struggles in a dozen cities in what is called the "Sunni Triangle"—although it is not exclusively Sunni, nor is it shaped like a triangle.

The resistance overran nine police stations in Mosul, a city of nearly 2 million people north of Baghdad. Oil wells and pipelines have been set on fire in at least five places.

Political impact

Demonstrations of thousands have already taken place in Arab countries in solidarity with Falluja. Perhaps even more important was the response in Iraq itself.

"On the fourth day of the ground attack on Falluja, last Friday [Nov. 12]," writes Haifa Zangana in the British Guardian Nov. 17, "joint Shia-Sunni prayers were held in the four mosques in Baghdad and were massively well attended. Inter-communal prayers were the hallmark of the 1920 revolution."

According to a Xinhua report on Nov. 17, some 47 Iraqi political and religious parties have decided to boycott the general elections engineered by Washington for January 2005. The reason was "the U.S.-led assaults in cities like Najaf, Karbala, Samarra, Sadr City, Adhmiya, and especially the genocide crimes in Falluja," said the statement.

Mainly Sunni factions led by the Muslim Clerics Association signed the statement, but at least eight Shiite groups and one Christian party were also among them, according to Xinhua.

Another place where Falluja will have an important political impact is in the United States and among U.S. troops. Already the New York Times reported on Nov. 16 that the Army had sent notices to more than 4,000 former soldiers ordering them to return to active duty. More than 1,800 have already requested exemptions or delays. Of about 2,500 scheduled to arrive on military bases for training by Nov. 7, some 733 failed to show—29 percent.

Within the U.S., there have been demonstrations in response to the Falluja war crimes in Baltimore, Boston, New York, Philadelphia, Chicago, San Diego, San Francisco, Boulder, Colo., Washington, D.C., Buffalo, N.Y., and other cities.

Perhaps the closest historical example for Falluja is Hue. After all, it was Vietnamese resistance organizer and communist leader Ho Chi Minh who said the Vietnamese were ready to fight for decades, even generations, if necessary.

The New York Times gave a hint of this when its reporter in Mosul wrote about the children at one playground there. "Amin Muhammad, 10, and his friends raced around with plastic guns. 'We divide ourselves into two teams,' he said. 'The mujahedeen versus the U.S. forces.' And in their battles, he said, the mujahedeen always win." □

A Teach-In on the case of



The Cuban Five

Gerardo Hernández Nordelo ♦ Antonio Guerrero Rodríguez

Ramón Labañino Salazar ♦ Fernando González Llort ♦ René González Sehwerert

Political Prisoners held unjustly in the U.S.

Imprisoned for trying to stop ultra-right groups in Florida from carrying out terrorist actions against the Cuban people.

Saturday, Nov. 20

10 am - 4 pm

John Jay College

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Subways: A/B/C/D to 59th/Columbus Circle; L9 to 59th or 69th

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- The legal battle to overturn the sentences
- Visa and visitation rights campaign for the families
- Media and public relations
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Speakers:

- Linda Backie, (human rights and criminal defense lawyer)
- Rev. Luis Barrios (Associate Professor and Anglican priest)
- Ramsey Clark (former Attorney General)
- Rev. Lucius Walker (IFCO/Pastor for Peace)



"We have been apart six years, denied the right to have a family, and to share our private thoughts with a visit. The most important thing for us is family."

— Adriana Pérez, denied a visa five times to visit her husband, Gerardo

Sponsors:

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Free the Cuban Five!

PUERTO RICO

Solidarity caravan boosts strikers

By Arturo Pérez-Saad

Under torrential rains, the Puerto Rican Central of Workers (CPT), Teamsters Union (UT), Authentic Movement of Organized Unions (MASO) and Broad Front of Truck Drivers (FAC) made an historic six-and-a-half-hour caravan from the town of Cataño to Hato Rey Nov. 14 in solidarity with a national strike of the Genuine Independent Union (UIA). The action was reported in the daily newspaper *El Nuevo Día* and a news release from the CPT.

The caravan was just one of many solidarity actions that have taken place since the strike began Oct. 4.

The government-run Irrigation and Aqueducts Authority (AAA), headquartered in Hato Rey, is attempting to strip the UIA workers of their benefits, including health care. AAA made the changes without consulting the union.

The colonial Puerto Rican government has used the mainstream media to vilify UIA leaders. San Juan is colluding with Washington in using the USA Patriot Act to justify the arrest and incarceration of strike leaders.

On Nov. 3 the FBI surrounded and invaded the homes of four union officials. UIA President Hector René Lugo said that they could “arrest me and even kill me, but we will not end the strike until you negotiate with the workers.”



Puerto Rican trade unionists rally in front of their office.

In a telephone interview, UIA's Elba García said that the AAA is trying to break the union because, along with health care, “we have benefits that other [Puerto Rican workers] do not have.” These include “lawyer services, a travel agency, scholarships to the children of UIA workers and two vacation destinations for workers to use.”

El Nuevo Día reported Nov. 11 that a federal investigation into the repeal of the health-care plan and its connection to Ondeo, a firm working on plans to privatize AAA, has been launched. But at the rally in Hato Rey, UIA President

Lugo warned workers not to expect much, saying the government “does not want to investigate the contract with Ondeo.”

In front of the AAA's headquarters caravanners chanted in support of Lugo, “iRene, tranquilo, the UIA está contigo!”—“Rene, don't worry, the UIA is with you!”

Lugo told the rally that public support for the strike has not diminished despite the media and government's daily diatribes against the union and threats to arrest picketers, supporters and UIA leaders. □

By Mumia Abu-Jamal from death row

Crusades new and old

Shortly after 9/11, U.S. President George W. Bush initially announced the beginning of a “crusade” against the forces that unleashed Sept. 11. Under criticism from his advisers, who said that the term evoked outrage in much of the Arab world, he relented, and the term was heard no more.

While the word “crusade” may no longer be used in presidential speech, there can really be little doubt that it is precisely the concept of “crusade” that actuates many of the actions of the U.S. government vis-a-vis the countries of the Middle East. Bush has spoken often of “remaking the face of the region.”

There is a reason why Arab countries and communities reacted with outrage and horror at the mere mention of the crusades; Arabs and Europeans view that past differently, because their respective cultures were in conflict then. The Europeans saw the Crusades as a noble assignment from the popes to “liberate” Jerusalem from the hands of the “infidels,” the Muslim Arabs and Moors. The Arabs saw the era as one of unrelenting bloodshed and cruelty at the hands of the Christians, and saw the dark days of European colonialism as an echo of that earlier period.

For many Americans, the notion of “crusades,” while not as loaded as either, evokes bright, shiny images of knights with crosses on their shields, defending the poor and the weak.

Behind the various images of the crusades, however, lies its awful and bloody history, which British historian Edward Gibbon, in his classic “The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire” [Abridged], does not hesitate to relate. He is not one who recites the glories of these mass military campaigns. It... “[Appear[s] to me,” Gibbons writes, that these 200 years of “holy wars,” “have checked rather than forwarded the maturity of Europe” (691). Gibbons writes:

“The lives and labors of millions, which were buried in the East, would have been more profitably employed in the improvement of their native country: the accumulated stock of industry and wealth would have overflowed in navigation and trade; and the Latins would have been enriched and enlightened by a pure and friendly correspondence with the climates of the East.” [691]

The Crusades were not absolutely evil, he argues, in that they did away with another evil: the crusades unleashed an untold number of Europeans, who were tied to the soil as serfs. These people were thrown into the teeming armies of the crusades, and the costs of such ventures “dissipated” the estates of the barons, allowing the poor to agitate for some semblance of freedom, and some social standing free of the rapacious nobility.

Gibbons reminds us that wars begin for many, various reasons; yet few of us can see their end. Surely, the nobles of church and state, who alone bore the stamp of “citizen” or “men,” before the 200 years of war, could not foresee their dissipation, and loss of power and prestige afterwards. They saw only the promise of vast wealth, and the misty inheritances of martial glory.

Yet, as ever, there are lessons in history. “War,” the saying goes, “is the sport of kings.” It is also, often, an engine of societal change, that transforms the nations that wage war, as often as the nations that are warred against. The first crusades weakened rather than strengthened Europe, but this was lost to those ruling and wealthy classes, who could not see past their own avarice.

We are told that these wars too will, in the crippled words of Bush, “last for generations.”

None of us can see the beginning of an end. But if history teaches us anything, it is that change is coming.

It will change them; but assuredly, it will change us, as well. □



Are you ready to fight?

Continued from page 7

fightback isn't just some desire that we have. It's a necessity. It's our responsibility. We must push this movement forward to defend every gain, and win more.

We must stand in solidarity and continually support the resistance of the Palestinians, of the Haitians, of the Iraqis, the Colombians, the Venezuelans, and any people standing up defiantly to U.S. imperialism. We must fight for an end to oppression at home.

And we have an opportunity, I believe. I think that these elections proved to many that there is no choice between Democratic and Republican—and essentially no choice for working people under capitalism. And I think folks are looking for something differ-

ent, almost desperately. And in fact, I saw that when I was on the campaign trail with John Parker and Teresa Gutierrez.

Because we have a solution. We have a revolutionary outlook, and it's an objective and optimistic one. We know that this system cannot continue. It's not built to last.

And the frenzy with which the ruling class is waging its wars on the people of the United States and the world, and the widespread repression of social movements along with it, shows that they're worried about it too.

Workers World Party is confident that socialism is the eventual solution. And we'd like to share that outlook with you this weekend.

So we want to take this weekend to

take stock of where we're at, and where we're going. We want to learn from each other, to be angered, refreshed, inspired and energized to carry forward this struggle to the best of our ability. We want to hear the thoughts and ideas of each and every one of you this weekend.

We want to reach out to folks, some who for the first time are seeing capitalism fall apart at the seams, with our class continually having to bear the burden for its inadequacies and contradictions. We want to forge unity with all progressive forces to take this struggle to victory.

The mandate this year wasn't to the Bush administration. It was to us. And we accept.

So, are you ready to fight? □

HAITI A SLAVE REVOLUTION 200 years after 1804

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

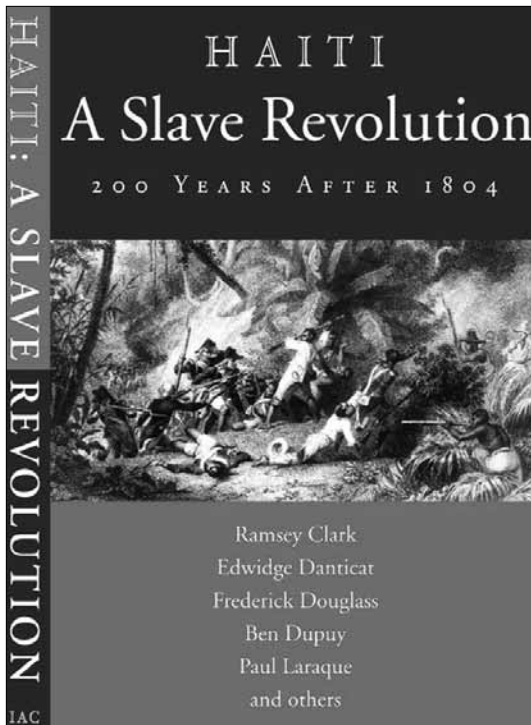
Haiti's history has been turbulent, but not for the reasons given by mainstream historians. Racism underlies their charges that the first Black Republic lacks “democratic traditions and is prone to violence.”

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

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Wall Street celebra victoria de Bush mientras

La deuda nacional aumenta y los salarios bajan

Por Milt Neidenberg

Hay alegría en Wall Street—por el momento...

Con la reelección de George W. Bush los super-ricos, ya inundados en mares de riquezas, están celebrando las ganancias anticipadas de otra serie de recortes de impuestos y otros beneficios. Se están preparando para privatizar el seguro social, creando cuentas de inversión para hacer invertir en las bolsas capitalistas a la población nacida en las décadas después de la Segunda Guerra Mundial. Las bolsas de valores subieron violentamente después de las elecciones mientras los inversionistas disfrutaban una semana de ganancias. El Promedio Industrial Dow Jones subió 360,07 puntos. También aumentaron los índices Standard & Poor's 500 y NASDAQ, la bolsa electrónica.

El petróleo, flotando alrededor de \$50 el barril, es, junto a los mercados de mercancías, un paraíso para los especuladores. Los ricos están gastando cientos de billones (mil millones) de dólares en fondos especiales no controlados para evitar las fluctuaciones en precios. Están apostando a todo indiscriminadamente para obtener ganancias rápidas.

Los banqueros y los patrones están gozando por un reporte del Departamento del Trabajo que informó que 337.000 trabajadores se han incorporado a las filas de empleados, avivando la alegría de que la economía está mejorando rápidamente. Sin embargo, más de 72.000 de estos empleos fueron el resultado directo de la necesidad de reconstrucción después de los tornados y huracanes. De todos modos, una ola de optimismo ha rodeado al club dorado.

¿Una euforia de poca duración?

Según la Agencia de Presupuesto del Congreso, Bush comenzó su primer período con la anticipación de un superávit en el tesoro nacional de \$5,6 trillones (millón millones). Ahora comienza su segundo término con un déficit de por lo menos \$2,3 trillones.

Si el Congreso, ahora con mayoría republicana, aprueba los planes de Bush de recortar impuestos, la necesidad de pedir préstamos va a subir dramáticamente al igual que las tasas de interés.

¿Cuánto tiempo puede durar esto? Nadie entre los analistas expertos de Wall Street ni entre los economistas burgueses sabe.

Pero sí saben que cada vez más los prestamistas son los bancos nacionales asiáticos, que tienen cantidades enormes de reservas en dólares de la deuda del Tesoro Nacional de los Estados Unidos. En cualquier momento ellos pueden rehusar préstamos lo cual desencadenaría una crisis económica de proporciones monumentales.

China y Japón ya han comenzado a retraerse. El Departamento del Tesoro reportó que durante el mes de agosto, inversionistas privados en el exterior vendieron \$4,4 billones más en bonos y

notas del Tesoro Nacional que lo que compraron.

Según dijo Stephen S. Roach, economista en jefe del banco de inversiones Morgan Stanley en el Washington Post del 19 de octubre: "China e India no se comprometen a comprar dólares abiertamente. Este cambio de operación es negativo para el dólar y las tasas reales de interés".

Estos prestamistas van a demandar una tasa de interés más alta por su riesgo, y porque un dólar más barato reduce el valor de sus inversiones. Wall Street y la América corporativa prefieren un dólar más barato, lo cual hace más competitivo los productos y servicios de los Estados Unidos en los mercados mundiales.

Según Wall Street, la Junta de la Reserva Federal seguramente va a subir la tasa de interés a corto plazo cuando se reúna el 10 de febrero. Se espera que suba de 1,75 a un 2 por ciento. El presidente de la Junta Federal Alan Greenspan intentará explicar que la subida de las tasas de interés puede crear una economía fuerte y vibrante al estimular la actividad económica y mantener la inflación baja y estable. Lo cual no es cierto.

Al subir las tasas de interés se hará más costoso el obtener préstamos y a la vez, restringirá a los consumidores (trabajadores) de comprar, causando grandes superabundancias en el mercado. Las deudas personales están aumentando

mientras disminuyen los ingresos a la vez que los precios de bienes y servicios crecen. Los gastos en artículos de consumo son imprescindibles para el crecimiento de la economía. Estos representan dos terceras partes del producto bruto nacional —el valor de todos los bienes y servicios.

Otros problemas enormes siguen plagando la economía. La guerra para colonizar a Irak va por mal camino. Hay miedo de que el precio del petróleo siga alto. El balance comercial está persistentemente desfavorable. El mercado de empleos sigue flojo y el dólar sigue barato. La capacidad industrial sigue desnivelada en sólo 75 por ciento de capacidad mientras que la productividad disminuye. Los Estados Unidos siguen perdiendo terreno en el porcentaje de bienes y servicios intercambiado en el mercado mundial. China, India y Latinoamérica siguen expandiendo sus economías al encontrar socios comerciales compatibles.

El déficit presupuestario de los EEUU aumentó a un nivel récord de \$412 billones en el año fiscal que terminó el 30 de septiembre. Billones de dólares se gastaron en el complejo militar-industrial en el fallido intento de romper la resistencia heroica del pueblo iraquí. Se han prometido aún más fondos por los EEUU planear intensificar la muerte y destrucción en el área cercada a Faluya. Se ha profundizado la crisis.

No hay manera de escapar como no sea

retirar las tropas y terminar la ocupación.

La guerra doméstica sigue

La Agencia de Estadísticas Laborales reporta que los salarios crecieron sólo en un 2,4 por ciento durante el año pasado. Este es el nivel más bajo en un año —y queda detrás del nivel de inflación.

La deuda familiar ha alcanzado el nivel astronómico de \$9,7 trillones —mayormente de hipotecas, cuentas de hospital, tarjetas de crédito, financiamiento de carros y otro montón de deudas. Es más de 10 % que el año pasado. Cada vez más trabajador@s descubren que es imposible pagar sus deudas enormes mientras pagan los gastos cotidianos de comida, ropa, vivienda y gastos médicos.

El movimiento sindical está sufriendo más despidos, aumento de la velocidad de producción y recortes en los pagos de jubilación y seguro médico. La tasa de desempleo es de un 5,5 por ciento. Más de un 23 por ciento de los desempleados han estado sin trabajo por casi un año.

El desempleo entre l@s african@ american@s es oficialmente de un 11%. La cifra de adolescentes sin empleo subió a un 19%. El número de trabajadores temporales aumentó en 48.000, el incremento más grande desde febrero de 2001.

El promedio de la semana trabajada es solamente de 33,8 horas. Este es el promedio más bajo de los últimos cuatro años.

La represión engendra resistencia. L@s miembr@s de la AFL-CIO, que trabajaron duramente para sacar el voto a favor de John Kerry, tienen que tomar una vía independiente hacia la resistencia y romper con el Partido Demócrata. Los 55 millones de votos, concentrados en los centros urbanos y entre mujeres y gente de nacionalidades oprimidas, que contribuyeron a la campaña "cualquiera menos Bush" pueden representar una amenaza potencial a la clase dominante de millonarios abiertamente derechista y racista. Pero existe una crisis de liderazgo. Es crítico que l@s activistas se distancien de la fracasada política de sus líderes, que apoyaron a Kerry y al Partido Demócrata con enormes cantidades de dinero y recursos.

El movimiento laboral se encuentra en una encrucijada crítica. Tiene que seguir el ejemplo del grupo de líderes sindicales negr@s que tuvieron la visión de comenzar a forjar un movimiento de la clase trabajadora independiente en el medio de la campaña frenética electoral de Kerry y Bush. Ell@s organizaron la marcha del 17 de octubre, Marcha de un Millón de Trabajador@s en Washington, D.C., planteando las cuestiones más relevantes para l@s trabajador@s y l@s oprimid@s.

Bajo las condiciones más difíciles, ell@s vincularon esas cuestiones con la oposición a la guerra contra Irak que está desviando billones de dólares de los servicios sociales básicos que desesperadamente se necesitan. La Marcha de Un Millón de Trabajador@s fue el primer paso para hacer realidad un movimiento independiente de trabajador@s y oprimid@s. □

