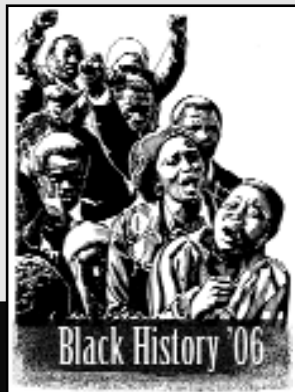


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WW PHOTO: G. DUNKEL

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A 90 year-old ex-slave miner in W.Va. in 1921.

PHOTO: JAMES T. LAING



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Ford bosses to cut 30,000 jobs

But there's still time to fight back

By Fred Goldstein

The Ford Motor Co. launched its long-threatened assault on the workers on Jan. 22 with the announcement of plans to lay off 25,000 to 30,000 auto workers and shutter 14 plants. It also intends to lay off 4,000 white-collar staff.

Seven assembly and parts plants are to be closed by 2008 and the rest by 2012. The company aims to reduce its workforce in North America by 28 percent to stop losses on its operations in the U.S. and Canada. Ford's layoff announcements come in the wake of a similar announcement by General Motors in December of 30,000 layoffs and the shutdown of nine plants.

Scheduled for the ax are Ford assembly plants in Hazelwood, Mo., outside St. Louis; Wixom, Mich., outside Detroit; and Hapeville, Ga., outside Atlanta. It also will close the transmission plant in Batavia, Ohio, outside Cincinnati; shut down Windsor Casting in Ontario and shut down a shift at St. Thomas, also in Ontario. It has also been rumored that plants in St. Paul, Minn., and Cuautitlan, Mexico, are on the chopping block.

The plants named cover less than 10,000 of the intended 30,000 layoffs, leaving workers all over the continent worrying over whether they will have a job by 2008. This cruel tactic may partly be a result of the fact that Ford is rushing to appease Wall Street investors by announcing a restructuring before it has been figured out. But, more importantly, it is also calculated to sow fear and competition among workers—to set plant against plant,

each hoping theirs will be spared. And it is meant to minimize the prospects of a company-wide rebellion.

Billionaire Ford calls for 'sacrifice'

William Clay Ford, grandson of the company's infamous founder, Henry Ford, had the audacity to tell the workers that "Today, we declare the resurgence of the Ford Motor Company.... We call our plan The Way Forward ... it's a strategy that calls for sacrifice at all levels of the company." Ford is not making much of a sacrifice. In addition to his inherited billions, he "earned" \$22 million last year in salary and cashed-in stock options. He made \$5 million the year before and left \$15 million in options unexercised.

The company is pleading that it has to turn its profit picture around. But the fact is that Ford made \$3.5 billion in profit in 2004 and \$2 billion in 2005. The company has \$25 billion in cash on hand. In fact, Ford's profits jumped in the fourth quarter of 2005, pushing its stock price up. Despite reporting losses in North America, it has enough money to keep the workers on indefinitely and still make a profit on world-wide operations in the present global market.

Ford employs 324,000 workers worldwide, 122,000 of them in North America. Of these, 88,000 are in the U.S. at 18 assembly plants, eight stamping plants and 17 powertrain and casting plants. Its market share of the more than 16 million units sold in

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Evo Morales (waving to crowd) officially became the first Indigenous president on Jan. 22.

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IN NEW ORLEANS

The battle of right to return

By Larry Hales and LeiLani Dowell

Corporate cronies led by real estate executive and George Bush fundraiser Joseph Canizaro continue to push their gentrification plans for the city of New Orleans in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina.

Under the euphemistically titled "Bring New Orleans Back Commission," Canizaro along with New Orleans mayor Ray Nagin proposed a plan on Jan. 11 that would halt rebuilding in the most devastated areas of New Orleans for four months, after which development decisions would be made based on an assessment of "critical mass" i.e., if enough people are planning to return and rebuild. If it is determined that such critical mass is not reached, the land would be seized and turned into wetlands.

Plans like this by the filthy rich, which attempts to encourage relocation through a halt in rebuilding, and then completely ignore the resources necessary for evacuees of New Orleans to return, consistently underestimate the intelligence and resolve of Katrina survivors.

Harvey Bender, a resident of the Lower Ninth Ward, told the packed audience at the Jan. 11 meeting, "I don't know you but Mr. Canizaro, I hate you. You've been in the background scheming to take our land." Another resident, Caroline Parker, said, "I don't think it's right that you take our properties. Over my dead body. I didn't die with Katrina." (blackcommentator.com)

Before Hurricane Katrina hit, the Lower Ninth Ward in particular was an impoverished area in a city where 27 percent of people lived below the poverty line, most of them Black. Louisiana itself has one of the lowest per-capita incomes in the country, ranking 42nd.

After the hurricane, the local ruling class salivated, basking in the devastation of Hurricane Katrina and the criminal neglect of local, state and federal officials.

Millions around the world saw the effects of classism and racism, as the city displayed its lack of planning for the thousands who had to face the brunt of the storm. The capitalist media showed not only indifference, but aired reports of chaos that could not be substantiated. These racist reports were found to be untrue as no evidence of mass murder or rape ever surfaced. What footage does exist shows great heroism on the part of New Orleanians.

The local ruling class in New Orleans revealed their plans shortly after the devastating hurricane. The mainly

white ruling elite, many of whom brought in security firms to guard their property, envision a new New Orleans. "Those who want to see this city rebuilt want to see it done in a completely different way: demographically, geographically and politically," said James Reiss, one of the rich, who is the chair of the Regional Transportation Authority.

Reiss further points out, "I'm not just speaking for myself here. The way we've been living is not going to happen again, or we're out."

Many find it unconscionable that local, state and federal authorities would allow the rebuilding of New Orleans to exclude the inhabitants that made up the majority of the city and gave rise to the culture that New Orleans is known for. It is not that anyone is fooled and doesn't see the criminal neglect, or doesn't recognize the effects of racism and class. However, many find it hard to believe that after the world was awakened to the truth of life in North American society, that it would be a hard task to continue to perpetrate such a crime in New Orleans.

But as hurricane Katrina revealed the anarchy that exists under capitalism, where there is scant if any social planning, the plans being laid for New Orleans reveal the disdain of the U.S. ruling class for workers and people of color and how cut-throat the ruling class is. Plans are laid, but many New Orleanians can't even return home. Utility services have been cut or never restored, rents are being jacked up and jobs in the area are not being offered to local inhabitants. The construction firms are super-exploiting immigrant labor, putting them in dangerous conditions at little pay and the local populous is being denied jobs.

Officials at every level would like to steal the peoples' land and develop a playground for the rich. They want to use the culture of New Orleans as a draw, a culture forged through struggle, most notably from the Black inhabitants who made up nearly 70 percent of the population of the city. When tourists visited the city—whether from the United States or as far away as Japan—many came for the culture, of which Black-created jazz was a major part.

Yet with each passing day, resistance increases. Mtangulizi Sanyika of the African American Leadership Project told the Black Commentator, "Struggle on the ground has intensified enormously. A number of groups are in motion.... Increasing numbers of people are coming back into the city. You can feel the political rhythm."



Millions More Movement D.C. rally Oct. 15.

WW PHOTO: MONICA MOOREHEAD

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WW CALENDAR

LOS ANGELES

Fri., Feb. 3
Eyewitness report from World Social Forum in Venezuela. Hear John Parker. 7:30 p.m. At 5274 W. Pico Blvd. (btwn LaBrea & Fairfax), Suite 203. For info phone (323) 936-7266.

Sat., Feb. 11
Black History Month Forum: Hear Larry Holmes, co-coordinator: Troops Out Now Coalition and secretariat member: Workers World Party. Call for time and location phone (323) 936-1416.

NEW YORK

Fri., Jan. 27
Workers World Party Forum. West Africa, the World Social Forum and the Bamako Appeal. Speaker: John Catalinotto, a WW managing editor, just returned from attended the 'Polycentric' World Social Forum session held in Bamako, Mali. 7 p.m.

(Dinner at 6:30)
At 55 W. 17 St., 5th Fl.,
Manhattan. For info phone
(212) 627-2994.

Sat., Jan. 28
Studying Marxism for today's struggles. "U.S. imperialism's stake in the Middle East." Instructor: Sara Flounders is a co-director of the International Action Center and a co-editor of several books on Iraq. 3-5 p.m. At 55 W. 17 St., 5th Fl., Manhattan. For info phone (212) 627-2994.

Sat., Feb. 4
Studying Marxism for today's struggles. "What is Materialist Dialectics. Part 2." Taught by Hillel Cohen. (You can attend Part 2 without having attended Part 1.) Cohen is the author of "Science and Change: An Introduction to dialectical materialism." 3-5 p.m. At 55 W. 17 St., 5th Fl., Manhattan. For info phone (212) 627-2994.

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BLACK HISTORY MONTH

A revolutionary perspective

Pat Chin, a Workers World Party leader, passed away from cancer on May 16, 2005. Jamaican-born, Chin traveled numerous times to Haiti in solidarity with the people's struggle for liberation there. As a contributing editor for Workers World, Chin wrote many times on Haitian and other Caribbean developments. In tribute to her memory, the WW editorial staff is reprinting excerpts from remarks made by Chin at a WWP Black History Month forum held on Feb. 14, 2002.



aspect of racist ideology had been invented, in fact, to justify the trans-Atlantic slave trade—the 400-year holocaust against African people that took an estimated 70 million lives.

Moreover, the selling of Black slaves, coupled with the additional riches wrung from their forced labor, helped to make the U.S. rich and powerful. The stock market was in fact invented in England so that the fabulous riches being sucked from the slave trade could be reinvested.

Capitalism continues to suppress or distort history—particularly of the people it oppresses and exploits. The profit system, then as now, must—of necessity for its continued existence—destroy our sense of self and that entails erasing our histories.

In 1976 Black History Week was expanded into “Black History Month” as part of the country’s bicentennial celebration—a country that, to this day, refuses to pay reparations for the tremendous damage caused by the slave trade, and that has sought to turn back the limited remedies of affirmative action under the guise of the absurd notion of “reverse racism.”

Black History Month has remained tremendously popular in the Black community. Each February there are thousands of programs nationwide that commemorate the gains, however limited, that the struggle has won.

But celebrating the history and struggle of Black people also exposes a painful reality. How much can we celebrate, for example, when we’re faced with an “endless

Pat Chin, fifth from left stands next to writer Walter Mosley, center. Chin was a founder of the Bedford-Stuyvesant Coalition for Peace. During Black History Month 2003 she helped organize forums featuring anti-war speakers such as Mosley.



war” that first targeted Afghanistan and now threatens to consume other oppressed people of color? How many of our own Black and Latin@ youths will die in these wars as cannon fodder for the rich, sent to fight people who look more like them?

How much can we celebrate when there’s a thousand percent increase in racial profiling, when unemployment is skyrocketing, when thousands kicked off welfare now face the blank wall of unbridled poverty with no social benefits? When millions remain without health insurance, decent shelter, education and food? When a disproportionate share of the effects of poverty fall on our communities?

Then there’s the attempt by big business to manipulate Black History Month, ever since it was introduced in conjunction with the bicentennial celebration. So now you see multinational giants like Coca-Cola, Mobile Oil and Exxon—who exploit us at home and super-exploit our sisters and brothers abroad—coming out in support of Black History Month.

Over the years we’ve seen hypocrites like Clinton, Bush and Giuliani issuing proclamations in support of the month—this, after they’ve slashed programs that has the effect of putting Black women and children out on the streets, and after they pave the way for the expansion of the

prison industrial complex which has a disproportionate share of Black people behind bars and on death row.

If we revolutionaries could adjust things, we would change the focus of February to Black History Month of struggle. Now it goes without saying that it’s good to study, reflect on and celebrate history. This is especially important to us who have faced the systematic, centuries-long attempt to destroy our history and culture.

But if we simply study without struggling to change the world, our history will be obliterated. “Power concedes nothing without a demand,” in the words of Frederick Douglass. “Without struggle there can be no change,” he so rightly said. This is most true at this particular time with imperialist wars raging abroad and the domestic assault on our civil rights to destroy our movement for social and economic justice.

If the ruling class truly wants to honor Black History Month why don’t they pass a bill in support of reparations; why don’t they free Mumia? In fact, why don’t they give all Black political prisoners amnesty—it’s not too late. □

BLACK COAL MINERS

A long legacy of struggle

By Stephen Millies

African Americans have been mining coal and fighting bosses for over 200 years. Slaves were working in coal mines around Richmond, Va. as early as 1760. During the Civil War, a thousand slaves dug coal for 22 companies in the “Richmond Basin.”

Black miners were expected to load four or five tons of coal. Slaves able to fill this quota were fed supper. Those who couldn’t were whipped.

Slavery in the mines didn’t end after the war in 1865. For decades prisoners convicted of “vagrancy” and “loitering” worked as virtual slaves for private outfits in Alabama, Georgia and Tennessee. From 1880 to 1904, 10 percent of Alabama’s state budget was paid by leasing prisoners to coal companies.

African Americans accounted from 83 percent to 90 percent of these slave miners in Alabama. Sixty-nine percent of Tennessee prisoners digging coal in 1891 were Black. Some poor whites were railroaded to jail too.

Conditions were horrendous in these convict mines. Nearly one out of ten prisoners died annually at the Tracy City, Tenn. mine operated by the Tennessee Coal and Iron Company (TCI).

TCI was bought by United States Steel in 1907. USS continued to operate TCI’s mines in Alabama for another 20 years. Reparations are owed by USS and the JPMorgan/Chase Bank whose financial ancestor set-up this steel Goliath as the first billion-dollar corporation in 1900.

Three hundred miners with guns freed prisoners at TCI’s Briceville, Tenn. facility on July 15, 1891. The following week 1,500 miners returned to free more prisoners. H.H. Schwartz of the Chattanooga Federation of Trades reported that “whites and Negroes are standing shoulder to shoulder” and armed with 840 rifles.

James Knox, an African American convicted of passing a \$30 bad check, was tortured to death by guards at Alabama’s Flat Top mine on Aug. 14, 1924 because he was unable to meet the mine’s daily ten-ton quota.

The uproar over this murder finally forced Alabama to shut down its slave

mines. On July 1, 1928, 499 Black prisoners singing the “Negro” spiritual, “Swing Low, Sweet Chariot”, turned in their lamps and picks for the last time.

Black labor summoned to the mines

By 1930 there were over 55,000 Black coal miners. That year African Americans accounted for 53 percent of Alabama’s coal diggers.

These Alabama miners went on strike in 1894, 1904 and 1908. Eleven thousand miners—75 percent of whom were Black—struck again from Sept. 7, 1920 to March 12, 1921. Among the Black leaders were J. F. Sorsby, United Mine Workers District 20 vice-president, and International organizers, William Prentice and George H. Edmunds.

Despite bold tactics that included dynamiting a Southern Railroad train carrying scab coal, the strike was crushed by the National Guard. At least 16 people were killed. But the UMW came back to organize these mines in the 1930s during the Great Depression when militant struggles were being carried out by labor.

Twenty-two thousand African Americans were employed in West Virginia’s mines in 1930. Black and white miners there fought side-by-side in the Paint Creek-Cabin Creek strike of 1913-14. The



PHOTO: NORTHERN WVA. COAL OPERATORS’ ASSN. Miner lighting a fuse in 1923.



PHOTO: JAMES T. LAING Miners’ children, 1932

Black union man known as “Few Clothes” Dan Chain — portrayed by James Earl Jones in the powerful John Sayles film, “Matewan”—became legendary for his courage.

The “mine wars” in Mingo and Logan counties from 1919 to 1921 produced the biggest armed confrontation in U.S. labor history. Logan County Sheriff Don Chaffin was paid \$32,700 a year (worth about \$400,000 today) by mine owners to keep out union organizers.

Following the assassination of the pro-union sheriff Sid Hatfield on Aug. 1, 1921, 8,000 armed miners, one quarter of whom were Black, marched on Logan County. While ten union members were killed at Blair Mountain, one hundred of Chaffin’s mercenaries were slain.

Army Gen. Billy Mitchell wanted to bomb the miners. Only the dispatch of 2,500 soldiers by President Warren G. Harding prevented the union’s victory.

The mechanization of mines has wiped out 400,000 union jobs since 1950. Black workers were targeted first for dismissal. Just a few thousand African Americans are working in mines today.

The 14 miners killed last month in West Virginia were white. Most of the people who drowned in New Orleans in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina were Black. Capitalist greed and the Bush administration are responsible for all of their deaths.

Sources: Black Coal Miners in America by Ronald L. Lewis (The University Press of Kentucky, 1987) and Coal, Class and Color, Blacks in Southern West Virginia, 1915-1932 by Joe William Trotter, Jr. (University of Illinois Press, 1990).

By Osborne P. Anderson, a Black revolutionary who was there. With an essay on ‘The Unfinished Revolution’ by Vince Copeland and prefaces by Mumia Abu-Jamal and Monica Moorehead. 128 pp, photographs. World View Forum, \$18 online at www.leftbooks.com

AVOICE from HARPER'S FERRY 1859



Medicare drug plan

Nothing but a scam

By Kathy Durkin

The new Medicare Drug Plan is proving to be a mess—as predicted by its critics. Touted by the Bush administration as a “great” deal for the 42 million seniors and disabled people who receive Medicare benefits, it is instead a bonanza for the health insurance and pharmaceutical giants but a nightmare for many of the poorest and sickest.

Medicare recipients and their families, plus pharmacists, doctors, city and state officials have raised a hue and cry against this disastrous plan. Mass anger is building. In fact, over half of eligible seniors say they won’t enroll in the plan at all.

The blame game has begun. State and local authorities who feel the heat and pressure don’t want to be blamed for this debacle. They are criticizing the federal government, the Republican leadership and particularly President George W. Bush for promoting and pushing this through. Faced with spiraling medical emergencies, governors in at least 24 states have been forced to implement emergency measures: their states are temporarily paying for prescriptions for low-income beneficiaries.

And now there’s buck-passing over who will repay the states. Medicare officials are refusing to do so and are telling the states to haggle it out with insurance companies. Angry lawmakers from both big parties are threatening legislation to require Medicare to reimburse the states.

President Bush during his last election campaign called this scam the “most significant advance in Medicare in 40 years” and promised it would help the elderly. Now he is on the hot seat. Trying to squirm out of it, he has thrown out a few crumbs. He told private Medicare drug-plan insurers they should pay for prescription refills for 30 days and not ask the poorest recipients for co-pays above \$5.

This is just a stopgap measure; it will not fix the national health emergency created by Bush, his entire administration, Congress and the big insurance and drug corporations.

The so-called Medicare Modernization Bill of 2003 was not really meant to help the 42 million Medicare recipients. Bush, the best friend the drug companies ever had, sold the public a bill of goods. He and his cronies in the Republican Party colluded with the insurance and drug industries to get it passed in Congress, which

was all too willing to do so despite warnings and opposition from many quarters.

They got what they wanted: the creation of a largely government-funded program that puts money directly in the hands of private corporations, amounting to a \$728 billion gold-mine for the insurance and pharmaceutical industries, and a giant step toward whittling down Medicare.

How it works

Under this scheme drug benefits are not administered by Medicare, the way it directly handles doctors’ visits and hospital stays—but through hundreds of plans held by private companies contracted by Medicare, which pays them to buy medicines. Each company has its own premiums, coverage and multi-tier co-payments, which can be raised with little notice.

In this way the drug corporations have acquired a new buyer for their products—the federal government. But built into this plan is a ban on the government negotiating prices with the drug companies. The health insurance companies, which are unnecessary middlemen in this operation, get mega-profits, too.

Because this is all about profits and not helping anyone, problems have been rampant since the plan went into effect on Jan. 1. Horror stories abound. This debacle has been a minefield for hundreds of thousands to navigate; many have lost out.

Among the hardest-hit have been the 6.4 million “dual eligibles”: those on Medicaid and Medicare. They are the poorest elderly as well as the physically and mentally disabled. Previously, they received free medications from state Medicaid programs. Since being arbitrarily switched to private plans, many are going without. Their lives may be at risk.

Many have been turned away by pharmacies because the plans they are in don’t cover their drugs or have expensive co-payments. Some of those formerly covered by Medicaid have been told they had to pay a \$250 deductible, even though that should not apply to them. Tens of thousands have left drug stores empty-handed, without life-saving medicines, even cancer drugs. Medical and psychiatric hospitalizations have increased as people have gotten sicker without crucial medications.

Predicting this, the Medicare Rights Center had gone to federal court in 2005 to protect “dual eligibles,” but was turned down flat. The court said it had no power

to order further drug benefits for Medicaid recipients. The lower-income elderly and the disabled should deal with this individually—an impossible task.

Other non-Medicaid low-income Medicare recipients were duped, too. Though Bush guaranteed they would get drug subsidies, the government has approved the applications of only 1 million out of up to 6.6 million people.

This system was devised as a deliberate scheme to transfer more money from Medicare—which is funded by taxes from working people and beneficiaries’ payments—to the health insurance and pharmaceutical industries, i.e., to siphon off more money from the people and get it into the coffers of big business.

Boston University professors Alan Sager and Deborah Socolar in 2003 calculated that 61 percent of the Medicare money spent on medications would wind up as profits for the drug corporations.

Excited over the profit potential in the Medicare Drug Plan, Wall Street went wild. Pharmaceutical stocks soared when it passed. Drug companies then callously raised prices of popular medications before it went into effect. (PBS, April 30, 2004)

The U.S. pharmaceutical industry charges the highest prices in the world. In 2004, the top 15 U.S. drug companies took in \$273 billion in revenues, but their hunger for super-profits never ends.

It is no surprise, then, that the pharmaceutical industry has spent a scandalous \$800 million over the last seven years on lobbying and campaign contributions. In that period, only the insurance industry spent more on buying favor among lawmakers. Their success has translated into billions more in drug profits. (Center for Public Integrity)

In 2003, the year Medicare Part D passed, the drug lobby spent \$116 million, mainly aimed at Congress.

In fact, columnist Paul Krugman reveals that the Medicare drug bill was authored by two politicians who are now health industry lobbyists: Thomas Scully, who Bush named to run Medicare, and Rep. Billy Tauzin, the bill’s “point man on Capitol Hill,” who, having left Congress after the bill passed, now heads up the Pharmaceutical Research and Manufacturers of America. (New York Times, Jan. 20)

The drug industry also gave millions of dollars to the election campaigns of senators and congresspeople, both Repub-

licans and Democrats, including Sen. John Kerry. Bush, however, received the most—over \$1 million—in the last election period.

No wonder the Medicare Drug Plan passed in Congress relatively unopposed.

Seniors are now discovering that “stand-alone” insurance plans provide NO coverage for drug expenses between \$2,250 and \$5,100 a year—the so-called “doughnut hole.” Before getting “catastrophic coverage,” the sickest must pay \$3,600 out of pocket for medications—on top of a monthly premium and a \$250 deductible.

Seniors and the disabled can use up their life savings and be bankrupted by drug expenses, if, in fact, they can afford the coverage to begin with.

The American Association of Retired Persons cannot be let off the hook for this fiasco. The AARP, which is supposed to advocate for its 35 million elderly members, went all out to get the Medicare Drug Plan enacted in Congress. It spent millions of dollars on advertising and public appeals, using its magazine and bulletin to promote it.

Like the proverbial fox guarding the chicken coop, the AARP is now raking in millions of dollars selling health and other insurance to its members.

Dr. David Himmelstein of Harvard Medical School and Physicians for a National Health Program was outraged when AARP came out for Medicare “reform.” He said it had “shamefully agreed to sell out its members in exchange for the organization’s financial gain.” (Boston Globe, Dec. 8, 2003)

Instead of fighting the plan, the latest AARP bulletin warns its members that purchases of cheaper drugs in Canada won’t count for out-of-pocket costs here towards “catastrophic coverage” and that it is illegal to import drugs from Canada.

What seniors need is an organization that strongly defends their rights and benefits.

Quality health care must be viewed as a right, free and accessible to all—like the library system.

For this to happen, the profits must be taken out of ALL health care. This latest catastrophe points out the crying need for socialized medicine—the only way the masses of people can have quality, humane, accessible and available health care, including life-saving medications. It’s possible. In Cuba everyone has free quality health care, from the cradle to the grave. Why not here? □

IN MARYLAND, FLORIDA

Wal-Mart feels workers’ heat

By Sharon Black

The Maryland General Assembly overrode on Jan. 12 Gov. Robert Ehrlich’s veto of a bill that will require Wal-Mart to pay more for workers health care. The bill is called the Fair Share Health Care Fund Act and it is the first of its kind to succeed in the U.S. Thirty other states are poised to look at similar legislature, which has been put forward by union and community activists.

The law, which will take effect in 30 days, requires companies with more than 10,000 employees to spend at least 8 percent of their payroll on worker health care or pay the difference to a state medical assistance fund. Of the four companies of that size in Maryland, Wal-Mart is the only one that would be affected.

In Maryland, the state AFL-CIO and

health care advocates from the Maryland Citizens Health Initiative launched a campaign that included rallies, protests, lobbying and call-ins. It touched off a fierce debate on workers’ rights versus a company’s ability to exploit at will. Wal-Mart has become the new prototype corporation leading the way in low wages and no benefits. It has lost this round in the battle.

Wal-Mart workers in Florida have been fighting back and winning. In one rural Florida town, over 20 percent of Wal-Mart workers had their hours cut. The workers were bold; they went into the community and collected petitions against the company. As a result, their hours were restored. In St. Petersburg, a third-shift worker was accused of theft and fired. The day after the firing, half the day shift quit in protest. In another store, workers marched on management after a 70-year old worker had her

schedule changed. Management quickly reinstated her schedule.

These actions were initiated and led by members of the Wal-Mart Workers Association. WWA is a non-majority union founded with seed money from the United



Waiting for a raise at Wal-Mart.

Food and Commercial Workers Union, SEIU, the AFL-CIO and other community groups. Their strategy has been to channel workers’ anger into action rather than to wait for court mandates. This is particularly important to central Florida workers since Wal-Mart is projected to double its super centers there by 2010.

The larger question facing the Wal-Mart workers, the rest of the labor movement and its allies is how to mobilize the working class as a whole to fight for health care for all. The 46 million uninsured workers desperately need this. The union members who are enduring health care cuts on the jobs and waging defensive battles to save benefits need it. What would greatly benefit this cause is to bring all the workers to Washington, D.C., to hold a Million Health Care March rather than to fight each battle isolated and alone. □

Bankruptcy means Richer bosses, poorer workers

By Martha Grevatt

Bankruptcy is good business. No, that's not some Orwellian doublespeak along the lines of "War is Peace."

It's the conclusion being drawn by more and more top executives. This corporate consensus is the topic of a recent New York Times article entitled, "Gee, Bankruptcy Never Looked So Good." (Jan. 15)

United Air Lines (UAL) has just emerged from bankruptcy, proclaimed solvent after looting workers' pensions and extracting huge concessions from airline workers' unions. For so skillfully pulling off this embezzlement through the grand theft of workers' labor, the corporate thieves are being handsomely rewarded.

As the Times article points out, on Jan. 12 "unsecured creditors and executives at the UAL Corporation...agreed to a deal in which 400 executives stand to share an astonishing 10 million shares...worth an estimated \$115 million."

How are the workers being rewarded for their sacrifices? They aren't. But the bosses, who gave up nothing, justify their priorities. In the words of UAL spokeswoman Jean Medina, "It's in everyone's interests for management to have this component of management compensation tied to the future performance of United's stock price."

UAL is not the exception but the rule. Bankruptcy courts approved hefty bonuses for US Airways executives after pensions were dumped and workers took three successive pay cuts. These concessions are locked in until 2009.

On Jan. 16 Northwest Airlines asked a bankruptcy court to void its contracts with flight attendants, pilots, customer service agents, and ramp workers, even after those workers had agreed to concessions. The pattern was repeated throughout the steel industry and has hit the auto and auto parts industry with Delphi's filing for bankruptcy last Oct.

Sometimes bankrupt companies are then bought out by people like Wilbur Ross, CEO of International Coal Group, blamed for the tragic deaths of the miners in Sago, West Virginia.

According to the ICG web site, "International Coal Group was organized by WL Ross & Co. LLC to acquire the principal operations of then-bankrupt Horizon Natural Resources on October 1, 2004." Ross also has strong connections with Steve Miller, hired to put Delphi into bankruptcy and destroy the workers' livelihood.

When Miller put Bethlehem Steel into bankruptcy, Ross purchased the company cheap and then sold it out fairly quickly for a profit of \$500 million. On Jan. 11 it was reported that Ross was reviewing assets of distressed auto suppliers for possible takeover and stated that consolidation was "even more imperative" in 2006.

"Not a nickel, not a dime, cutting wages is a crime!" was the message autoworkers from the Midwest brought to the suburban Detroit front door of General Motors' creation, Delphi, at Jan. 23 protest.

WW PHOTOS: DAVE SOLE



In nearly every case, a company leaves bankruptcy "leaner and meaner." After slashing wages and cannibalizing pensions, it is better poised than before to exploit a smaller, lower-paid workforce. It's all a big scam perpetrated by corporate con artists.

Pensions, jobs under attack

Bankrupt or not, major firms are going after pensions and retiree health benefits. Earlier this month IBM suspended its pension program. Alcoa, the world's largest aluminum company, announced that new salaried employees would not receive traditional pensions. Are union pensions next on the chopping block?

GM and Ford asked for and received from the United Auto Workers an increase in retiree health care costs.

Equality of sacrifice? Forget it. GM's CEO Rich Wagoner states, "Here's where people get this wrong: They say, 'Why are executives paid so much? You have to ask: Why are professional athletes paid so much?' The capability of successfully trying to turn around an unsuccessful automobile company is a very rare and highly sought after skill set."

In 2004 Wagoner's "skill set" got him a \$2.2 million salary, a \$2.5 million bonus, and 400,000 stock options worth \$5.1 million.

Meanwhile, workers at GM, Ford and DaimlerChrysler are left wondering if they will have a job long enough to even have a pension. Last month GM announced plans to cut 30,000 jobs. GM recently revealed plans to go after the "jobs bank," a program that allows laid-off workers to

receive 40 hours' pay. Ford has just announced massive layoffs. The Jan. 22 Detroit News describes how Daimler Chrysler is scheming to eliminate skilled trades jobs by combining classifications.

The auto bosses cite loss of market share to foreign competitors to justify these drastic cuts. This is a bogus argument because they are selling as many cars as ever. In 2005 GM sold nine million vehicles worldwide, the most it has sold since 1978. DaimlerChrysler sold a record four million vehicles, led by its Chrysler Group.

Delphi workers point the way forward

These attacks are widespread, and the situation could seem depressing and hopeless, but the inevitable resistance to capitalist restructuring is emerging.

A tremendous fightback is spreading throughout the Delphi corporation, started by rank-and-file UAW members who call themselves "Soldiers Of Solidarity." As reported in an earlier WW article, SOS has been able to slow production by way of "work to rule."

SOS has supplemented its in-plant strategy with public demonstrations, including a Jan. 8 picket of the North American International Auto Show and a Jan. 23 picket of Delphi world headquarters. After the auto show picket, the Detroit capitalist media could not hide its nervousness about SOS.

The Flint [Michigan] Journal bemoaned that SOS was creating a militant climate and that Toyota might decide not to build a plant there after all. "You can bet Toyota officials read the local newspapers care-

fully and are aware of the SOS activities," wrote Tom Walsh in the Detroit Free Press. The whole situation is making the ruling class jumpy, further evidenced by the FBI visiting two progressive Michigan lawyers involved with SOS.

Delphi is showing signs of conciliation. CEO Miller on Jan. 16 told the World Automotive Congress that his "committed objective is to arrive at a consensual resolution." UAW President Gettelfinger said that was "certainly a step in the right direction."

Stronger language came from SOS spearheader Gregg Shotwell, who hails from Flint, Mich., the site of the original 1937 sit-down strike. "A reporter asked me, 'If you strike and shut down GM, won't you be biting the hand that feeds you?' We aren't biting the hand that feeds us. We are biting the hand that slapped us, cheated us, and robbed us. First, we'll bite the hand. Then, we'll go for the throat. What have we got to lose?"

The bankruptcy courts conspire with corporate America and Wall Street financial and banking institutions to profit at the expense of the unions and its members. Also sitting on the UAL board that approved the benefits for the UAL executives is Miller, who was the architect of the Bethlehem bankruptcy, and is now doing the same thing to the UAW and its members at Delphi.

If the workers are able to stay Miller's hand and save their contract, it will lift the hopes of the whole working class and inspire a broader fightback.

The writer is on the executive board of UAW Local 122 at DaimlerChrysler's Ohio Stamping Plant.

Flight attendant speaks out

"It's been over three years since UAL corporation filed Chapter 11 bankruptcy and there has been no justice for workers in bankruptcy court. It is set up to ensure the greatest profits for the corporation, and it has always been our experience that this is at the expense of the workers. While airline execs get bonuses and guaranteed pensions, they terminate our pensions and cut our wages and work rules.

There has always been more than enough money for everyone but the workers who built and run the airline. They have forced concession after concession upon us and now expect us to accept a 'replacement plan' of unsecured UAL stocks for our retirement. They continue to threaten to abrogate our contracts if we don't concede to concessions because fear is their only tactic. We have also endured

daily harassment on the job from supervisors and unjust firings during this time, but we will not be intimidated.

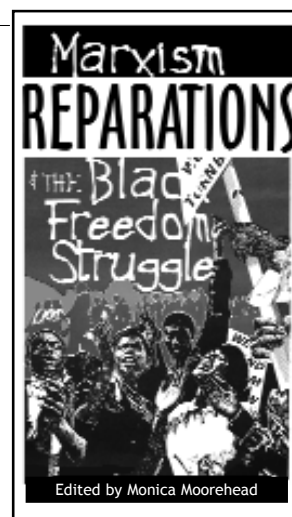
The corporate execs are not even the legal owners after a Chapter 11 filing—the largest creditors, the workers, are the legal owners! We must always remember this and fight for what is ours—not only our wages, benefits and pensions, but the entire company belongs to us, the workers. Corporations are using bankruptcy to get at our union contracts. But this is a time to not only resist endless corporate demands of worker concessions, but time for us to stand up and assert our ownership rights! Airline workers own the airlines just as public transport workers in NYC own the subway system, and those who build and maintain automobiles own the auto industry. Transportation is a public need and the workers of these industries must stand together to resist further attacks on our wages, benefits, work rules and pensions."

—Michelle Quintus, United Airlines flight Attendant and a Council 5 Representative of the AFA-CWA.

Marxism, Reparations and the Black Freedom Struggle

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Workers narrowly reject contract

Transit struggle goes into round three

By Milt Neidenberg
New York

By a razor-thin margin of seven votes, Local 100 Transport Workers Union members have rejected the tentative contract agreed to between TWU leaders and the Metropolitan Transit Authority (MTA). As of the noon deadline on Jan. 20, two-thirds of the 33,700 union members had voted, an exceptional turnout. The vote was 11, 234 to reject the contract and 11,227 to accept.

There is no indication that TWU President Roger Toussaint is seeking a recount. The rank and file have spoken. Although Toussaint campaigned hard to get the tentative contract ratified, and lost by an unprecedentedly close vote, he is honoring the mandate of the membership.

This was the first time the TWU had conducted a ratification vote through the Internet and over the telephone, the members having been issued secret pin numbers. The vote was organized and monitored by the American Arbitration Association.

Now it is back to the bargaining table and uncertainty. The next step for the union is a strategy session with the executive board. It is critical that Toussaint and the opposition find common ground to improve the tentative agreement rejected by the rank and file. This is a tall order.

TWU under attack

MTA chairperson Peter Kalikow, a real estate tycoon handpicked by Gov. George Pataki, has proposed binding arbitration under the rules of the anti-union Taylor Law. Earlier, Toussaint had rejected binding arbitration, preferred by employers because it removes the decision-making process from the rank and file and their elected leaders. It should be rejected again.

The MTA strategy is to create tensions and exploit differences between TWU leaders and the rank and file in order to undermine the power of the transit workers, who for three days shut down the largest city in the country and paralyzed the financial institutions of U.S. imperial power.

The campaign has begun. In newsprint and on television and radio, the capitalist media have zeroed in on subway and bus riders who will attack the union members



WW PHOTO: DEIRDRE GRISWOLD

A Dec. 22 rally for the transit workers affirms their right to strike.

as greedy and self-serving. They have also searched out disgruntled TWU members.

The New York Times found one such bus driver, who works on the B43 route in Brooklyn. They got a quote from him to exploit tensions between older and younger workers: "This contract is for the older guys. ... I started in 2000 and this contract doesn't benefit me in any way as far as getting anything new. There's like one more vacation day. The 1.5 percent [referring to a new health cost deduction] is the worst thing." (New York Times, Jan. 21) There was a lot new in the contract that the Times failed to mention.

In the same article, the Times quoted the president of the Partnership for New York City, the city's largest association of business leaders, most of whom had taken heavy financial hits during the three-day strike. "It's a sign of substantial problems between union leaders and members," Kathryn S. Wylde said happily.

The attacks are nothing new. Trinidad-born TWU President Roger Toussaint and the multinational rank and file, overwhelmingly Black and Latin@, were subjected to an extremely ugly, racist campaign during negotiations and especially throughout the three-day strike.

A New York Daily News editorial headline urged "Throw Roger from the Train" and called the settlement the "MTA Gravy Train" under which the TWU had "made out like bandits." The New York Post characterized the members as "You Rats" on its front page and the Wall Street Journal,

mouthpiece of the ruling class, accused the MTA of having "caved on pension reform."

Governor Pataki and billionaire Mayor Michael Bloomberg joined the racist chorus, calling the members "thugs" who carried out criminal activities. They were furious that the TWU had defied the infamous anti-union, strike-breaking Taylor Law and was rewarded with a contract far superior to the MTA's original "final offer." Pataki had sworn there would be no negotiations until the strike was over. But he was wrong.

Gains won in the contract

The MTA had agreed to guarantee lifetime health care for about 13,000 retired members and dropped its demand for a two-tier proposal that would have forced new hires to pay into a pension plan. It also dropped its demand to extend the retirement age for new hires from 55 to 62.

The TWU also won over \$130 million in the reimbursement of pension over-deductions for 22,000 current members and retirees. However, backed by Wall Street, Governor Pataki threatened to renege on the \$130 million retroactive payment, which he had vetoed twice previously. This infuriated the rank and file.

The 37-month contract included a 10.5 percent wage increase over three years, a paid Martin Luther King Day holiday, and an independent authority to restrain the MTA on disciplinary citations that have averaged over 16,000 annually. Toussaint called the citations "plantation justice."

The contract included maternity leave stipends for the first time, and no broad banding that would eliminate jobs and double up work loads. Faced by a work environment fraught with danger below and above ground, the union won on-the-job death benefits and state disability compensation was doubled. Bus drivers, train operators and conductors could get two years' assault pay if attacked on the job.

The sticking point for many workers was the payment of 1.5 percent of their annual earnings, including overtime, toward health care costs. And if MTA health care payments were to exceed a certain level, the members would bear the brunt of further increases and the percentage deducted would be raised.

Fearful of an open-ended plan and the sky-rocketing cost of health care, a slim majority of the members rejected the tentative contract.

Even though the MTA had guaranteed it would pick up the tab for the \$130 million pension payback in the event of a Pataki veto, this issue also contributed to the no vote.

Solidarity in struggle

Some labor academics want to stir up the pot of discord and divisions. David L.

Gregory, a labor law professor at St. John's University, told the press, "The militant members of the union will continue to work, but they may be prone to a wildcat job action or slowdown which could be almost as chaotic as a system-wide shutdown." (New York Times, Jan. 22) The Times writer refers to "so much anger, ill feeling, dissent, and political jockeying ... that some unpredictable and undesirable things might happen if the union members or its dissident leaders flex their muscles."

Contrary to this description of an unpredictable and disorderly work force, the facts are the rank and file waged a disciplined, orderly and well-managed struggle to get a decent contract with respect and dignity. They exerted a power that was truly awesome. The rallies, demonstrations and work-to-rule job actions, and finally the three-day strike, were carried out by the Local 100 leadership, headed by President Roger Toussaint, in a militant, unified and coordinated manner.

The 33,700 rank-and-file transit workers have established this splendid precedent. They have waged an independent struggle for respect and dignity and they don't need to be lectured to nor influenced by different sections of the capitalist class and their mouthpieces.

Some facts are clear. The MTA has deep pockets. It can afford to absorb the health care costs, just as it does for its executive board and supervisors. It admitted to a \$1 billion surplus this year. Reportedly, two sets of books were kept on the agency's finances. Exposure of other hidden assets in real estate and other investments will justify a major mobilization, carried on in the same spirit that won solid gains, to reverse the 1.5 percent wage deduction for health care.

The TWU needs allies in this fight. Lack of health care is a disgrace in a country where over 45 million working poor, organized and unorganized, can't afford coverage. The TWU struggle resonates far beyond New York City. The AFL-CIO and the Change to Win Federation have a big stake in the outcome. They can't afford to be cheerleaders, urging the TWU to fight their fight. Mayor Bloomberg has already indicated he will pressure other public sector workers to accept the 1.5 percent.

Call for a general strike

During the strike, the Area Labor Council in Troy, N.Y., a small mid-state city, had called for a "General Strike to Support NYC Transit Workers." Its resolution stated: "The Troy Area Labor Council of the AFL-CIO calls on the New York State AFL-CIO to organize a General Strike of all New York State Union Workers to bring these Anti-Worker politicians to their senses and to obtain a just settlement of the Transit Worker Strike." Referring to the Taylor Law, the resolution said: "The right to strike is a fundamental human right without which all other rights of workers become meaningless."

This resolution is more timely now than ever. Under the Taylor Law, Toussaint is subject to jail time, the TWU could be fined \$3 million and each member is subject to six days of lost wages. This deserves the attention of the state AFL-CIO and its affiliates. The potential to reverse decades of givebacks and concessions is front and center.

Said the great African-American leader and historian, Frederick Douglass: "Power concedes nothing without a demand. It never did and never will." □

Union draws line in contract battle

Hotel workers poised to fight back

Hotel workers are some of the most impoverished workers in the U.S. The average hourly wage for a hotel housekeeper is \$8.67 or approximately \$17,000 a year. This is in exchange for doing the backbreaking work of keeping hotel rooms clean. These housekeepers along with bellhops who carry heavy luggage as well as food workers, servers, janitorial staff and desk receptionists who keep the hotels filled and running are often ignored, invisible and marginalized. They are about to be heard from.

UNITE-HERE, a union that represents U.S. and Canadian hotel workers, has announced a wage campaign to raise the wages of the poorest hotel workers who work in the Sunbelt states like Arizona and the South and make far less than their counterparts in Manhattan, New York or

San Francisco who are unionized.

The union feels it is in a stronger position to accomplish this with contracts aligned to expire at similar times in New York, Chicago, Los Angeles, Boston and Honolulu. This means that in more than 400 major hotels across the country, workers could be on strike. The New York and Chicago contracts are up this summer.

The hotel industry is now owned and operated by a handful of multi-billion dollar companies like Hilton, Starwood, Marriott, and Hyatt that have been buying up companies. Starwood owns the Sheraton, Westin, St. Regis, Four Points and W chains. UNITE-HERE hopes to use this as leverage aimed particularly at Hilton and Starwood to unionize the chains in their entirety.

—Sharon Black

'Hertz Hurts!'

Support needed to defend union

By David Dixon
Charlotte, N.C.

The bosses at the Hertz rental car location at the Charlotte Airport have been harassing workers ever since they joined with Teamsters Local 71 to organize a union. Matt Emmick, who is with the Teamsters, said, "Hertz workers have faced a series of problems including arbitrary policy enforcement, favoritism and unfair discipline based on unfounded customer complaints and reports from 'mystery shoppers.'"

Hertz Management has been trying to intimidate workers by having private meetings with them. Bosses inquire about union activity and threaten the workers with the loss of their already inadequate 401(k) retirement plan if they join a union.

In a union-busting move reminiscent of the city of Charlotte's recent firing of labor activist Cedric Williams, Hertz has illegally fired three workers who actively support a union.

Courtesy Bus driver John Roberts was the first. Roberts had been employed at Hertz for three years and had been an outspoken supporter of a union there. He was fired shortly after the union campaign came to the attention of the bosses on charges made by a "mystery shopper."

The company that provides Hertz with mystery shoppers, DSG Associates, refused to give Roberts any type of due process or a grievance procedure.

Emmick states that Roberts "implied that losing a day's pay based on reports by nameless, faceless people and being denied the right to face his accuser

reminded him of racist activities he saw as a Black man growing up in the South."

Hertz also fired two other employees, Walter Mumford and Bill Cuthbertson.

Walter Mumford was fired Jan. 9 for supposedly "bumping" into a supervisor. The incident was said to have taken place Dec. 23, yet no action was taken at that time.

Emmick said, "Walter was accused of 'bumping' the supervisor only after he told a customer, in the supervisor's presence, that he had signed a union card and that he believed John Roberts' firing was unjust. Although Walter was accused of a grave infraction, no disciplinary action was taken at the time of the alleged incident, and he continued working. In the two weeks between the alleged incident and his firing, Walter enjoyed cordial rela-

tions with the supervisor and was awarded a \$50 gift card as a safety bonus."

Cuthbertson had been with the company 10 years and had a near-perfect work record. On Jan. 20, he was fired based on two "negative mystery shopper evaluations." He was told by the Hertz operations manager that the company had adopted a new policy stating that two negative mystery shopper evaluations would result in termination.

The workers at Hertz need the support of the community. A coalition been formed to help these workers fight for their rights. The coalition is planning a Jan. 27 rally at the Charlotte airport and has launched a "Hertz Hurts" campaign.

For more information contact Matt Emmick at emmick391@aol.com or call Teamsters Local 71 at (704) 596-2475. □

Ford bosses to cut 30,000 jobs

Continued from page 1

the U.S. annually has dropped from 26 percent in 2000 to 17 percent in 2005. It has been operating below 80 percent capacity in North America. The layoffs are supposed to help turn this situation around.

Most of Ford's dramatic decline in sales were due to a drop in demand for gas-guzzling SUVs and trucks as gas prices rose. Both Ford and GM had largely abandoned the fierce competition with Japanese, German and Korean auto monopolies for the passenger car market in the 1990s. Out of arrogance and short-sighted greed, both of these giants chased after the high-profit SUV and truck market. Now, outmaneuvered by their corporate rivals from Europe and Asia, they are trying to make the workers pay the price.

Ford is supposed to accompany the layoffs with an aggressive new design and marketing campaign to rebuild its passenger car business and stabilize its market share. But the workers and the union should not have to depend upon the ups and downs of the capitalist market for job security.

Whether the bosses are making super-profits or not, the workers have put their sweat and blood on the line. They have built the company and all its wealth. They have a fundamental right to their jobs, independent of the business climate. Workers should not be interested in being set up to compete with other workers over market share in a rat race to the bottom.

Instead of looking at the company's books so that the filthy rich auto bosses can prove "hardship," the United Auto Workers union should declare that a job is a right. In response to an official UAW statement on the layoffs, UAW member Ron Lare of the Rouge plant told the Detroit Free Press: "When Rosa Parks got thrown off the bus, she didn't just say it was unfortunate. She went out in the streets and started a movement. The UAW should start a movement to outlaw plant closings."

Violates moratorium on plant closings

This plant-closing announcement is both a slap in the face and an open challenge to the UAW. The contract it signed with Ford in 2003 declares a moratorium on plant closings. The company is in violation of the contract by unilaterally announcing plant closings and tearing up the moratorium in advance of the

2007 negotiations.

Ford announced that the closings would begin in 2008, after the upcoming negotiations. This was a thinly disguised attempt to legally circumvent the contract. But the company is confronting the workers with a fait accompli by "moth-balling" the plants and reducing operations while not officially shutting them down.

UAW President Ron Gettlefinger reportedly "blasted Ford's plan as 'extremely disappointing and devastating news.' Moreover, Gettlefinger said a showdown over the wholesale elimination of jobs and factories is coming at the Big Three national contract talks in 2007. 'Certainly today's announcement will make the negotiations in 2007 all the more difficult and all the more important.'" (Detroit Free Press, Jan. 23)

The official statement by Gettlefinger and UAW Vice President Gerald Bantom, who directs the national Ford department, is rather mild. However, it ends with an assertion that, whether meant seriously or not, must be taken with dead seriousness and enforced by the rank-and-file.

"The UAW-represented workers affected by today's action are covered by the job security program and all other provisions and protections of the UAW-Ford National Agreement. Our union will rigorously enforce those programs," read the statement.

Ford workers, GM workers and the entire membership of the union must see to it that not only their job security but also the health and pension provisions in the contract are enforced to the letter. Every day in the capitalist media there is a steady drumbeat of attacks on income security for laid-off workers—the so-called jobs banks—in the UAW contract. Under the Guaranteed Employment Numbers (GEN) provision, workers who are victims of plant closings are entitled to long-term pay.

Also under attack are so-called "legacy" costs such as workers' pensions and retirees' health care coverage.

There are endless complaints from the financial analysts, who find the Ford cutbacks "tepid" and a "first step." They complain about the so-called "extra costs" per car that make Ford and GM "non-competitive" with European and Asian auto companies. These companies have moved into the South and other rural areas with anti-labor environments and set up non-union plants all over the country.

"When Rosa Parks got thrown off the bus, she didn't just say it was unfortunate. She went out in the streets and started a movement. The UAW should start a movement to outlaw plant closings."

—UAW worker, Ron Lare

Wall Street and Ford would like to use the plight of non-union workers to overturn the hard-won gains of generations of unionized auto workers. Auto workers pioneered the struggle to establish industrial unions through sit-down strikes and on picket lines. They have sacrificed to get a small measure of income and health-care security.

Auto workers have given their lives at difficult labor so that the top executives and rich shareholders who never came anywhere near a production line could live in luxury.

In 2002, the UAW allowed William Ford to get away with closing five plants and laying off 35,000 workers under his "Back to Basics" restructuring plan. Last December, Ford got \$850 million in givebacks from health-care benefits for retirees. All these concessions, instead of appeasing this billionaire company, have now led to the demand for more layoffs and will undoubtedly lead to demands for more concessions.

Work to rule: in-plant resistance strategy

The lesson is that no concessions will lead to an end of the attacks. The only answer is organized resistance.

The rapacious greed of the Delphi auto parts manufacturer, which went to bankruptcy court to reduce wages by 60 percent and attack pensions and health care, has provoked new currents of rank-and-file organization. The recently organized Soldiers of Solidarity (SOS) demonstrated against Delphi at the National Auto Show in January. The UAW international leadership, to its shame, boycotted this very important opportunity to put a national spotlight on Delphi's alliance with the courts and the banks to tear up the UAW contract.

UAW's concessionary leadership fears SOS for more than just its demonstrations. SOS has been promoting the tactic of "work to rule." This tactic is calculated to take advantage of the company's vulnera-

bility and allows the workers to resist from inside the plant. It was used by Transport Workers Union Local 100 in New York City as pressure against the Metropolitan Transit Authority when the union was preparing for a possible transit strike.

The SOS website, www.soldiersofsolidarity.com, has a lengthy and valuable history and explanation of the tactic.

"The slogan 'work to rule' has a double meaning," it says. "Work to rule is a method of slowing production by following every rule to the letter. The aim is to leverage negotiation. Work to rule is also an invocation for workers to govern collectively, to control the conditions of their labor. Work to rule means power to the people."

"Work to rule is an in-plant strategy, a method of influencing negotiations without going on strike. Workers follow the boss's orders but do nothing on their own initiative. They keep their knowledge and experience to themselves, defer all decisions to the straw boss, and let the pieces fall where they may."

SOS discusses work to rule in the context of the sitdown strikes of the 1930s. It also discusses how African-American slaves used their music to coordinate the pace of labor. These historical analogies help illuminate the tactic.

"Management thinks they control the plant with their clipboards, portable phones But when workers work to rule the bosses find out who really runs the plant, who keeps machines humming, production flowing and the money coming in."

This tactic, which is being reborn out of the Delphi struggle, can be creatively applied and will hopefully spread industry-wide under this new barrage of attacks being laid down by GM and Ford. But whatever tactics are used, it is clear that there is a basis for rank-and-file resistance to these new assaults and everything must be done to organize and fan the flames of that resistance.

Stop the layoffs! A job is a right! Work to rule! □

The UN's lethal role in Haiti, Ivory Coast

By G. Dunkel

Occupying United Nations troops in both the Ivory Coast and Haiti have been meeting growing resistance. These popular struggles have dispersed, but not dissipated, the smokescreen that the troops provide for the imperialist powers' maneuverings.

UN troops are authorized by resolutions passed by the Security Council, a body where the United States, along with France and Great Britain, call most of the shots.

In Haiti, U.S. Special Forces seized President Jean-Bertrand Aristide and put him on a U.S. plane into exile in the Central African Republic, and French troops were quickly sent to clamp down on the people's protests over the coup-napping. UN troops from Brazil have replaced them. Aristide is now in South Africa.

There are also substantial UN contingents in Haiti from Chile and Argentina, and smaller ones from Jordan, Ecuador, Guatemala, Peru and Uruguay, as well as cops from China and Canada operating under UN direction.

When two UN soldiers from Jordan were killed Jan. 17 at a checkpoint leading into Cité Soleil, and Chilean soldiers, firing from armored cars, exacted revenge that left one person dead and at least 17 wounded, they were wearing UN uniforms, not U.S. or French. (CNN.com)

A Brazilian general runs the military side of the UN operation and the Brazilian government has to pay for its troops in Haiti and also face demands from its peo-

ple that the troops be withdrawn.

According to the Haitian Press Agency (AHP), the Sao Paulo daily Folha has called for Brazilian troops to be brought home, a call echoed by Socialist parliamentarian Orlando Fantazzini and Green Party deputy Fernando Bageiras. Brazil is seeking a seat on the UN Security Council.

The UN presence provides a buffer for the Bush administration from criticisms like that of the U.S. Congressional Black Caucus and other Black leaders demanding U.S. withdrawal from Haiti, and making the obvious connection to the occupation and war in Iraq.

But the U.S. is not totally off the hook even as the situation in Haiti becomes more lethal.

Since the beginning of December, violence has grown more widespread and intense in Haiti. Doctors Without Borders, which runs a clinic in Port-au-Prince that treats gunshot wounds, reported 68 cases in October 2005 and 122 in December. And many people who are injured by the cops or the UN do not go to a clinic or a hospital for treatment out of fear they will be arrested and "disappeared" from their hospital beds.

In a Jan. 19 coordinated action, 200 lawyers in Boston, Washington D.C., New York, Miami and Philadelphia filed motions in dozens of deportation cases, demanding that the Department of Homeland Security grant temporary protected status to Haitians living in the United States.

In multiple press conferences the lawyers asserted: "The DHS has failed to act, despite full awareness of the horrors

being suffered by the civilian population in Haiti. The majority of the population now teeters on the brink of death from hunger, disease and displacement. Without [temporary protected status], nationals of Haiti are subject to forced repatriation into a country where the government cannot prevent immediate threats to their lives, freedom, and welfare." (New York Times, Jan. 20)

Attorney Thomas M. Griffin of Philadelphia, author of a widely circulated report on human rights in Haiti, is coordinating this effort along with Paromita Shah, a lawyer at the National Immigration Project in Boston.

Resistance in the Ivory Coast

In the Ivory Coast, 4,000 UN-controlled soldiers are present, as well as 7,000 French troops operating outside UN control but under a grant of authority from the Security Council.

Strenuous popular protests broke out Jan. 15 when the UN-backed International Working Group (whose French initials are GTI) decided to dissolve the parliament controlled by the Popular Ivoirian Front (FPI), the party of President Laurent Gbagbo. (Bloomberg.com)

Since the Ivoirian army staged an uprising in 2002, the country has been split in two, with the military rebels holding the north, the Gbagbo government holding the south, and the French, the former colonial power in the Ivory Coast, maneuvering to preserve France's interests, which are substantial.

Thousands of Gbagbo supporters, known as "Young Patriots," filled the

streets of Abidjan, the commercial center of the Ivory Coast, and other large cities. They threw Molotov cocktails and rocks at French diplomatic and military installations as well as UN facilities. Most U.S. papers presented the protests as "riots."

In Guiglo, a city in the western part of the Ivory Coast near Liberia, UN troops opened fire on the protesters, killing five. As these soldiers then withdrew to an area controlled by the French army, the 200 to 300 UN troops and civilian employees came under fire. (AP-French)

Kofi Annan, the secretary general of the UN, condemned this as "orchestrated violence directed against the United Nations." The UN also threatened "individual sanctions" against prominent leaders in the protests. (CNN.com)

But Annan's remarks served to hide France's role in promoting and maintaining neocolonial control of the Ivory Coast. The head of the FPI, Pascal Affi N'Guessan, has characterized the UN presence as part of "recolonization of the Ivory Coast." (CNN.com)

Only the intervention of Olusegun Obasanjo, current head of the African Union, led the FPI to call off the protests and rejoin the government.

Obasanjo, president of Nigeria, came to Abidjan to meet with Gbagbo and other Ivoirian leaders, jointly issuing a statement that the UN-backed GTI did not have the authority to dissolve the Ivoirian parliament. (TheAge.com)

The immediate crisis in the Ivory Coast has been defused, but the UN's role in hiding France's effort to recolonize the country has only been checked, not defeated. □

'Bamako Appeal' promotes struggle against market-driven society

By John Catalinotto
Bamako, Mali

A group of about 80 anti-globalization intellectuals and political activists, including Marxist economists and organizers, came together to meet on Jan. 18-19 in Bamako, Mali, just before the polycentric World Social Forum opened in this city. The gathering, which was not an official WSF activity but whose invitees also participated in many WSF discussions, issued a statement at the end of the meeting: the Bamako Appeal.

The appeal involves promoting discussion and action on a series of points outlining major problems for humanity. These include the need to build a workers' united front and to struggle against imperialist domination and U.S. military hegemony; the problems of peasant societies under threat of destruction from subsidized competition; democratic management of media and cultural diversity; and the struggle against neoliberal and market-driven policies.

One of the Bamako Appeal's major goals is to promote solidarity among workers and progressives in the imperialist countries and the peoples' movements in the oppressed countries. The appeal says the participants "have expressed their concern with the task of defining alternate goals of development, creating a balance of societies, abolishing exploitation by class, gender, race and caste, and marking the route to a new relation of forces between North and South."

Egyptian economist and head of the Third World Forum Samir Amin, who is a professor at the University of Dakar in Mali's neighbor Senegal, had called this



WW PHOTO: JOHN CATALINOTTO

Maliens protest the privatization of the Dakar-Niger railroad Jan. 19 in Bamako, Mali at opening march of World Social Forum.

pre-WSF gathering a "Peoples' Bandung Conference" to mark the 50th anniversary of the 1955 conference of non-aligned nations held in Bandung, Indonesia. Some of the Malian political leaders working on the WSF hosted and participated in the conference. They included former Minister of Culture Aminata Traore.

Among the 80 people participating in the pre-WSF discussions were Bernard Founou-Tchuigoua and Babacar Diop Buuba, both university professors in Dakar, Senegal; former member of the European Parliament Miguel Urbano Rodrigues of Portugal; Chilean political journalist Marta Harnecker; Lebanese-French editor Leila Ghanem; and the organizer of the rebellion.org website Luciano Alzaga.

Also there were Wen Tiejun and Jinhua Dai of Peking University; editor-in-chief Isabel Monal of the Cuban magazine "Marx Now"; Brazilian radical economist Paolo Nakatini and Communist Party of Brazil representative Jose Reinaldo Car-

valho; French economist Remy Herrera; trade-union expert Ingmar Lindberg of Sweden; Antonio Tujan of the Philippine Institute of Political Economy; Mamdouh Habashi of the Anti-Globalization Egyptian Group; and Bellamy Foster, editor of Monthly Review from the United States.

Ignacio Ramonet of Le Monde Diplomatique, Bernard Cassen of Attac-France and anti-globalization author Susan George, who have been closely connected with all prior major social forums, also spoke.

Along with the invited guests, there were also some groups of youths from some of the former French colonies, in particular Senegal, Benin and Togo. Some of the Cuban medical and other aid workers in Mali also participated.

To carry out the discussion the larger group split up into 10 different committees. These held intense discussions for about three hours each, five committees at a time. Some of the committees decided to try to set up permanent watchdog commissions, such as "imperialism watch" and "ecology watch."

Alarcon asks for anti-imperialist actions

Cuban National Assembly President Ricardo Alarcon took part in the discussions too. He made some practical suggestions. One was that the Bamako Appeal have as its goal not simply to set up an anti-imperialist forum that outlines a program or spreads ideas, but that it also organize for coordinated anti-imperialist actions.

The Bamako Appeal does call for some actions. Among them is support for the March 18-19 worldwide days of anti-occupation demonstrations.

The call says it aims "to reinforce the movement protesting against war and occupations, as well as expressing solidarity with the people in fight in the hot spots of the planet. In this respect, it would be very important that the world demonstration against the war in Iraq and the military presence in Afghanistan envisaged for March 18-19, 2006, coincide with:

- the prohibition of the use and the manufacture of the nuclear weapons and destruction of all the existing arsenals;
- the dismantling of all the military bases existing outside of national territory, in particular the base at Guantanamo;
- the immediate closing of all the prisons of the CIA."

The appeal also calls for solidarity with Palestine and for being on guard to stop U.S. intervention against Venezuela and Bolivia.

In summary, the "Bamako Appeal, built around the broad themes discussed in subcommittees, expresses the will to:

- (i) Construct an internationalism joining the peoples of the South and the North who suffer the ravages engendered by the dictatorship of financial markets and by the uncontrolled global deployment of the transnational firms;
- (ii) Construct the solidarity of the peoples of Asia, Africa, Europe and the Americas confronted with challenges of development in the 21st century;
- (iii) Construct a political, economic and cultural consensus that is an alternative to militarized and neoliberal globalization and to the hegemony of the United States and its allies."

Catalinotto represented the International Action Center at the pre-WSF meetings.

Cuba 1, U.S. imperialism 0

By Mike Gimbel

In a stinging defeat for George W. Bush, the U.S. Treasury Department on Jan. 20 granted a license for Cuba to participate in this March's "World Baseball Classic." The Bush administration was thus forced to back down on its threat to bar Cuba's participation when it became clear that the event would collapse if the White House followed through on its threat.

"The International Baseball Federation had said it would have pulled its official sanction of the event had Cuba been excluded, a move that likely would have caused other nations to pull out and likely would have forced tournament officials to cancel the event." (Washingtonpost.com, Jan. 20)

There are 112 nations with teams in the International Baseball Federation (IBF). The Cuban national team had won the last 9 IBF "Baseball World Cups," most recently held this past September in the Netherlands. Cuban President Fidel Castro recently suggested that the U.S. was afraid to face the Cuban team.

The "World Baseball Classic" is intended to substitute for the Olympics, which decided to remove baseball from the 2012 Olympic games because of a conflict with the U.S. Major League Baseball's spring training. The 16-team tournament starts March 3 in Tokyo and March 7 in San Juan, Phoenix and Orlando.

Cuba will play its first game March 8 in San Juan. The Puerto Rican host federation had threatened to withdraw as host

for the games if the Bush administration denied Cuban participation.

WBC officials had even considered moving the games outside of the U.S. (L.A. Times, Jan. 20), which would have been a huge embarrassment for the Bush administration, especially since the original call for moving the games outside the U.S. was made by Venezuelan President Hugo Chávez, no favorite in the White House.

In addition, San Diego had invested a lot of money in order to host the final games and stood to lose bags of cash if the tournament was cancelled.

In a classic statement of "doublespeak" White House spokesperson Scott McClellan said "The president wanted to see it resolved in a positive way." (AP, Jan. 20) Yeah, sure and we have a bridge to sell you!!

The Bush regime, which represents a virulent anti-Cuba section of the ruling class, makes it sound like it really wanted Cuba's participation all the time rather than being determined to punish it through continuing and hardening four decades of a U.S. blockade against Cuba.

This retreat by the Bush administration, just one month after proclaiming that Cuba would not be allowed to participate in the games, is a blow against U.S. imperialism in its attempt to bully Cuba and is an example of the continuing weakening of U.S. imperialism's worldwide geopolitical position.

Even before the WBC has started, the U.S. is the big loser and Cuba the big winner! □

Bolivia's first Indigenous president

Morales sworn in as 300,000 celebrate

By Deirdre Griswold

Right after taking the oath of office Jan. 22 as Bolivia's new president, Evo Morales, his fist raised, called for a moment of silence—for the Incas who died resisting the Spanish conquest, for the unionists, peasant leaders and Indigenous who have died fighting neoliberal governments in Latin America, and for Che Guevara.

It was a poignant moment that showed how far Bolivia has come since that somber day in 1967 when the "heroic guerrilla," as Che is known in Cuba, was murdered by the U.S. CIA after being handed over by Bolivian soldiers.

Morales, an Aymara and the first Bolivian president in decades to have received an outright majority of the vote, won with massive support from the Indigenous people, who make up the bulk of the population but have until now been ruled by descendants of the Spanish colonizers.

As he was being sworn in, an estimated 300,000 people celebrated on the streets of La Paz. Most wore the traditional clothing of Indigenous nations, as did Morales himself.

'Politics is for serving the people'

Prensa Latina, the Cuban press agency, described Morales' inauguration speech:

"Morales said that the people have taken power through their resistance and consciousness, enriched through more than 500 years of struggle, in order to do away with injustice, inequality, discrimination and oppression, and to live with respect for multicultural diversity and in unity and peace.

"We want to change Bolivia,' he affirmed. 'After 180 years as a republic, we have a country that has known only the plunder of its natural resources, a dependent state that has been de-capitalized in spite of its enormous natural wealth.'

"Politics, he emphasized, is for serving the people and not for living off it, and that



Views of massive rally in La Paz to celebrate the inauguration of Evo Morales.

means attending to economic and social problems. It is impossible to continue having basic services such as water privatized, he said.

"Morales also noted that his government's goals are to provide universal social security for the elderly and to eliminate the concentration of land ownership, unemployment, illiteracy and the majority of the population's lack of access to health services. In Bolivia, he emphasized, the neoliberal model is not an option."

Bolivia has only 9 million people, but many Latin American presidents attended, including Hugo Chávez of Venezuela, Ricardo Lagos of Chile (outgoing), Néstor Kirchner of Argentina, Alvaro Uribe of Colombia, Luís Inácio Lula da Silva of Brazil, Martín Torrijos of Panama, Nicanor Duarte of Paraguay and Alejandro Toledo of Peru. Carlos Lage, vice president of Cuba's Council of State, was invited to stand at Morales' side during the swearing-in. Uruguayan leftist intellectual Eduardo Galeano also had a place of honor.

Prince Philip of Spain also came, showing Spain's continuing interest in its former colony.

Rich land, impoverished people

The Bolivian people are the poorest in South America, but their country is rich in natural gas and minerals. It has been exploited for its tin, silver and gold for generations. The Bolivian miners are leg-



endary for their militant struggles for a better life. In recent decades, as the mines introduced new technology, many were laid off and turned to farming in the lower, warmer eastern regions of the country known as the Chapare.

Coca leaves have been grown and sold for centuries in Bolivia for their medicinal and stimulant properties. An article by Alma Guillermoprieto in the New Yorker magazine of March 16, 1992, described how the Coca-Cola Co. bought large quantities of the coca leaf in Bolivia to flavor its soft drinks.

The U.S. government, however, embarked on a coca eradication program in the 1990s as part of its "war on drugs." The U.S. media increasingly charge Morales, who was leader of the coca farmers' union, with supporting "narco-trafficking." In fact, Morales opposes the processing of coca into cocaine, but stands up for the right of the farmers to grow coca plants.

Roger Burbach of New America Media, reporting from Bolivia on Jan. 23, described the struggles that brought Morales to power:

"[T]he United States militarized the region, setting up four military bases while training and advising special

Bolivian battalions. According to Pedro Rocha, a small coca grower interviewed while tending his plants, 'nothing was sacred. Our homes were invaded and even burnt, our belongings were stolen or tossed into the fields and many of us were beaten and arrested.' Subsistence crops along with coca plants, Rocha said, were trampled and destroyed.

"The cocaleros, led by Morales, organized massive resistance to the eradication program, reaching out to other national unions and to international human rights organizations. Roads were blockaded in the Chapare for more than a month at a time as the local unions rotated their members, women and men, day and night, to stop all traffic through the center of the country.

"As the war was unfolding in Chapare, the city of Cochabamba [Morales' home] erupted with massive demonstrations in 1999-2000 against Bechtel, the U.S. corporation that led a consortium of companies that had taken control of the city's

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FMLN leader dies



SCHAFIK HANDAL, left, commander and founder of the Farabundo Martí Liberation Front (FMLN) of El Salvador, died of a heart attack on Jan. 24 returning home from the inauguration of President Evo Morales in Bolivia. He was 75 years old. FMLN leaders in New York told WW, "We have lost an important leader today." Emergency memorial services are taking place in New York City on Jan. 26 and at San Romero Church on Jan. 29 with a formal event to take place later. Handel was a tireless liberation leader who in the 1980's helped lead an armed struggle against neo-colonial and imperialist occupation led by the U.S. He was a very good friend of Cuba and a personal friend of Fidel Castro. The FMLN has never given up the anti imperialist struggle and much of that was due to Commander Schafik's leadership. WW will have more coverage in an upcoming issue.

— Teresa Gutierrez



Thousands of Indigenous Bolivians danced, sang, threw confetti and waved flags in Bolivia's capital La Paz.





What coal miners need

Two more coal miners have died in West Virginia, bringing the total killed for the month of January to 14 in that one state.

The first 12 were killed when methane gas exploded at the Sago mine, owned by the International Coal Group. It was the deadliest coal accident in the state since 1968. The next two died after a fire in a mine owned by the Aracoma Coal Co.

A coal miner also died in Kentucky in January. Grieving families waiting for news of their loved ones have become a common sight again.

Government hearings on mine safety have now brought out details about the paltry fines levied on companies that violate health and safety regulations. In one case, after 13 miners were killed in Brookwood, Ala., in 2001, the mine operator appealed a fine of \$435,000 and got it reduced to \$3,000—less than \$250 per miner killed.

The Sago mine was cited for 208 safety violations last year. The recent deaths may lead to some tightening up

of regulations, which have been watered down recently. But the mining companies routinely violate the regulations that already exist. Will they act any better toward new ones?

Little attention has been paid in the media to the fact that the two mines in West Virginia were both non-union, where the workers have no power to halt production when they believe conditions to be unsafe. Even complaining can make workers vulnerable when there's no union at their back.

Half the power in the U.S. is generated by burning coal. The demand for coal has accelerated as higher oil prices have made it more competitive. Coal production—and the profits of the capitalist mine owners—have been rising steadily in recent years. Old mines have been reopened to meet the demand.

This is a prescription for more disasters—unless the workers themselves are empowered through union organization and support from the general labor movement. □



Lavender and Red focuses on the relationship over more than a century between the liberation of oppressed sexualities, genders and sexes, and the communist movement. You can read the entire, ongoing Workers World newspaper series by Leslie Feinberg online at www.workers.org.

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Bolivia's first Indigenous president sworn in

Continued from page 9

water supply as part of the privatization of public utilities occurring throughout Bolivia. The citizens won the 'water war,' forcing Bechtel out, and doubtlessly helping inspire the people of Los Altos to move on the very seat of government in La Paz. The subsequent change in presidents also boomeranged in Chapare, as a weakened President [Carlos] Mesa was forced to negotiate a truce with the cocalers in late 2004, allowing each family to grow one-sixth of a hectare of coca plants.

"The militancy of Cochabamba and Chapare is palatable as Evo Morales takes over the presidency. As farmer Pedro Rocha declares, 'Bolivia's presidents have all had their special military guards. We will be Evo Morales' special guards, ready to rise up, making sure that no one dares to touch him so he can change our country.'"

Purge of military high command

During his inauguration speech, Morales had deplored the fact that not one of Bolivia's top officers was Indigenous. One of his first acts after being sworn in was to remove the heads of the military services, as well as of the police, and replace them with lower-ranking officers. Those removed did not all go quietly. The Associated Press reported there were "shouts and scuffles" among the generals as the new appointments were announced on Jan. 24 and that several were "detained by palace security guards."

Morales vowed to fight corruption in the armed forces. This corruption is linked directly to Washington. In December,

fearing a left-wing victory in the upcoming election, the generals had removed 28 shoulder-held missiles, which Bolivia had purchased from China, and sent them to the U.S., where they were reportedly destroyed. Such missiles could be used against a possible air attack. The new government has launched an investigation of how this happened.

The AP wrote that "The change of [military] command came a day after Morales formed a leftist and largely Indian government, naming a Marxist known for his criticism of gas and oil companies as energy minister and filling his Cabinet with union activists, intellectuals and social leaders."

The U.S. has been dangling a possible \$600 million aid package in front of Bolivia, but John Danilovich, who heads the quasi-governmental corporation now in charge of making decisions on U.S. foreign aid, told the right-wing American Enterprise Institute on Jan. 23, "We will consider the situation in Bolivia very, very carefully. ... The evolution of policy in Bolivia under President Morales remains to be seen." (Washington Times, Jan. 25)

There is no question that the U.S. imperialists are hostile to any changes that would shift Bolivia's wealth into the hands of the people and away from control by the transnational corporations. But they also need to conceal their real motives—hence the "war on drugs" charade. And they are worried that if they move too brutally, it could boomerang throughout the whole region.

Right after the election, Morales visited Cuba and China, among other countries,

Critically acclaimed film gets scant U.S. distribution

'Paradise Now' a Palestinian view of suicide bombings

By Joyce Chediak

Who are the Palestinians who blow themselves up for their cause? Why do they do this?

Are they "terrorists," "fanatics," "cowards"? People who come from a place where "life is cheap"? This is what the U.S. media say, but the voices speaking are not Palestinian; they are the self-proclaimed "Middle East experts" from the Bush administration, or from pro-Washington think tanks.

What do Palestinians have to say about the people in their communities who volunteer for suicide missions?

If you want to know, then run, don't walk, to see the independent film "Paradise Now."

This Arabic language, subtitled film—shot in 2005 on location in Nablus—just won the prestigious Golden Globe award for best foreign language film and is Palestine's entry to the Academy Awards. It is "a real, deep and intense personal view of how normal young men make the decision to do something so unimaginable," according to the director Hani Abu-Assad.

Paradise Now is a riveting suspense story, with touches of humor. The film covers 48 hours in the lives of Said and Khaled, childhood best friends, who work as auto mechanics. Said and Khaled receive word that the suicide mission for which they volunteered some time ago will take place the next day. As they requested, the friends will be doing it together.

They are fitted with explosive vests and set out for their mission. But things do not go according to plan. The two men are

and discussed economic cooperation and development. He invited China to participate in the development of Bolivian natural gas, which has the potential of bringing great prosperity to the people but is presently in private hands.

Venezuela will also help Bolivia with the nationalization of its oil and gas resources. Chávez and Morales signed eight cooperation agreements right after the inauguration. "Given this strategic line you have designed, Evo, with a view to nationalize strategic and energy resources, you can count on my whole administration, especially the Ministry of Energy and Petroleum and the new (state oil giant) Pdvs for cooperation in this sense," Chávez said. (eluniversal.com)

Morales will have to watch his back as he mobilizes the people to change the Bolivian economy. It took Cuba two and a half years after its revolution to nationalize the lands and properties the U.S. had used to suck out the wealth of that country. President Chávez of oil-rich Venezuela has only recently talked of socialism as the goal of the revolution there, after having proven his popularity in nearly a dozen elections and referendums.

But the Bolivian movement for real social change has going for it the combative energy of the masses of people, who have mobilized and fought again and again in recent years, as well as the revulsion against U.S. neoliberal policies that is sweeping Latin America. □

separated. In the frantic dash from place to place to set things right, Khaled and Said deeply and movingly begin to question and explore their motivation for what they are doing.

Shot on location in Nablus, the film allows the viewer to enter the lives of the people who live there, and to get a glimpse of life after 40 years of Israeli occupation. We see the humiliation of going through an Israeli checkpoint, the danger involved in sneaking through a heavily patrolled portion of the wall Israel has built to seal Palestinians into tiny areas.

We visit the impoverished homes of Said, Khaled and their families. We sit at the table with them to eat. We see what they do for entertainment; we are with them at

work. We see the unpredictability of life due to ever-changing Israeli roadblocks. We walk with the characters through the streets of Nablus, the second largest city on the West Bank and formerly a pride of Palestine, now with large areas reduced to rubble by Israeli missiles.

The film's director, Hani Abu-Assad, is a Palestinian born within the Israeli green line, in the city of Nazareth. The film was produced by Bero Beyer, who is based in Amsterdam, and Amir Harel, who is Israeli. The leading characters, Said and Khaled, are played by Palestinian theater actors Ali Suleiman and Kais Nashef. Warner Independent Pictures distributes the film in the United States.

In accepting the Golden Globe, Abu-Assad said he saw the award not only as recognition of the film, its cast and crew, "but also as recognition that the Palestinians deserve their liberty and equality unconditionally."

Abu-Assad strived to keep the film close to reality. "I read the interrogations of bombers who failed, an interview with a lawyer in a jail where they are held, and the report of the Israeli officials," he explained. "I spoke to people who knew the bombers who died: friends and families and mothers. I learned no story is the same as the others. (The Guardian, Feb. 12)

This 2005 film has also won other awards, including the Amnesty International Film Award, and best foreign film awards from Independent Spirit, the National Board of Review and the Dallas-Fort Worth Film Critics Association Board. The movie's artistic merits are all the more impressive since it was made in a war zone. Nablus has the highest number of casualties, the most severe physical damage and the most intensive restrictions in movement in the West Bank, according to a recent United Nations report. A land mine detonated 300 feet from the film's production.

If the film is not playing in your city, it is well worth it to wage a struggle to get your local independent movie center to carry "Paradise Now." You may have no other choice. In searching the web, this writer found the film only playing in eight U.S. cities. (www.imdb.com)

On Jan 22, "Paradise Now" was seen in one theater each in New York City; Montclair, N.J.; Los Angeles; Denver; and Albany, Ore. The film was also viewed in one-time showings in Pilot Grove, Mo., and Occidental and Santa Rosa, Calif.

The DVD, however, comes out in March.

The people of the United States have a right to hear Palestinian views, in art and in politics. But this takes struggle. □

FILM REVIEW

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In lives and resources

The unimaginable cost of Iraq war

By LeiLani Dowell

As activists gear up to protest the third anniversary of the Iraq war, the cost of that war—in money spent, wounds sustained and lives lost—continues to grow.

A report released by 2001 Nobel-Prize-winning economist Joseph Stiglitz and Harvard University budget expert Linda Bilmes has now set the war's monetary cost to the United States at between \$1 trillion and \$2 trillion. This up to 10 times more than previously estimated.

Stiglitz stressed to the *Guardian* that the report's estimates are actually conservative, and do not include costs to Iraq or Britain. The study included costs of war not usually factored into estimates, such as health care. Lifetime care just for troops who have received brain injuries could cost up to \$35 billion, the report says.

One reason for the war's excessively high cost is "a singular legacy of the war in Iraq"—the highest level of injuries ever recorded in a war. (*New York Times*, Jan. 22)

Writer Denise Grady explains: "Survivors are coming home with grave injuries, often from roadside bombs, that will transform their lives: combinations of damaged brains and spinal cords, vision and hearing loss, disfigured faces, burns, amputations, mangled limbs, and psychological ills like depression and post-traumatic stress... More than 1,700 of those



March on New York Mayor Bloomberg's home, March 19, 2005.

WW PHOTO: G. DUNKEL

wounded in Iraq are known to have brain injuries, half of which are severe enough that they may permanently impair thinking, memory, mood, behavior and the ability to work."

The Army has had to open a new amputation center in response to the high number of amputations—345 as of Jan. 3, according to the article.

The military has tried to avoid the growing number of casualties and injuries by increasing its fighting from the air rather than the ground. However, even this strategy is having only limited success.

Defense News has reported that Iraqi resistance fighters "in the use of sophis-

ticated, shoulder-fired anti-aircraft missiles pose a grave new threat to American helicopters, U.S. Intelligence sources say."

According to the newspaper, military sources previously thought that the missiles, SA-7s, had "all but disappeared as a threat in central Iraq." Yet ABC News reports that there are hundreds, maybe thousands of unaccounted-for SA-7s throughout Iraq.

At least four helicopters have gone down in Iraq within the past two weeks. This brings the total of downed U.S. helicopters since May 2003 to 46, according to the Washington-based Brookings

Institution. The U.S. military claims that only 26 of those were brought down by enemy fire.

at the same time, a recent *Al Jazeera* article headlined "Epidemiology of mad war" describes the consequences of modern warfare: As military strategists devise new armor and tactics to protect their forces from the effects of weapons, civilians bear the brunt of the war.

Nicholas J.S. Davies writes: "Those who fire the most destructive weapons are now well protected from their effects, including the psychological effects of seeing what they do to other human beings. ... The inevitable con-

sequence is that about 90 percent of the casualties in modern wars are civilians, not combatants."

In a 2004 report the *Lancet*, the official journal of the British Medical Association, set the number of civilian deaths in Iraq about 100,000—with violence a leading cause of death, and air strikes by occupation forces the leading cause of those violent deaths. Now Davies updates the 2004 report, estimating between 200,000 and 700,000 Iraqi civilian deaths.

He points out that U.S. forces have admitted to conducting about 270 air strikes in November and December 2005. This compares with 200 total in the eight months between January and August of 2005. □

Nepal monarchy shaky as insurgency, protests spread

By David Hoskins

Large protests have erupted throughout Nepal against the repressive regime of King Gyanendra. Nepal's absolute monarch recently unleashed a fresh wave of state terror with the imposition of a nighttime curfew in the capital, Kathmandu, and other parts of the country. The curfew marked the intensification of a violent campaign by armed forces to squelch opposition to Gyanendra's direct rule.

Nepal, located north of India in the Himalaya mountains, has a population of over 27 million people, the vast majority of whom live in great poverty.

Government forces banned public meetings, cut off all mobile phone service and threatened "strict action" against individuals who publicly campaign against upcoming elections. An alliance of seven opposition parties, forced from office in 2002 when Gyanendra dissolved the parliament, has been organizing for a boycott of planned municipal polls. The seven-party alliance has criticized the election as a gimmick designed to solidify the king's control.

Defying the government ban on public meetings, the alliance held a protest rally

in Kathmandu on Jan. 21. Several hundred opposition leaders, journalists and human rights activists were arrested for participating in the mass action. The peaceful rally turned violent as police used force to unlawfully detain protesters. The demonstrators responded by building blockades of burning tires and clashing with police forces.

Armed insurgency spreads

The government crackdown betrays its fear that revolutionary forces in the country are close to taking power. In early January, the Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist) resumed the armed struggle after having observed a four-month-long, unilateral ceasefire. The government had failed to heed the calls of human rights activists and the United Nations to reciprocate with a ceasefire of its own.

The CPN(M)'s armed wing—the People's Liberation Army—has stepped up its military offensive. Explaining why it called off the ceasefire, rebel leaders issued a statement saying: "The royal army is surrounding our people's liberation army, which is in defensive positions, to carry out ground as well as air attacks on us. Therefore, we are compelled to go

on the offensive not only for the sake of peace and democracy but for the sake of self-defense."

In the weeks following the end of ceasefire, the PLA waged a number of attacks on army barracks, police posts and government buildings. Scores of armed police and soldiers were killed in the attacks. Coordinated armed actions took place for the first time in Kathmandu, with multiple raids on police posts and government buildings.

Over a dozen police officers were killed and several government buildings destroyed in the simultaneous attacks in the capital. The PLA carried out additional armed actions throughout other parts of Nepal during this time.

PLA and alliance reach agreement

The seven-party alliance has stepped up its criticism of the monarchy at the same time that the PLA has intensified its strategic offensive. News reports indicate that the PLA boasts a fighting force in excess of 15,000 strong, with another 50,000 organized into militias in the liberated zones. Meanwhile, bourgeois opposition parties, such as the Congress Party, have removed clauses supporting a constitutional monarchy from their party constitutions.

The CPN(M) used the period of unilateral ceasefire to negotiate a 12-point agreement with the alliance parties. The agreement solidifies two of the revolutionary force's key goals by calling for an end to the autocratic monarchy and elections to a constituent assembly. Both the revolutionaries and the seven-party alliance acknowledged past mistakes and guaranteed not to repeat errors made either in the process of armed conflict or participa-

tion in the now-dissolved parliament.

Nepal has been plagued by a succession of corrupt and tyrannical monarchs who oversaw decades of poverty and despair for the peasants and working masses. Massive street protests in 1991 forced the previous monarch, King Birendra, to allow elections to Nepal's parliament. However, the parliamentary parties proved unable to arrest the declining living standards of the Nepali people.

Nine prime ministers assumed power over the next 10 years. Even the reformist United Marxist-Leninist Party, elected in 1994, could not bring about the necessary social changes, such as land reform, to improve the quality of life and empower Nepal's workers and peasants.

The CPN(M) launched its people's war in 1996. It was not difficult for the revolutionary forces to find a mass base of support in a country where only 10 percent of the people have access to electric power. More than 85 percent live in rural areas without running water or basic sanitation, and malnutrition is rampant among children.

The U.S., Britain and India have given open military support to the monarchy in the past. Now, however, they must at least give the appearance of supporting some sort of democratic change. However, this does not preclude covert support for the repressive state.

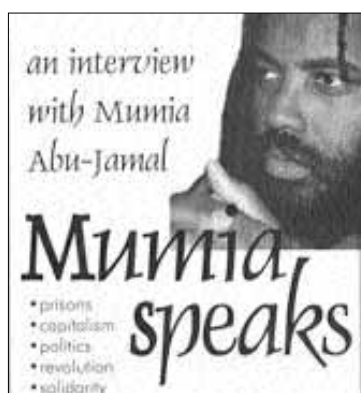
Recent developments demonstrate that Nepal's monarchy has dug its own grave throughout years of forced impoverishment and oppression. The workers and peasants of Nepal are poised to take political power for themselves and rectify the situation. This more than anything else worries the Nepali ruling class and fuels the country's current crisis. □

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Ante los continuos ataques del gobierno

La campaña para liberar a los 5 cubanos crece

Por Julie Fry

A pesar de que un panel de tres jueces de la Corte de Apelaciones de los Estados Unidos unánimemente retiró las acusaciones de conspiración de espionaje contra los Cinco Cubanos en agosto del año pasado y ordenó un nuevo juicio, los Cinco continúan en las prisiones de los Estados Unidos hoy. El Departamento de "Justicia", sorprendido por su derrota que sufrió en ese mes agosto, está llevando a cabo un ataque agresivo contra los Cinco para mantenerlos en prisión y prevenir un nuevo y justo juicio. En respuesta, el movimiento internacional para la liberación de los Cinco héroes aumenta sus esfuerzos a la vez que lanza una ambiciosa campaña política para lograr su libertad.

La batalla legal continúa

Después de un año de deliberaciones, el panel de tres jueces del 11 Circuito de la Corte de Apelaciones se mantuvo unánime en su decisión diciendo que los Cinco no podrían recibir un juicio justo en la atmósfera política hostil anti Cuba en Miami. En su opinión escrita de 93 páginas, el panel encontró que la conducta del fiscal, la prensa, y las fuerzas anti cubana en Miami han sido tan hostiles que los Cinco tienen el derecho de un nuevo juicio fuera de la ciudad de Miami.

El Circuito 11 es considerado ampliamente como uno de las cortes más conservativas y reaccionarias del país. Los jueces pertenecientes a esta corte no son en ninguna forma amigos de Cuba o campeones de las libertades civiles. La opinión unánime de su corte en agosto del año pasado fue una indicativa tanto de la falta de sustancia en las acusaciones del gobierno y la fuerza del movimiento mundial para liberarlos, un movimiento que ha crecido enormemente desde que los Cinco fueron arrestado en 1998.

Después de que sus acusaciones fueron denegadas en agosto, el gobierno cubano ha exigido la inmediata libertad para los Cinco. Sin embargo los Cinco todavía están encarcelados en varias prisiones en el país. El Departamento de Justicia continúa negándoles sus más básicos derechos, como la oportunidad de visitas por sus esposas y niños.

El gobierno claramente fue sorprendido por la orden del Circuito 11. Esto no es porque ellos creyeron en la fuerza de su caso, sino porque acusaciones criminales de cualquier tipo muy raramente son subvertidas y mucho menos por una corte tan reaccionaria como esta. Además, el Departamento de Justicia sin duda alguna contaba con la hostilidad política hacia Cuba que existe en todos los sectores del gobierno federal para defender su caso. Los fiscales subestimaron la fuerza y el impacto del vigor de la campaña para obtener la libertad de los Cinco. Esta campaña ha crecido cuantitativa y cualitativamente en Cuba como en todas partes del

mundo desde 1998. Y ellos subestimaron la fuerza de la información sobre el caso.

Ahora, el gobierno de los Estados Unidos, enfrentando a una derrota potencialmente enorme, en su campaña para aislar a Cuba y ellos que apoyan a Cuba, está ocupado en una fase nueva de su batalla legal. En vez de permitir a los Cinco tener un juicio nuevo y justo, el Departamento de Justicia ha pedido a la Corte de Circuito 11 escuchar el caso otra vez "en banc". Esto significa que en vez del jurado de tres jueces como de ordinario, todos los jueces que juzgan en el Circuito 11 van a escuchar el caso. Los jueces tienen la autoridad de soportar o rechazar la opinión del jurado más pequeño. El Circuito 11, en lo que muchos consideran una decisión inusual, se acordó con la petición del Departamento de Justicia. Los abogados en el caso presentarán sus argumentos orales durante la semana del 13 de febrero.

Esta etapa en la batalla legal marca un período increíblemente importante para el caso de los Cinco. Aunque el movimiento para liberar a los Cinco está incre-

mentando todavía, la presión contra los jueces desde la administración de Bush y de fuerzas hostiles a Cuba también ha incrementado desde la decisión del 11 de agosto. Por ejemplo, el Departamento de Justicia hizo un pedimento al Circuito 11 que rechace dos argumentos legales de parte del National Lawyers Guild (el Gremio Nacional de Abogados), la sucursal de la Florida de la Asociación Nacional de Abogados Defensores en Casos Criminales, y la Asociación Nacional de Defensores Federales Públicos en apoyo a los Cinco. Estos argumentos legales, están aceptados habitualmente por las cortes. El 6 de enero, la corte decidió en contra del gobierno y aceptó los argumentos legales.

Nuevas campañas lanzadas para ganar la libertad de los Cinco

Respondiendo a esta presión derechista creciente, el movimiento internacional para liberar a los Cinco está acercando su campaña política. El Comité Nacional para Liberar a los Cinco Cubanos ha lanzado su Fondo de Libertad para los Cinco Héroes, una campaña para recaudar fon-

dos sumando los \$250,000 necesarios para lanzar una ofensiva política mayor para los Cinco. Los fondos serán recogidos pagarán varias iniciativas como por ejemplo emplear una compañía progresista de publicidad para alzar el nivel de conocimiento público sobre el caso de los Cinco, así como la compra de otro anuncio de una página entera del periódico New York Times sobre el caso. En 2004, se recogió \$60.000 para comprar tal anuncio y decenas de miles de personas alrededor del país conocieron del caso de los Cinco por primera vez.

El Comité de Nueva York para Liberar a los Cinco ha lanzado una campaña de mujeres en nombre de los Cinco y sus familias. En septiembre 2005, el Comité entregó una carta dirigida al Departamento de Justicia firmada por docenas de mujeres líderes notables. La carta exigió la liberación inmediata de los Cinco y que el gobierno les diera inmediatamente permiso para que miembros de sus familias que deseen visitarlos pudieran hacerlo.

El Comité de Nueva York está siguiendo con esta campaña, demandando una reunión con los oficiales del Departamento de Justicia que son los que están encargados de este caso.

Priscilla Felia del Comité de NY y la organización Solidaridad con Cuba Nueva York comentó sobre la campaña de mujeres, "Aunque el Fiscal General Gonzales no ha respondido a la correspondencia ni a una visita por un grupo que representa más que 100 mujeres de todas partes del país, consideramos que el Fiscal General González es responsable por el dolor que él ha causado a estos hombres nobles y sus familias por no defender los valores que forman la base de nuestra Constitución, lo cuál él debe hacer, y debe hacerlo inmediatamente".

Hay acciones locales que están teniendo lugar por todo el país, incluyendo una gira venidera cinematográfica por la Costa de Este por cinematógrafo Bernie Dwyer, el co-creador de "Misión contra el terror", y el líder religioso Padre Geoffrey Bottoms.

Los líderes del movimiento se dan cuenta que lo más que la gente sepa sobre los Cinco lo más difícil sea para la administración de Bush a negar su libertad a los Cinco. Es crítico para su victoria que se organice un movimiento fuerte en apoyo de los Cinco en los próximos meses importante.

Teresa Gutiérrez, una líder del Comité de Nueva York para Liberar a los Cinco Cubanos, dijo, "Una parte de la intransigencia del gobierno de los Estados Unidos en el caso de los Cinco debe a su guerra de largos años contra Cuba. Esta guerra se ha intensificado en el período reciente con la política que tiene metas de pegar a Cuba aún más golpes. Pero los sucesos recientes desde Bolivia a Venezuela señalan que un período nuevo está surgiendo, lo cuál cambiará el curso por la justicia y ayudará a ganar la libertad para los Cinco". □

