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Wall St. sharks buy Chrysler

Auto workers wary of backroom deal

By Martha Grevatt
Cleveland

For auto workers, every day the news headlines paint a picture more ominous than the day before. On Friday, May 11, Chrysler's sale to Canadian auto parts company Magna appeared imminent. Bad news got worse on Saturday, with stories that it was not Magna but the private equity firm Cerberus that would likely buy Chrysler. By Sunday night it was front-page news: Cerberus and DaimlerChrysler (DCX) had struck a deal.

The sale was confirmed by a DCX press

release Monday morning. The sale will create a new Chrysler Holding Co. Cerberus will acquire an 80.1 percent stake in Chrysler for the bargain-basement price of \$7.4 billion while Daimler will retain a minority share. In a complicated and confusing arrangement, Daimler will actually pay out \$650 million to complete the sale.

The news sent DCX stock prices soaring. Why? The stockholders' delirium stems from the fact that they will be relieved of all health care and pension obligations—some \$70 billion—to the Chrysler workers.

Sharing in the glee are Chrysler CEO Tom LaSorda; Daimler CEO Dieter Zetsche; Cerberus CEO Steven Feinberg; Cerberus Chairperson John Snow, who is also a former secretary of the U.S. Treasury; Cerberus bigwigs, including former Ford executives David Thursfield and Kenneth Leet, who are also formerly with the Goldman Sachs investment bank; former Vice President Dan Quayle; and the advisor in the deal to both Daimler and Cerberus: JP Morgan Chase.

For a vulture capitalist like Cerberus to buy an entire automotive manufacturer is

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From Abu Dhabi to Pakistan

Washington in trouble

By Sara Flounders

May 15—The deteriorating global position of U.S. imperialism was starkly exposed in two very different recent visits to Abu Dhabi.

On Friday, May 11, Vice President Dick Cheney stood on the deck

of a U.S. aircraft carrier in the Persian Gulf in front of the deadly firepower of five F-18 Super Hornet jets to deliver an ominous threat. Cheney declared: "With two aircraft carrier strike groups in the Gulf, we're sending a clear message to friends and adversaries alike. ... The United States will stand with others to prevent Iran from gaining nuclear weapons and dominating this region."

The next day Cheney quietly visited Abu Dhabi in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) as part of a hasty trip to U.S.-controlled regimes, including Iraq, Saudi Arabia and Jordan, to shore up Washington's deteriorating position.

Just one day after the U.S. vice president's visit, and in stark contrast to the low-key reception accorded to Cheney, Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad arrived in Abu Dhabi May 13 to a red carpet welcome. It was the first time an Iranian head of state had visited the UAE since the 1979 Iranian revolution.

Besides meeting with top officials in the capital, President Ahmadinejad went to the city of Dubai, where he gave a rousing speech to a cheering rally of thousands who packed a soccer stadium to greet him. This had to have been seen in Washington as another serious challenge to U.S. domination of the region.

The very fact that the tiny, privileged layer of UAE rulers, who have depended on the U.S. military presence in their country to preserve their position, allowed the rally to happen despite a permanent ban on any demonstrations shows just how fearful this grouping is of mass pressure.

The UAE is ruled by a small but fabulously wealthy royal family that holds dictatorial power. No political parties are allowed. There are no elections. Three U.S. military bases are located in the Emirates and U.S. Navy ships dock there regularly.

Out of its population of 4 million, 80 percent are not even considered citizens. Millions of workers in all the Gulf states have a similar status. Whether they have lived in the region for decades or even generations, they are labeled migrant workers.

These workers have no rights to education, health care,

Continued on page 10



Women in Dubai cheer Iran and Ahmadinejad at mass rally.

Latin@ family describes vicious police attack

By Lal Roohk
New York

Standing in front of the 34th Precinct police station in Manhattan's Washington Heights on May 10, members of a Latin@ family gave details to the media about how the police had attacked them the previous day. The New York Justice Committee called the media conference.

Jesus Bracero said he had been dropping his daughter and her child off at school on May 9 when police approached his car and demanded to see identification.



Bracero did not immediately comply because, as he said, "I had not done anything illegal." The police called for backup from the 33rd and 34th precincts. They dragged Bracero out of his car with a chokehold on his neck. Bracero says he was assaulted by many police, who handcuffed him and repeatedly banged his head on the ground.

This occurred in the presence of parents and children coming to school. One of these parents, Lucie Turul, spoke at the press conference. She said many parents could testify that the police brutalized Bracero. Turul said these types of police attacks against members of the Dominican community in Washington Heights were becoming worse.

Later that morning Bracero's family had gone to the 34th Precinct, where he was being held. They say that when Bracero's daughter reached out to hug her 56-year-old father, who suffers from a severe back disability, the police told her she was "acting up" and grabbed her. When her mother tried to help her, they threw the mother across the room onto the floor. His son tried to help. He was assaulted and thrown in jail with his father.

The father and son were arraigned the next morning and face serious charges.

The son, a U.S. Army soldier, is waiting to be shipped out to Afghanistan. He came to the media conference but stayed in the background. He told the media he had military instructions not to speak about the police attack or have his photo taken.

Many New York television reporters appeared at the media conference. As cameras and microphones were trained on the tearfully distraught and badly injured family members, they grilled Bracero over and over again on the same question: Why didn't he immediately give his ID to the police? The question assumed that it is normal for the police to use force to stop people without reason and demand identification, especially if these people happen to fit their bias profile.

Bracero is receiving hospital treatment for serious head and back injuries. □

The Bracero family.
WW PHOTOS: LAL ROOHK



Victory for Father Barrios

After a three-day trial in which his supporters packed the courtroom, Father Luis Barrios was found not guilty on May 9 of all charges except a minor disorderly conduct charge that carried no jail time and a \$95 fine for court costs.

The progressive cleric, well-known in New York and elsewhere for his strong social justice activism, was one of 16 people arrested at the United Nations in September 2006

attempting to serve President George W. Bush with findings on U.S. war crimes in Iraq. Police attacked the crowd, as seen in a video shown in court.

Acquitted on charges of assault and resisting arrest, Barrios says they were fraudulent because "I went there to get arrested—why would I resist?"

—Report and photo by Deirdre Griswold

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Writers, activists show support for Mumia

A very moving program initiated by Writers for Mumia took place at Community Church in New York City May 12. Journalists, poets and activists came together to show their support for political prisoner and award-winning journalist Mumia Abu-Jamal, who has been on Pennsylvania's death row for almost 25 years. A greeting from Abu-Jamal to this program was played at the church.

Abu-Jamal was convicted of first-degree murder back in July 1982 following a sham of a trial. This coming May 17, his lawyers will be presenting an oral argument before the U.S. Third Circuit Court of Appeals in Philadelphia demanding he be granted a new trial in order to prove his innocence.

Abu-Jamal is a former president of the Philadelphia Chapter of the Association of Black Journalists. He wrote powerful exposés against police brutality, especially during the 1970s when former police chief Frank Rizzo was mayor.

The program at the Community Church included writers who presented their own compositions, the writings of Mumia Abu-Jamal, and information about the upcoming mobilization in Philadelphia on May 17. Despite being relegated to an extremely isolated cell for almost 24 hours a day, Abu-Jamal continues to write and record commentaries on many social issues that can be heard at www.prisonradio.org.

Many of those who spoke are members of various chapters of the National Writers Union. Abu-Jamal was made an honorary member of the NWU. Susan Davis and Louis Reyes Rivera from the New York Chapter of the NWU co-chaired the event. An open letter to journalists in support of Abu-Jamal can be read at www.troopsoutnow.org.

—Monica Moorehead

WW PHOTOS: LAL ROOHH



Attack on MOVE remembered



Some of the grandchildren of the MOVE 9 and other MOVE children participated in a protest on May 13. The young children helped hand out flyers, held signs and yelled slogans into a bull-horn on the 22nd anniversary of the vicious 1985 government bombing and murder of MOVE family members in Philadelphia.

Besides commemorating that horrible crime, MOVE members and others also demonstrated today in support of the MOVE 9, who have been in prison since 1978—almost 30 years—and will be up for parole in 2008. The nine were sentenced to 30 years for the “crime” of being in a building withstanding a full-scale attack by Philadelphia police, during which a cop was killed. The building was bulldozed over within 24 hours of the attack, destroying evidence that could have proven their innocence.

—Report and photo by Joe Piette

U.S. delegation visits Rue Mumia



The first anniversary of the naming of Rue Mumia Abu-Jamal (Mumia Abu-Jamal Street) in St. Denis, France, was celebrated with a march and rally in a park near the street on April 29. A U.S. delegation attended the event, including Pam Africa, Linn Washington, Harold Wilson, Suzanne Ross and Sundiata Sadiq. The French hosts “were surprised by the controversy caused back in the states” by their honoring one of the world’s most famous political prisoners, Sadiq said.

—Gary Wilson

Cops kill three people in three days

By Martha Grevatt
Cleveland

“He was doing real good,” Hugh Steele said of his son Aaron. Aaron had just completed training at an auto mechanic school and had begun working for the Regional Transit Authority.

“It’s a shame that something like this can happen when a kid just went somewhere to drop his girlfriend off and came back home to get prepared for work.”

“Something like this” refers to Aaron’s death May 8 at the hands of Cleveland police, who initially stopped the young man for playing his radio too loud. Police, who allege Aaron pointed a gun at them, fired a barrage of bullets. According to the coroner, Aaron was shot 16 times, 13 times in the back. Seeking further justification, police are claiming Aaron Steele had crack cocaine in his pocket—as if that were a capital offense.

This was the second killing this year by Cleveland police, but not the last. On May 9 police attempted to pull over Steven Ray,

who they supposedly thought was conducting a drug sale with two other men—while driving! The high speed chase that followed gave Ray a broken leg and killed John J. Rankin, a driver of a separate vehicle who was just in the wrong place at the wrong time.

Witnesses say that orders from superiors to halt the chase in the interest of public safety were ignored. “They did not stop for one second until the accident happened,” a woman told the news media.

Unbelievably, the very next day, 22-year-old Ira Mitchell died in a car crash after fleeing police, who claim Mitchell was also involved in a drug transaction. A woman in another vehicle was also injured.

The daily newspaper, the Plain Dealer, considers it newsworthy that just three days after Steele’s killing “the deaths this week have yet to spark any significant protests.”

In fact, activists are respectfully waiting to hear the wishes of the grieving families before taking action. By the Plain Dealer’s own accounts, Steele’s family does not view the killing as justified. A May 13 let-

ter to the editor questions the policy of “engaging in high-speed pursuit in a heavily populated area.” Support for the police is hardly unanimous.

While Steele, Ray and Mitchell all were Black, the newspaper insists that racism is not an issue. “The line appears to be drawn between law-and-order supporters and those who either subscribe to thug culture or had a personal connection with the suspects.” How can such biased reporting pass for news?

In the same article reporter Gabriel Baird recounts last month’s tragic shooting of 15-year-old Arthur Buford. When Buford allegedly tried to rob Damon Wells outside his home at gunpoint, Wells shot and killed Buford. Baird calls it “perplexing” that Buford’s peers created a memorial shrine with stuffed animals. Wells has been portrayed as a hero. In fact, Wells, distraught over having killed a child, has stated that at one time he could have been Buford.

Continuing the demonization of Buford and Steele, white columnist Regina Brett

calls for “a united front against lawlessness.” She makes the outrageous claim that “this is the new civil rights movement.” Brett cites the many Black readers who have called and written in support of Wells.

Most everyone wants to live in an environment that is safe and drug-free. However, the murderous forces of so-called law-and-order will never get the drugs out of the communities. Some are actually drug dealers themselves, from the cop on the beat to the CIA. The repeated claims by police of having found drugs on those they kill are suspicious.

Some of Cleveland’s African-American neighborhoods have an unemployment rate of 80 percent. Why not make drug treatment readily available and why not give the youth jobs at union wages?

The Cleveland Lucasville Five Defense Committee will demonstrate on May 17, combining its demand for freedom for the Lucasville Five and Mumia Abu-Jamal with a call for justice for Steele, Rankin, and Mitchell. □

Remembering Kent and Jackson State

By Caleb Maupin

Thirty-seven years ago, demonstrating students were shot and killed at Kent State University in rural Ohio and Jackson State in Mississippi. New evidence has emerged about what happened at Kent State so many years ago.

In the year 1970, insurrection was breaking out all across the country. When President Richard Nixon announced the U.S. invasion of Cambodia on April 30, students opposed to the Vietnam War refused to go to classes. A nationwide student strike followed.

At the same time, truck drivers in the Teamsters union were on strike all over Ohio. Gov. James A. Rhodes sent the National Guard to patrol the city of Cleveland and they violently clashed with the striking workers.

Something brewing in Kent

On May 1, Kent students held a demonstration of around 400 people. Just that day, after the charter of the campus chapter of Students for a Democratic Society had been revoked, the students formed a new radical organization on campus.

That evening fights broke out in local bars as students expressed their outrage over the escalation of the war. Suddenly thousands of youth were cast out into the streets. Their numbers multiplied to thousands. Chanting anti-war slogans, some gathered around a bonfire in the middle of the street.

In the ensuing rebellion, these working class students began to fight with police, countering their nightsticks with glass bottles. The Kent State May 4th Task Force said the targets of student rebels were "mainly political" that night. Of the 43 windows that were broken, 28 were at a bank. Many understood what Workers World Party was expressing at the time with its slogan "Big firms get rich while G.I.s die."

Bikers fought alongside hippies. Youth of many different ethnicities and nationalities armed themselves with sticks and rocks and fought together against the police. Anti-war slogans filled the air. The police were outnumbered and losing their grip. Something was clearly brewing in the streets of Kent, something that Governor Rhodes, then currently running for the U.S. Senate on a "law and order" ticket, needed to suppress.

The mayor of Kent declared a state of emergency and a dusk-to-dawn curfew. He also requested that Gov. Rhodes send in the National Guard.

The next evening, a crowd of 300 students defied the curfew, gathering on the campus commons and chanting anti-war slogans as the sun went down. They marched through the dormitories of the campus, and again their numbers grew to thousands.



National Guard troops were ordered to point loaded weapons and fire on the Kent State students. Four were killed. Days later two students were killed by police at Jackson State.

The students surrounded the building of the campus ROTC, an old building that had already been boarded up and was scheduled to be demolished.

The rage the students felt at seeing their brothers, uncles and fathers come home in body bags was turned against a symbol of the military apparatus of the U.S. Windows were broken. Students attempted twice to burn the building down, but both times their efforts were foiled by the local fire department with police protection.

The protest moved on to another location and then fizzled out. As students returned from the protest, they noticed that the ROTC building, after being extinguished twice, was suddenly up in flames once again. Though some gathered and rejoiced at the burning of the building, it is still unclear what made it happen.

The response

The next day, May 3, Gov. Rhodes declared on national television that the student rebels in Kent were "the worst type of people we harbor in America, worse than the Brown Shirts and the communist element." He even compared them to "nightriders" and "vigilantes," a clear reference to the Ku Klux Klan.

As he was giving the speech, the campus of Kent State University filled with National Guard units. Encampments were set up. Armored vehicles patrolled the streets. The city became a war zone. The student slogan that had echoed around campus just two days before, "Bring the war home," had been fulfilled.

It was really a class war, between the mostly working class students of a public university who opposed the war, and the official body of armed men defending the state—Ohio, the U.S. government and the capitalist class that rules them both.

It confirmed what Russian revolutionary V.I. Lenin had written back in 1917, in his famous work "The State and Revolution." What the essence of the state boils down to is not politicians but "special bodies of armed men."

Thousands of students gathered on campus only to be met by the National

Guard. Helicopters flew over them spraying teargas. The National Guard broke up their demonstration violently.

On May 4, the students gathered once again. At first it was a small crowd of 200, but it soon reached 1,500. They were told that all public gatherings were illegal, but remained strong. They were told to disperse but pumped their fists in opposition and refused.

Teargas canisters were fired at the youth, who threw them back.

The troops were ordered to point their loaded weapons at the students. With the nearest student only 60 feet away, according to the FBI's own report, the Guard opened fire. For 13 seconds the shots continued, 67 in all.

Four people were killed. Nine more were seriously wounded.

All around the country colleges shut down. Thirty ROTC buildings were burned in the following two weeks. Five days later 100,000 marched in Washington, D.C. Nixon's speechwriter described it as "civil war." Battles between the police and the anti-war movement broke out all over.

Jackson State

Youth at Jackson State College, now Jackson State University, in Jackson, Miss., took to the streets in rebellion 10 days after the shooting at Kent. The mostly Black youth frequently had endured racist taunts and harassments from racist whites driving past as they walked to class. These Southern racists were outraged that Black people were permitted to attend college.

Just eight years earlier, thousands of armed vigilantes in the same state had occupied the University of Mississippi to prevent a single Black student from attending.

On May 14 the Black youth of Jackson State College, in response to the killings at Kent State, their outrage at the Vietnam War, and their continual harassment at the hands of the local population, took control of Lynch Street, a major roadway. They lit a dumpster on fire, turned over a truck and blocked traffic.

Some 75 local police plus state troop-

ers were soon on the scene to dispel the students, but failed. The crowd of merely 100 students fought back against nightsticks, bayonets and teargas with bricks and rocks. They defiantly mocked the police with what the press called "obscene catcalls."

Out of the blue, the authorities opened fire. Some witnesses say a campus security guard had already calmed the crowd when the shots began. Authorities later claimed they had seen a "powder flash" as justification for firing hundreds of shots. Some 460 of the bullets hit a nearby dormitory.

Two youths were killed and countless others wounded. One who was killed, James Earl Green, was behind the police line, meaning that an officer must have turned around in order to kill him.

As students lay bleeding on the ground, police refused to allow ambulances to be called until they had carefully picked up shell casings that could be used as evidence against them. Finally, the students were taken to a hospital for medical care.

A gripping account of what happened can be found at the Jackson State University web site.

New evidence at Kent State

Alan Canfora is a survivor of the Kent State massacre. He was shot in the wrist by the National Guard when the shooting began. He is currently director of the Kent May Fourth Center and recently came into possession of a tape recording during research for a forthcoming book.

The tape was recorded by students at Kent State who put a microphone to a dorm window as the events of May 4 unfolded. Canfora says the words "Get set, point, fire" can be heard on the tape, showing that an order was given to shoot the students.

The corporate media has come down hard on Canfora for his release of this tape. Columnist Connie Schultz in the May 4 Cleveland Plain Dealer labeled Canfora someone who "made a name for himself as the Kent State survivor who won't shut up."

But the tape goes to the heart of the question. The state claimed individual guardsmen were nervous and shot out of fear. But if a command was issued to fire on the students, then it implies a wider conspiracy to cover it up.

Countless times when the people of the U.S. have been in revolt, the government has used violent means to suppress them. The shootings at Kent State and Jackson State, while they show the capitalist state is only too willing to employ tactics that violate the "rule of law" and the "freedom" so touted in this country, also show that the movement can survive these atrocities and win its goals.

Five years later, after the rebellions spread to the armed forces themselves, the U.S. had to pull its last troops out of Southeast Asia and end the war. □

Victory for 'David Price Six'

By Ben Carroll
Chapel Hill, N.C.

Due to overwhelming community support and pressure on North Carolina Rep. David Price, first degree trespassing charges were dropped against six students who were arrested during a February 16 occupation of Price's Chapel Hill office demanding that he vote against war funding.

The six members of both Raleigh FIST (Fight Imperialism-Stand Together) and Chapel Hill SDS (Students for a Democratic Society), dubbed the "David Price Six," appeared in court on May 7 to

face trespassing charges stemming from the occupation of Rep. Price's office on February 16, expecting a full trial. Prior to when the trial was supposed to begin, a powerful rally with over 100 supporters was held on the steps of the courthouse, during which time solidarity statements were delivered from other organizations, and supporters chanted against the war and continued war funding. Those rallying outside packed the courthouse when the time came, demonstrating support and solidarity with the six facing charges. The David Price Six had planned to use the witness box to project their political message and put Rep. Price, the Democratic

Party and the Iraq war on trial. Instead, when their lawyers presented a letter written by David Price asking for the charges to be dropped, the judge dismissed the case in the "interest of justice."

With the courtroom no longer available as a platform to put forth their politics, the six students and their supporters again took to the steps of the courthouse, this time to testify as they would have in court. They demanded that Price and other Democrats, who were elected into the majority of both houses of Congress in November 2006 with a mandate to



end the war, move beyond empty rhetoric and take concrete steps to end the war—this means cutting off the war funds now! The six pointed to the needs of people here—including rebuilding the Gulf Coast and

providing health care, education, housing, jobs, and childcare—that the money that is continuing the occupation should be used for. While the Democrats and the rest of the politicians in Washington continue to play games with war funding and hide behind non-binding timetables, the working people of this country continue

Continued on the next page

ON THE PICKET LINE

by Sue Davis

Still fighting for better health benefits

Why did thousands of grocery workers in Southern California strike for nearly five months beginning in October 2003? To win health benefits.

What's the main issue for their new labor contract?

To win better health benefits.

Local 770 of the Food and Commercial Workers broke off negotiations May 8 because of a proposal by Ralphs, Vons, and Albertsons supermarket chains that would "gut the trust fund that purchases health insurance for workers." (Los Angeles Times, May 10)

But Local President Rick Icaza told the newspaper, "We want to get back to the table." Union priorities include reducing the 12- to 18-month waiting period for "second-tier" employees to get health insurance and improving their pay and benefits. Second tier refers to roughly 33,000 lower-paid workers hired by the three chains since 2004.

Help Toyota workers

Workers at the Georgetown, Ky., Toyota plant testified at a town hall forum on March 31 that workers injured on the job never came back to work and full-time workers were being replaced by temporary workers earning half their pay. Those workers earn so little they can't afford health insurance.

Why is this happening? Sean Sudo, an executive in Toyota's North American division, was quoted in the Feb. 8 Detroit Free Press as saying that "the company should strive to align hourly wages more closely with prevailing manufacturing pay in the state where each plant is located and not tie ourselves so closely to the U.S. auto industry or other competitors." In Kentucky in 2005, for instance, manufacturing wages were 56 percent of motor vehicle manufacturing wages.

Working Families, an outreach arm of the AFL-CIO, is asking people to sign a petition demanding justice for Toyota workers. Go to www.unionvoice.org/campaign/toyota-respect-workers.

D.C. carpenters picket

The Mid-Atlantic Regional Council of Carpenters has been picketing Capitol Drywall Inc. in downtown Washington, D.C., several times a week. The workers, all people of color, charge the company with paying below-area-standard wages and unsafe working conditions. Their picket line was so loud and compelling it could be heard in hotel rooms across the street. □

Continued from page 4

to suffer and the people of Iraq are forced to live under the violence of occupation. The David Price Six vowed to continue to build the struggle against war funding and maintain pressure on Rep. Price until he acts upon the will of the people he claims to represent.

While the Democratic Party continues maneuvering to pretend that it is offering a challenge to the continuation of the war, the movement must stay in the streets and keep taking actions like those of the David Price Six and the more than 200 other people arrested at the offices of Congressional representatives across the country since February 2007. Every day that the occupation continues, resistance in Iraq and here at home is growing. It is the power of the people that will stop this criminal war, not the whims of politicians in Washington. □

Auto workers wary of backroom deal

Continued from page 1

unprecedented and represents an alarming and dangerous development for the United Auto Workers—indeed, for the entire labor movement.

Private equity firms like Cerberus and its rival Blackstone have one agenda: buy "distressed" companies, shed workers, force concessions, and sell the now-profitable company for many times what they paid for it. As the bankruptcy of Delphi, an auto parts maker spun off by General Motors, has already demonstrated, the workers are the big losers in these transactions.

What makes this deal dangerous is the huge amount of debt the new Chrysler Holding Co. is assuming. By freeing Daimler of all its pension and health care obligations, the new entity will take on some \$20 billion in annual debt. Moreover, the deal itself is a leveraged buy-out. Cerberus investors on Wall Street will surely demand that Chrysler become debt-free fast—on the backs of the workers.

Adding to the danger is the secrecy under which these shadowy firms operate. The complete lack of transparency is the trademark of hedge funds, which go largely unregulated. An April 15 article on Cerberus in the Detroit Free Press explains: "Critics and competitors say secrecy is imperative to success in the takeover business. ... Private equity is by definition private. Its investors don't have to publicize plans; they aren't beholden to public shareholders."

Even the name Cerberus is menacing. Cerberus was the name of the multi-headed dog in Greek mythology that guarded the gates to the underworld. The company's own top dog, Feinberg, rebuffs suggestions that the name be changed to put forward a softer image. With an estimated annual salary of \$75 million, Feinberg apparently regards the mythical beast as a good-luck mascot.

UAW leaders abandon opposition

While he originally opposed the deal, UAW President Ron Gettelfinger has now accepted it and even put a positive spin on it. In a brief news release, he stated, "In an in-depth private meeting with Dr. Dieter Zetsche, Chairman of the Board of Management of DaimlerChrysler AG, and Tom LaSorda, President and CEO of the Chrysler Group, in Stuttgart, it was explained that the status quo for the Chrysler Group was no longer an option. ... After a thorough review, [UAW Vice President] General Holiefield and I concluded that the transaction with Cerberus is in the best interest of our membership, the Chrysler Group and Daimler."

Gettelfinger should know better than to put stock in good faith assurances from Cerberus. This same company is supposedly withdrawing from the purchase of Delphi because the UAW would not agree to huge concessions. The UAW is holding strike preparation meetings with Delphi locals, charging that the company demanded major givebacks, including incredible pay cuts of over 50 percent.

How can Gettelfinger advance the absurd notion that this same Cerberus is union-friendly when it comes to Chrysler?

Why should the union be concerned with what is best for Chrysler, let alone

Daimler? Do the companies make it their concern what's in the best interest of the UAW membership?

Even if Snow keeps his word, the deal cements the cuts announced by DaimlerChrysler in February of 13,000 jobs in the U.S. and Canada.

Less conciliatory was Canadian Auto Workers President Buzz Hargrove, who demanded a written guarantee from Chrysler CEO Tom LaSorda that there will be no further layoffs in Canada beyond the 2,000 announced last February. After receiving a written letter allaying his concerns, he too got on board.

Early indications suggest the rank and file, while still confused, do not support the deal. An online poll by the Detroit News, which undoubtedly included many autoworkers, showed 72 percent opposed the Cerberus takeover. Online comments from workers suggest the same. Here's a sample:

"It's a shame people forget what others fought for. Most people in our country would be subjected to sub-standard living if it hadn't been for unions."

"What percent of jobs will be eliminated as this buyout progresses?"

"They sell us to these SOBs who will strip away what we worked for."

"When will the people here, the haters, realize unions are not [responsible for] all the 'legacy costs' but rather, all employees that retire. That includes the higher up executives. You know, the ones that put in all those 6 to 10 years and walk away with millions of dollars. That is where the biggest part of Legacy Costs are found. An equity corporation may not know the first thing about an assembly line, but they sure know how to assemble and restructure pension funds, benefits, all else profitable within the employee benefit package."

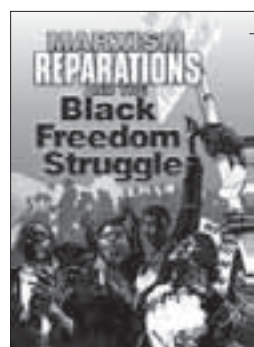
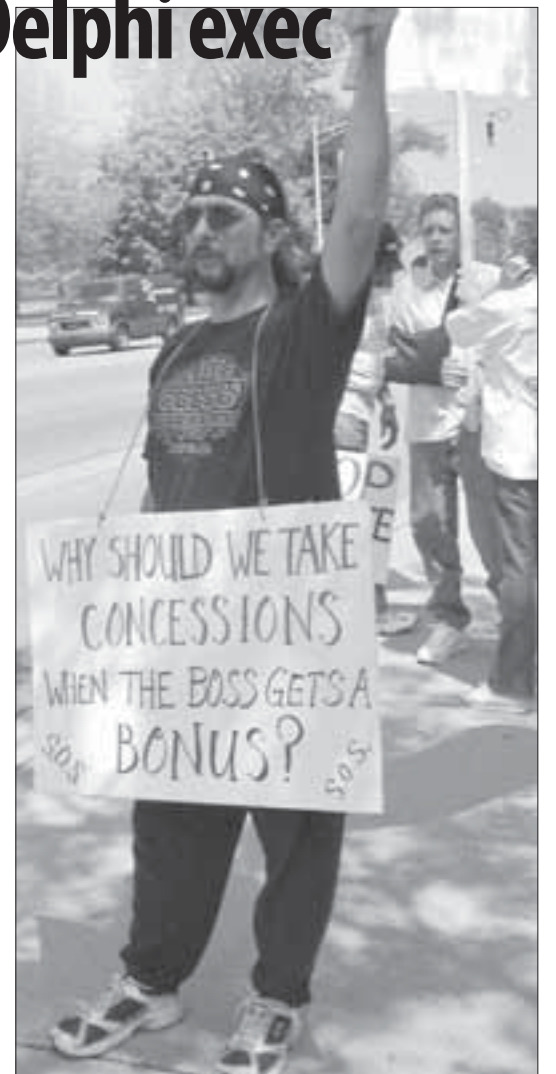
SoS pickets Delphi exec

Delphi Vice President Karen Healy gave a presentation to the Regional Chamber of Commerce's Economic Club in Lansing, Mich., on May 10. The well-dressed crowd who came to hear her had to drive their fancy cars past a picket line of auto workers chanting "Cut bonuses, not wages" and "Not one dollar, not one dime, cutting pensions is a crime." The picket line was organized by Soldiers of Solidarity.

Healy was unable to answer a question posed by SoS founder Gregg Shotwell, who pointed out that cuts in supervision have not kept pace with the cutting of over 10,000 union jobs, creating a ratio of supervisors to workers of 1:2 and costing Delphi over half a billion dollars. Shotwell also pointed out that Delphi, which posted an inconsequential loss of \$11 million in March, would have turned a profit except for executive bonuses of \$37 million—approved by the bankruptcy court.

Nevertheless, Delphi continues to use its alleged financial woes to demand huge concessions from the United Auto Workers. "It's my opinion that this was a deliberate strategy to bankrupt the company and break the union," charged SoS spokesperson Stacey Kemp.

—Report & photo by Martha Grevatt



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To combat AIDS

Cuba mobilized years before first diagnosis

By Leslie Feinberg

The Reagan administration tried to whip up world anger at Cuba's handling of the AIDS epidemic. In reality, Cuba took an immediate, scientific and humane approach to people with AIDS.

In the U.S., AIDS was first diagnosed in 1981. By May 1983, simultaneous gay and lesbian protests of tens of thousands had to take to the streets in New York City, San Francisco, Los Angeles, Houston, Atlanta, Chicago and Milwaukee under banners reading "Fighting for our lives!" to demand federal funds to battle AIDS, and for research, services and Social Security benefits.

A day later, activists organized a telephone blitz of the White House to protest government inaction and to demand funds. It was to date the largest number of calls to the Oval Office in a single day in its history. The president had still not publicly said the word AIDS, while theo-cons demonized the emerging health crisis as a "gay plague."

By contrast, Cuba's health care workers began preparations to defend the whole population from the AIDS epidemic two years before the first case was diagnosed on the island in 1985. Cuba spared no expense despite the chokehold of the U.S.-led blockade.

Cuba—unlike the U.S.—mobilized against AIDS, not against people with AIDS. Researchers Lourdes Arguelles and B. Ruby Rich observed in the autumn of 1987 that, "Cuba is unusual in publicizing the disease, not as a gay disease, but rather as a sexually transmitted disease regardless of specific sexual practice."

Planning to protect population

After members of the Cuban Health Ministry took part in a workshop organized by the Pan-American Health Organization in August 1983, they immediately set up a national commission to research and create a plan of action to prevent AIDS in Cuba. (Karen Wald, *Guardian*, Oct. 28, 1987)

The National Commission to Face AIDS Syndrome formed in 1983. (*Denver Post*, Feb. 10, 2003)

The commission immediately blocked the import of all blood products from countries in which the epidemic was already documented.

The commission recommended discarding more than 20,000 vials of imported blood, worth millions of dollars.

Getting rid of all imported blood prod-

ucts greatly burdened the Cuban health system and forced the country to ratchet up local production. However, this urgent action resulted in avoiding HIV transmission to almost all hemophiliacs and others who needed blood transfusions. (*Financial Times*, Feb. 16, 2003)

A multi-disciplinary team of doctors and researchers was assigned to work full time on AIDS. Political journalist Wald wrote, "Their first move was to prepare a diagnostic screening program based on concrete symptoms that could be seen in hospitals, such as repeated cases of pneumonia or Kaposi's sarcoma type of cancer, which indicated possible AIDS. Hospitals were asked to give weekly reports on findings of these symptoms."

Doctors tested more than 135,000 Cubans for HIV in 1983.

Science, not stigma

In 1985, a Cuban who had returned from abroad was the first in the country to be diagnosed with AIDS. The Cuban was one of 300,000 heroes of the revolution who helped defend the people of Mozambique—an African country impoverished by colonialism and battling the forces of imperialism.

In the U.S., Africa and Haiti were being scapegoated as the source of the epidemic, without any scientific proof. In Cuba, however, where many are of African descent because of the history of slavery, health officials did not stigmatize the African continent.

In an interview in *Cuba International*, circa 1987, Dr. Rodolfo Rodríguez, then the national director of epidemiology for the Cuban Ministry of Health, said that while some of the mass media at that time might have been trying to blame the African continent for AIDS, "It is known worldwide that it is the developed Western countries—Europe and the U.S.—that have the largest number of AIDS cases and the largest number of asymptomatic carriers."

In the U.S., homosexuality was still against the law and viciously repressed. The right wing labeled AIDS a "gay disease." This only drove the epidemic deeper into the population. So too did the criminalization of drug addiction and prostitution, both highly profitable industries in the U.S.

There was no known intravenous drug addiction in Cuba, and same-sex love was not against the law.

Cuban health workers tested all pregnant women, people with sexually transmitted diseases, and anyone who might have had sexual contact with someone who was HIV positive. Testing equipment was installed in blood bank centers. (*Denver Post*)

By the end of 1985, Wald wrote, the Cuban government had purchased, despite great expense, all the technical means to screen the island's entire blood supply. "Cuba spent more than \$3 million to buy the reactive agents and equipment, and to set up labs in blood banks and hygiene and epidemiology centers around the country."

That year, the Cuban public health system allocated \$2 million for the National HIV/AIDS Prevention and Control Program, which focused on providing the first 750,000 diagnostic kits and centers. (*MEDICC Review*, Vol. II, No. 1, 2—2001)

Capitalism and contraception

The years of sex education that preceded the outbreak of the epidemic helped to create the basis for a more scientific and compassionate approach to people with AIDS.

However, when faced with a sexually transmissible epidemic like AIDS, Cuba had to overcome a particular capitalist legacy regarding safer-sex education and practices.

Dr. Celestino Álvarez Lajonchere, a gynecologist and ground-breaking sex educator in Cuba, reminded interviewers in 1988, "You know this country inherited a system in which the rural areas and small towns had little or no medical care before the revolution."

He added that before the revolution, illegal abortions were common. They were most often performed by doctors, without anesthesia, in unsanitary conditions.

Álvarez Lajonchere explained: "At the triumph of the revolution, the majority of these abortion doctors left the country. There was no habit in the country of using contraceptives, and contraception did not even appear in the medical school curriculum. ... The private physicians at the time didn't give contraceptive services to their patients because they could charge much more doing abortions."

As a result, he said, "Since people didn't have contraceptive habits, we encountered serious difficulties in the first years after the triumph of the revolution."

While half of all Cuban doctors left the island and went to capitalist countries, 97 percent of the physicians in obstetrics and gynecology emigrated. As a result, Álvarez Lajonchere noted, overnight he became the oldest gynecologist/obstetrician in the country.

Álvarez Lajonchere said that, in addition, within months after the workers and peasants took state power, "[A]ll of the professors at the medical school quit voluntarily, thinking mistakenly that the government could not replace them. The government accepted their resignations. It was a policy in the country, and still is, that if you really don't want to live in this country under socialism you should leave. You can't create a socialist society with people who are disaffected.

"So the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Public Health got together a course for new professors," he continued, "people who could never have been professors before the revolution because of their low social class origins—they didn't come from the upper middle classes."

The medical school faculty was replaced with new professors. "We all left private practice and went to teach. It was an extraordinary advantage that we knew the conditions of medical practice in the country. I became chief of the department of obstetrics and gynecology at the one and only medical school. The first thing I did was to put contraception into the medical school curriculum. There were never any restrictions about who could have access to contraceptives in this country: not by age, not by race, not by anything."

Álvarez Lajonchere added, "Medical services from the very beginning have been free." And the new medical teachers received a higher salary than the president. (*International Journal of Health Services*, Vol. 18, Number 2, 1988)

"The habit of using contraceptives," Álvarez Lajonchere explained, "is a habit that takes time to build. For a population that was accustomed to having abortions, it was easier for them to go to the hospital and have an abortion."

After the revolution, underground abortions in unsanitary conditions increased until 1965. "When we started to do all of them in hospitals, obviously deaths as a result of abortion disappeared."

He added that the number of abortions began to decrease in 1974 as a result of mass education about sex and contraception.

Álvarez Lajonchere concluded: "Our
Continued on 10



FBI plotted attack on Fort Dix

By Gary Wilson

He declared that he wanted to kill "Americans." He came up with a plan to attack Fort Dix, and found an arms dealer willing to sell the necessary munitions.

One attorney said, "Everyone in the community knew him, and he was bad news." (*International Herald Tribune*, May 11)

He pressured six others in their informal group to go along with his plot. He was pressing so forcefully that one of the six, Serdar Tetar, "called a Philadelphia police officer in November, saying he had been approached by someone who was pressuring him to obtain a map of Fort Dix and that he feared it was terrorist-related, according to court documents." (*AP*, May 11)

And who is this plotter? His name is secret, but he works for the FBI. The six

others, who were all arrested and have already been convicted by the big business-controlled news media, were victims of entrapment by the federal police. At least, that's the only inference to be gleaned from the reports of what has been said in court so far.

The legal definition of entrapment is when law enforcement officials entice others to commit a crime they otherwise would not have committed.

All the other fluff thrown up around this case in the media reports—about who the six defendants may or may not be—are like smoke in the eyes. The only one to plot an attack on Fort Dix and arrange to buy weapons for it, according to published reports, is the FBI guy.

It is almost six years since the 9/11 attack on the World Trade Center in New

York City. This attack has been used as an excuse for a long-planned war on Iraq and also for the invasion of Afghanistan. It has also been used to curtail civil rights here and build up internal police forces.

There is growing anger and opposition over not just the wars abroad but the repression at home. Homeland Security's anti-immigrant raids against workers at Smithfield and other workplaces across the country helped spark the May Day demonstrations that drew out millions last year and this.

Local politicians have been forced to protest the vicious Homeland Security raids for fear that the local population will dethrone them. Even one or two local police forces have complained. The governor and state legislature in Montana have gone on record that they will not go along

with the requirement for a national identity card—really a national passport on a piece of plastic.

While the Bush regime appears to have record-low popularity, it has not surrendered. The Democrats too have given no serious opposition to the curtailment of civil liberties and have in fact encouraged the expansion of the federal police forces. But the rumbles of working class opposition to the crackdown on civil liberties can be heard in Washington.

What better time than now for a new "terrorist plot" to emerge—now, when Congress wants to vote for more money for Homeland Security, which is second only to the Pentagon in federal funding. Maybe Bush and the Democrats both hope this new plot scare will save them and their expanding police force. □

Was Posada release a factor?

Two Cubans killed by would-be hijackers

By Jaimeson Champion

On May 3, two weeks after the release by a U.S. court of known terrorist Luis Posada Carriles, two Cuban Army deserters commandeered a civilian bus and used it to enter José Martí Airport, where they unsuccessfully tried to hijack a chartered plane headed for the U.S. Two members of Cuba's Revolutionary Armed Forces were killed while defending the Cuban people from the attack.

The two deserters had first killed sentry Yoendris Gutiérrez as they left their posts at the Managua Army Base armed with automatic rifles. They commandeered a bus from Santiago de las Vegas, near Managua, taking the passengers hostage and forcing the driver to ram the bus through security gates at José Martí International Airport near an area that handles flights between Havana and Miami. The terrified bus passengers were then forced at gunpoint onto an aircraft

bound for the U.S.

One of the bus passengers, Víctor Ibo Acuña Velázquez, a lieutenant colonel in the Revolutionary Armed Forces who was off duty and unarmed and just happened to be riding the bus at the time it was commandeered, was killed aboard the plane while heroically attempting to subdue the hostage takers.

In an article in the Cuban newspaper Granma on May 8, President Fidel Castro emphasized the role that U.S. aid to terrorists who commit crimes against the Cuban people plays in prompting and encouraging incidents like this attempted hijacking.

Castro asserted that the attempted hijacking was "a consequence of freeing the monster of terror. ... The impunity and material benefits that have been rewarded for nearly a half century for all violent actions committed against Cuba stimulate such acts."

The "monster of terror" Fidel Castro

was referring to is Luis Posada Carriles, the CIA-trained killer wanted in connection with a 1976 Cubana Airline bombing that claimed the lives of 73 people. Cuba and Venezuela are both seeking Posada Carriles' extradition to Venezuela in that case. Posada Carriles is also wanted in connection with a string of 1997 hotel bombings in Havana.

The evidence against Posada Carriles can only be described as overwhelming and includes an interview published in the New York Times in which he bragged about his role in these atrocities. (New York Times, July 12 and 13, 1998) But, despite the evidence, and in the face of international protests calling for Posada Carriles to be held accountable for the crimes he has committed, the U.S. regime, the same regime that claims to be fighting a global war on terrorism, freed this international terrorist on April 19.

While the hypocrisy of the empire is perhaps starkest in the release of Posada

Carriles, it is, in fact, as Fidel Castro pointed out in his recent article in Granma, only the latest injustice in what has been a long history of crimes that have been actively fomented, planned and financed by the imperialist regime in Washington.

From the 1961 Bay of Pigs invasion, to the numerous assassination attempts, to the blockade and embargo, and now with the release of the trained murderer Posada Carriles, the U.S. capitalist class has tried every method imaginable in its quest to extinguish the revolutionary socialist society in Cuba. It is a testament to the will of the Cuban people that, despite every act of aggression perpetrated against them, the flag of the Cuban Revolution still flies over José Martí International Airport.

Both Lt. Col. Víctor Ibo Acuña Velázquez and Yoendris Gutiérrez were posthumously awarded the Antonio Maceo Medal of Valor, the highest Cuban military honor, for giving their lives in efforts to stop the would-be hijackers. □

CIA assassin walks free, sparking world outrage

By Leslie Feinberg

Across the U.S. and around the world, angry protesters answered Cuba's call to take to the streets on May 11 in a coordinated day of actions denouncing the release of CIA terror commando Luis Posada Carriles.

U.S. District Judge Kathleen Cardone—appointed to the bench in 2003 by President George W. Bush—tossed out all charges against Posada Carriles on May 8, freeing him just days before he faced trial on immigration fraud.

Demonstrations took place in Mexico, Chile, Peru, Argentina, Spain and Canada, and in more than a dozen U.S. cities.

Many in the U.S. were initiated by the ANSWER coalition and endorsed by a broad front of forces, including U.S. Attorney General Ramsey Clark, Congressperson Cynthia McKinney and the Congress of the Women's International Democratic Federation (WIDF).

Endorsers of these and other actions included the National Lawyers Guild, GABRIELA, the International Action Center, Workers World Party, FIST (Fight Imperialism, Stand Together), National Network on Cuba, Bolivarian Youth—Miami, CLASP (Caribbean & Latin America Support Project), Action Center for Justice, Popular Education Project to Free the Cuban Five, Chicago Committee to Free the Cuban Five, Peace and Justice of La Luz, N.M., Cuba Education Tours, Venezuela Solidarity Network, Socialist Workers Party, Young Socialists and many more groups and individuals.

The release of Posada Carriles could mark a turning point in the anti-imperialist struggle, particularly within the U.S.

Anti-communist terrorist Luis Posada Carriles may have been an asset of the CIA over the quarter century the agency trained him as an operative in munitions and commando invasions, but right now he is a liability to the Bush administration and to U.S. finance capital as a whole. Freeing Posada Carriles, who has bragged about his terrorist killing of civilians, can expose to a larger population in the U.S. and around the world Washington's "war on terror" double-speak regarding its war for empire in the Middle East and Central Asia, its covert dirty wars against Cuba and Venezuela, the hypocrisy of jailing

the Cuban Five for trying to stop terror attacks, and its cynical political manipulation of immigration policies and policing.

'Outrage!'

The National Security Archives at George Washington University publicly released documents on May 18, 2005, that it says "unequivocally prove" Posada Carriles' role in the 1976 mid-air bombing of a Cuban airliner that killed all 73 people on board, many of them youths.

The lead article on the archive's Web site notes that "the CIA had concrete advance intelligence, as early as June 1976, on plans by Cuban exile terrorist groups to bomb a Cubana airliner.

"The Archive also posted another document that shows that the FBI's attaché in Caracas had multiple contacts with one of the Venezuelans who placed the bomb on the plane, and provided him with a visa to the U.S. five days before the bombing, despite suspicions that he was engaged in terrorist activities at the direction of Luis Posada Carriles. Another intelligence report shows that he also organized attacks on Cuban installations in Panama, Colombia and Trinidad in the months before Flight CU-455 was bombed." (Electronic Briefing Book No. 153)

Venezuela has filed for Posada Carriles' extradition to try him on charges of masterminding the plane bombing. Cuba accuses him of being behind a series of 1997 bombings of Havana hotels that killed an Italian tourist. Panama jailed him in a plot to assassinate Fidel Castro. The CIA operative is also accused of running guns to the U.S.-backed Nicaraguan counter-revolutionary mercenaries.

Yet Washington refuses to extradite Posada Carriles to Venezuela, where he escaped from prison, or to Cuba to face charges there. After his release, the Cuban and Venezuelan governments renewed their demand that the U.S. stop violating international law and honor the extradition request by Venezuela.

Posada Carriles has admitted sneaking into the U.S. through Mexico. Clearly he still has friends in high places; he didn't have to risk his life crossing the desert on foot, or face the gun barrels of the Minutemen. His presence in the anti-communist political citadel in Miami was an open secret.



Ramsey Clark speaks at New York protest over terrorist's release.

WW PHOTO: DEIRDRE GRISWOLD

When a million Cubans demonstrated, demanding the U.S. extradite him—and he came out of "open hiding" to hold a media conference—the CIA operative was picked up in May 2005 and charged with minor immigration violations.

"Trying him for minor immigration infractions was a travesty of justice and was designed to fool people into believing the government was serious about prosecuting this man," charged José Pertierra, a Washington-based attorney representing the extradition demand of the Bolivarian Venezuelan government.

But the release of this accused assassin and torturer, known around the world to have masterminded CIA-bankrolled terrorist attacks on the Cuban population, strips the mantle off Wall Street's war of terror.

It creates the basis for a wider mobilization of mass consciousness about the need to take the anti-war movement to the stage of active resistance. It lifts the rock off the undeclared half century of illegal warfare by U.S. imperialism: invasion and infiltration, sabotage and subterfuge, the military and political blockade of Cuba, and the covert attempts to carry out "regime change" after the Venezuelan people chose Hugo Chávez to lead the Bolivarian Revolution.

Letting Posada Carriles, who boasts of his terror killings of civilians, walk freely in the streets of Miami creates an opening to raise the struggle to free the Cuban Five—five brave Cubans who infiltrated the CIA-commando network in order to halt terror attacks against the island. The Cuban Five were tried in Miami, dominated by the CIA-linked, right-wing exile community.

While Washington and its border police and Minutemen and media declare war on undocumented workers, unleashing police state raids on workplaces and homes, Posada Carriles can slip across the border at will. Hypocritical U.S. immigration manipulation invites Cubans to risk their lives at sea in a propaganda ploy, while turning back Haitians who are fleeing U.S.-backed terror in their homeland.

Venezuelan President Hugo Chávez called the U.S. "a terrorist empire," and added, "The release of this terrorist must be denounced and a demand made for justice with outrage."

This outrage is a compelling opportunity to turn up the heat, with a high degree of unity.

Feinberg is an initiator of Rainbow Solidarity for the Cuban Five (www.freethetfiveny.org).

'Profound changes in capitalism are reshaping working class'

Fred Goldstein of the Secretariat of Workers World Party represented the party at an International Communist Symposium in Brussels, Belgium, on May 4-6. Below is the text of his talk to that gathering.

Today I would like to take up a theme that is the subject of an upcoming book on globalization, imperialism and the struggle for socialism in the 21st century that I am working on for my party. I raise it because there are profound structural changes in world capitalism that are reshaping the international working class. This transformation is already affecting the class struggle everywhere and will continue to do so as these structural changes deepen, particularly in the United States, and our party tries to see where we are in the unfolding of the post-Soviet phase of the struggle for socialism.

The globalization of capitalist production and services that is now underway requires a further extension of Lenin's work on imperialism. His book, "Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism," is the bedrock and starting point of all analysis of imperialism. The outline of imperialism's fundamental features—the domination of monopoly, of finance-capital, its predatory nature, etc.—are as applicable today as they ever were. And it is only in terms of Lenin's basic categories and Marx's labor theory of value that the global restructuring can be analyzed and understood.

There are two new realities that dominate the globe in the present period. The first is the collapse of the USSR and Eastern Europe and all its attendant negative consequences for the liberation movements and semi-independent regimes which lost whatever protection against total imperialist domination the socialist camp could offer. Of course, this collapse was preceded by the retreat of the Chinese revolution and its opening up to capitalism. And this has been accompanied by the drastic widening of the door to India for the multinational corporations and banks.

The second new reality is the scientific-technological revolution that has enabled the imperialist ruling class to expand in new ways. The expansion of the multinational corporations in the wake of the collapse of the USSR and Eastern Europe, their first real territorial expansion in 75 years, is not merely a quantitative extension of the reach of the monopolies. The expansion also represents a qualitative leap forward.

Communist groups meet in Belgium

The following release, issued by the Workers Party of Belgium, describes what was achieved at a recent international meeting of communists there.

The annual International Communist Seminar (ICS) was held in Brussels, from May 4 to 6. As the 90th anniversary of the Great October Socialist Revolution will be celebrated later this year, the main theme of the seminar was "The validity and current relevance of the October Revolution of 1917 for the 21st century." Fifty-three communist and workers' parties and organizations from 41 countries participated in the seminar. The reports presented contained elements of reflection and analysis on the October Revolution's significance as well as concrete examples of its current relevance for today's working class and people's struggles and for the building

A multitude of advances in the productive forces—computerization, fiber optic cables, satellites, super-freighters, automated port technology, Internet technology, software used to control and monitor global production, etc.—have created a new international division of labor which is affecting the class struggle and requires new strategy and tactics. It represents a significant evolution of capitalism.

In the earlier period of imperialism, there was a dominant international division of labor overall in the world capitalist system. The oppressed peoples in the colonial and semi-colonial areas were mostly confined to doing the back-breaking work of supplying natural resources, working the mines and plantations, the ports, building roads and railroads, etc. They supplied the imperialist centers where manufacturing and administration was located. Under these circumstances, the opportunity for the imperialists to create direct wage competition between the oppressed and their own domestic working classes was limited.

The super-exploitation of the oppressed and the garnering of super-profits, so clearly described by Lenin, were constrained by geography and geology. To engage in super-exploitation required establishing a labor process. But under the old methods of production, the location and degree of super-exploitation were largely determined by the location and richness of the mines, oil wells, arable land, available workers and so forth.

The development of the productive forces has set the bosses free from these limitations on their spheres of super-exploitation. Today, low-wage workers can be subjugated by capital virtually anywhere in the world, regardless of geography or geology.

With the scientific-technological revolution the most advanced labor processes, that is, the super-exploitation of labor, can be established almost anywhere that the bosses can find workers—whether in Singapore, Lesotho, Costa Rica, Bangladesh, Taiwan, Romania, Spain or the southern United States. The production of commodities, from the simplest to the most complex, can be broken up into different stages, these stages parceled out by the monopolies to coordinated global production networks, and surplus value realized in markets thousands of miles from production at minimal transportation costs.

and the tasks of the communist and workers' parties. [Most reports are available on www.icsbrussels.org, the web page of the ICS.]

Part of the seminar was dedicated to the drafting, discussion and adoption of a General Resolution on "The type of party needed to respond to the challenges of the 21st century." The resolution reaffirms the identity of the Communist Parties as having three main characteristics: a Leninist party, a vanguard party linked with the masses, and an internationalist party. [The resolution is available at www.icsbrussels.org, and signatures can be sent to ics@icsbrussels.org.]

Several specific resolutions were presented at the seminar. One expresses solidarity with Cuba in its fight to obtain

And this development has taken place virtually simultaneously with the global expansion of the exploitable labor force. By some bourgeois estimates, the collapse of the USSR, together with China's "open door" policy and the penetration of India, has brought 3 billion people into the orbit of imperialism and perhaps 1.5 billion workers who are newly available for super-exploitation and are living in low-wage, high-unemployment areas.

A worldwide wage competition is being organized by the bosses, pitting low-wage workers in the countries suffering from the legacy of imperialism and colonialism against the workers in the imperialist countries. Marx showed as early as 1847 in the Communist Manifesto that competition among the workers is the basic weapon of the bourgeoisie to keep the workers from overthrowing capitalism.

He also analyzed wages as the price of labor power that is bought at its value, which, he showed, is what it costs to maintain a worker and his/her family. In his analysis of wages and the value of labor power, Marx demonstrated that the necessary means of subsistence was determined differently for each nation according to the standard of living shaped for the workers under specific historical conditions. The poorer the country, the lower the necessary means of subsistence. The more developed the country and the stronger the organization of the workers, the higher the accustomed necessary subsistence.

In the present phase of global capitalist restructuring, the national determination of the price of labor power, of the necessary means of subsistence in the imperialist centers, is being dissolved in one job category after another. Wages are more and more being determined internationally and being driven by the bosses in the direction of the lowest global level. To the capitalists, the necessary means of subsistence should be what is required in Mumbai or Shanghai rather than in Detroit or Stuttgart.

When Lenin analyzed the results of the export of capital by the monopolies, he showed how imperialist super-profits fortified the privileges of sections of the workers in the imperialist countries and created a corrupted social base of support for the ruling class.

However, with the reorganization of the capitalist international division of labor,

Support for undocumented workers in U.S.

The Brussels conference endorsed the following resolution, introduced by the U.S. delegates.

We want to extend our solidarity and congratulations to all the organizers of the hundreds of thousands of immigrants who came out on the streets, from Los Angeles and San Francisco to Chicago, Minneapolis and Milwaukee, to Phoenix and Tucson to New York City and Washington, D.C., and many other cities throughout the United States on May Day to demand full rights, an end to raids and deportations and a better life.

We also want to demand an end to the vilification of over 12 million undocumented workers in the United States who are being demonized in a constant barrage of racist attacks by right-wing politicians and the big business media. Thousands of undocumented workers are being rounded up in factory raids every month

the export of capital, the essential economic feature of monopoly capital, is more and more becoming an instrument not only for the destruction of the most privileged workers, but for rolling back all the social and economic gains won through struggle for generations. This process is not only weakening the basis for opportunism, it is eroding the objective basis for working class support for capitalist exploitation. And where the objective basis is undermined, the subjective is sure to follow. That is materialism; that is Marxism; being determines consciousness.

The stability in the U.S. is no longer based primarily on the privileges of the workers. It is fragile, conditional and based primarily upon a ruthless offensive by the ruling class.

The advanced workers must be made conscious of the machinations of the bosses to engineer this wage competition. The answer is not to deny jobs to workers in India or Mexico. They need jobs, too. We must strive to explain to the U.S. workers what their bosses have done to Mexico, what the British imperialists did to the Indian workers and peasants. And the issue should be turned around. There must be jobs both in the U.S. and in Mexico—not either/or. And they must be jobs at living wages. Workers in the U.S. must know that their fate is bound up with the fate of the workers in India and Mexico. White workers must know that their fate is bound up with that of Black, Latino and Asian workers, and that means immigrant workers, too.

This struggle will require the highest international solidarity, cross-border organizing and coordination to counter the global schemes of the bosses; and capital has given the workers the technological means to facilitate such organizing. It will require the most strenuous struggle against national oppression and for class unity to break up attempts to divide our class; and it needs the greatest efforts on behalf of solidarity with immigrant workers, whose plight is just another part of capitalist globalization and the fever for low wages that has gripped the bosses in the wake of the collapse of the USSR.

International class solidarity abroad and class solidarity at home are fundamental prerequisites for the struggle for socialism in the 21st century on the road to working class power. □

by Bush's racist, repressive Department of Homeland Security and carted off to concentration camps in the Southwest of the United States. Families are being torn apart and lives and futures are being destroyed by this heartless persecution.

We recognize that the millions of undocumented workers, from Mexico to El Salvador to the Philippines—from Asia, Africa and the Middle East—have been driven to leave their native lands, their cultures and their families because their countries have been impoverished by the imperialist economic invasion by the giant multinational corporations and banks and the IMF, headed by the U.S. Having come to the United States, they have every right to stay here with full rights.

End the raids and deportations!

Full rights for undocumented workers in the United States!

There are no borders in the workers' struggle. □

Continued on page 10

Outraged over Colombian death squads

Protesters confront Uribe in D.C.

By Calima
Washington, D.C.

Around 100 people protested the visit of Colombian President Álvaro Uribe Vélez to Washington on May 2.

This was Uribe's 10th visit to the U.S. since he took office in 2002. His purpose this time was to guarantee that the Democrat-controlled Congress gives final

approval to pending agreements: Plan Colombia and the Free Trade Agreement (FTA). However, the accords have been deadlocked due to the critical situation of human rights in Colombia and to the latest "parapolitical" scandal. Eight government officials there have been charged and imprisoned because of their links with deadly paramilitaries.

Democratic Party politicians seem

to be using the FTA and Plan Colombia to manipulate public opinion on their behalf, portraying themselves as progressive human rights advocates.

Uribe came here to clean up his reputation of being a defender of paramilitary groups. Instead, he was surprised by chants of "asesino" (assassin) from a group of students, human rights activists, refugees and union members who were

waiting outside the American Center for Progress, where Uribe was to attend a meeting with NGOs.

The protesters came in defense of the dignity and humanity of the people struggling in Colombia against a brutal genocide by paramilitary forces aligned with the state. Inside the center, activists and students got up in the middle of the conference room and chanted, "Colombia is not for sale." They then unfurled a banner with the same slogan. Videos of the demonstration can be seen on YouTube.com by searching for "Uribe in Washington."

During an exchange in the meeting held in the American Center for Progress, Uribe once more showed his irresponsibility by calling Gerardo Cajamarca, a Colombian unionist in exile in the U.S., "a terrorist without camouflage." This labeling gives a clear signal to Colombian paramilitaries, who keep a "hit list."

These paramilitaries terrorize entire Afro Colombian, Indigenous and peasant communities.

A Colombian activist described the death squads' work: "Like the invention of a new kind of soccer game, in the small villages where these paramilitary groups arrive, they call out the residents and meet with them in the main plaza of the village. Once there, they call one of the families that reside in the area. Five or six human beings are taken to the center of the square and in front of the rest of the community, a paramilitary takes a little child with one hand and with the other holds a chainsaw. He uses it to cut the little child alive into little parts in front of his family and the rest of the community. Then the paramilitaries cut the rest of the family alive in parts and with the head of the husband, the paramilitaries play soccer in front of the community.

"When the game is over the paramilitaries shoot the peasants. This is called a massacre. This is not a description of the last Tarantino movie, 'Texas Chainsaw Massacre.' This is reality. It has been sponsored by corporations like Chiquita Brands, Drummond, Coca-Cola, Nestlé, Monsanto and the rest of the international and local corporations."

Calima, the contributor of this article, is active in the movement of international solidarity with the Colombian people.

PORTUGAL

Workers prepare general strike

By André Levy
Lisbon, Portugal

Unions in Portugal plan to hold a general strike on May 30 to protest cuts in social services, wages and job security.

After the fall of a right-wing coalition government in 2005, Portugal was swept by a deep desire for change in regime and in the social-economic situation. The opposition Socialist Party (PS) was the big winner in the elections at that time. This party obtained the absolute majority of seats in parliament and formed a new government.

As with other so-called "socialist" parties in Europe, the PS has abandoned any connection with real socialism or even with winning reformist concessions for the working class. The PS fully subscribes to the program of anti-worker social and economic change known as "neoliberalism." Indeed, the PS regime has carried out this attack on workers' rights more extensively than the previous more right-wing government.

For example, the government claims that it needs to reduce the public budget because conditions for membership in the European Union (EU) and the Euro-currency system demand no more than a 3-percent budget deficit. The PS government has already made changes in the public sector that mean in practice less job security, forced mobility to find work, an increase in retirement age and threats to social security.

Workers in various public-sector areas reacted by organizing strikes, marches and protests. These workers included teachers, public administration, transport workers, nurses, consulate workers, judges and postal workers. Even police officers and military personnel participated in job actions.

Attempt to split workers

The government also adopted new deceptive terminology as part of a blatant attempt to drive a wedge between workers in the public and private sectors. It referred to the hard-won rights of the workers in the public sector as "privileges." But private-sector workers also face fierce attacks, with increased unemployment and a predominance of short-term contracts and temporary labor. Youth are particularly affected, including those who recently graduated from college.

The regime asks workers to tighten their belts so that Portugal may adjust its budget and "modernize" its public sector. Small- and medium-sized companies also face increased economic difficulties. Yet the large corporations, particularly the banks, are reaping in profits in record amounts.

Over the last year, 20 percent of workers here saw their real wages decline after adjusting for inflation. Two million Portuguese live under the poverty level. One



On May Day, shown here, labor mobilized for general strike.

PHOTO: JORGE CARIA, AVANTE

third of these are active workers, another third are retirees. While incomes are decreasing, the cost of living is increasing and the cuts in public services affect all workers.

In a country the size of Maine, with a population of 10 million people, the government is closing more than 4,000 schools. Local protests all over are growing as emergency rooms, health clinics and maternity wards are closed.

When it was in opposition, the Socialist Party attacked a new Work Law approved by the previous government. Now in government, the PS has embraced this same law. This has made it easier for companies to conduct massive layoffs and eliminate collective bargaining.

Many foreign corporations that had been happy to accept tax benefits and direct incentives to settle in Portugal now look to relocate to Eastern Europe or Asia, where wages are even lower. The government is doing little to force these corporations to make due on their commitment to stay in Portugal.

Workers fight back

The workers, however, are fighting back. They are holding vigils at factory gates to prevent machinery from being removed. Workers in a number of companies are struggling for better working conditions and wages, and often for the survival of their jobs. Workers at Pereira da Costa in Amadora, near Lisbon, have courageously held a vigil for eight months, despite police repression.

The attempt to divide public and private sector workers has failed. On March 2, more than 150,000 workers from both sectors rallied in Lisbon, the largest workers' rally in more than a decade.

The PS government long ago squandered its initial support. For months workers have been engaged in struggle and the moment has come for a broad convergence on a national day of the strongest form of worker protest: the general strike.

April 25 marked the 33rd anniversary of the military and civilian coup that finally overthrew Portugal's long-lasting fas-

cist regime and restored democracy. On that day and on May Day, International Workers' Day, tens of thousands took to the streets in celebration and protest. Many banners could already be seen appealing for participation in the May 30 general strike.

In the words of the call to action of CGTP-IN, the largest confederation of unions in Portugal: "We must develop a struggle that continues the large mobilization of workers, that constitutes a strong signal to the bosses that we will not submit to their objectives of exploiting us, and to the government that we demand a change in course. This is a struggle for us and for all workers."

André Levy is a regular contributor to *Avante*, the weekly newspaper of the Portuguese Communist Party.

Haitian deaths

Did they capsize or were they rammed?

By G. Dunkel

The agony of Haiti does not stop. There appears to be no limit to the indignities and cruelties that neighboring imperialist countries are willing to inflict on it.

The Turks and Caicos Islands, a small archipelago about 125 miles north of Haiti, is a British colony and a tourist destination. On May 4, a small sailboat with 170 Haitians fleeing the grinding poverty in their homeland was a few minutes from landing there when a British patrol vessel rammed it and started towing it out to sea, according to Haitian survivors.

Many of the passengers were knocked into shark-infested waters; sharks killed 54 and another 30 to 40 drowned.

Less than half—70 men and 9 women—survived.

According to a May 8 dispatch from the

Haiti Press Service, the survivors and some of the dead will be returned to Haiti, but some bodies are in such poor shape that they will be buried in Turks and Caicos.

The British administration claims to have opened an inquiry into this affair but denied Haiti's request to be included in the investigation. Jacques Edouard Alexis, the prime minister of Haiti, has publicly expressed disbelief over a preliminary story the British issued that the boat had merely capsized.

Haitians living in the Fort Lauderdale area of Florida have formed the Support Group for Refugees and Repatriates, which issued a press release asserting that it was possible the U.S. Coast Guard was involved in what happened. It also feels that Haitian migration needs to be put in a global context related to economic development. □



'Saving' Social Security

It is time to begin a mobilization to defend and extend Social Security retirement income. The first step can be a fight to eliminate the ceiling on income taxable for Social Security. Right now, the wealthy don't pay Social Security tax on earnings above \$97,500 a year.

With the growing disappearance of guaranteed income from private pensions, workers in the U.S. are becoming more dependent on what is really an inadequate Social Security income.

Meanwhile, the more right-wing forces in the ruling class—with the current administration in the lead—have been trying to reduce Social Security. This is part of their drive to cut all government spending on social programs and divert it to subsidies for private industry. These rightist forces have opposed Social Security since it became a government program about 70 years ago.

To win support for cutting Social Security—one of the most popular government programs that exists—these right-wingers have exaggerated the future expected gap between Social Security tax revenues and payouts. Of course, any program dependent on stable growth of a capitalist economy can be blindsided by a downturn. But that's not the danger George W. Bush and his ruling-class allies are raising. They instead claim there are too many older people now and argue that Social Security benefits must be cut and/or tied to private investment in the stock market to remain solvent in the future.

Let's assume for a moment that they're right. It is still not necessary to raise the retirement age or reduce benefits. There's a simple way to keep Social Security completely funded.

A review of this question in the

May 2007 issue of the Bulletin of the American Association of Retired People (AARP), considers eight different ways to eliminate any expected shortfall. One way stands out. It's a straightforward approach that will more than remove the expected problem. And it should bring no pain to the vast majority of U.S. people, whether they be poor, working poor, or even relatively well-off income earners.

Tax income for Social Security comes from a flat tax—an equal amount paid by the worker and the employer—on the first \$97,500 of yearly income. Individuals with more than \$97,500 income stop paying Social Security taxes on earnings above this amount.

Keep in mind that more than 80 percent of **families**—no matter how many individuals contribute—have incomes substantially less than \$97,500. On the other hand, the recent vast increases in income for the top few salary earners have put much of this income beyond the Social Security tax limit.

The Democratic Party politicians who now control Congress got elected promising to protect Social Security. It is past time to see if those promises are any firmer than the ones they made to end the Iraq war.

Passing a law to remove the \$97,500 ceiling on taxable income would be a simple, direct way to protect this benefit. The vast majority would see this solution as eminently fair.

A mobilization to protect Social Security income would not replace the pensions already ripped off from workers by the corporations. It would not guarantee economic stability. But it would show everyone that the amount of pension income for retired people can be determined by the struggle. This would be a good start. □

Communist groups meet in Belgium

Continued from page 8

the extradition of the terrorist Luis Posada Carriles and the liberation of the Cuban Five. Another one supports the Filipino people's struggle against the so-called "war on terror." Still others tackle the undocumented workers in the U.S.; the repression at the May Day rally in Turkey; the hopeful perspectives in Latin America; and the resistance against war and occupation in the Middle East. [The specific resolutions are available at www.icsbrussels.org, and signatures can be sent to ics@icsbrussels.org.]

There were likewise calls for the liberation of the Palestinian political prisoners; to support the nomination of Bolivian president Evo Morales for the Nobel Peace Prize; to the Soviet people to restore Soviet power and socialism; against a new repressive law on political parties in Russia; and for the defense of the sovereignty of Belarus.

The first day of the Seminar, the participants decided to send an urgent solidarity statement to Cuba regarding the aborted attempt to hijack an airplane in Havana, in which a Cuban military official was killed. On the second evening, a meeting was held with the representatives of Cuba, Venezuela, Ecuador and Brazil to highlight and discuss the ongoing revolutionary processes in Latin America.

At the closing session of the seminar, it was agreed upon that next year's edition will be held on May 16-18, 2008, with as

main theme "The working class, its role and its mission today. The tasks and concrete experiences of the Communist Party in the working class and the trade union."

The participants were satisfied with the content, the positive atmosphere and the results of the 16th International Communist Seminar. They parted ways determined to continue to develop and intensify the cooperation and coordination among communist and workers' parties. □

Cuba mobilized years before first diagnosis

Continued from page 6

current policy on population is the same policy that we've had from the first day of the revolution. It's a policy of principle. A woman has the right to have the number of children she wants, and to have them when she wants. The government is obligated to assure that her right becomes a reality. So we educate people about all of the contraceptive methods. We include abortion, even though we don't view it as a contraceptive method, so that people will know about it. We have never said that having a small family is good; we have never pressured people to reduce the birth rate."

From Abu Dhabi to Pakistan

Washington in trouble

Continued from page 1

pensions, minimum wage or even to form unions or participate in any political activity. Nevertheless, a growing number of strikes and job actions have accompanied political ferment.

Half a million ethnic Iranians live in Dubai, the largest city in the UAE. In three separate public talks during his two-day visit, the fiery Iranian leader called for U.S. troops to "pack their bags" and leave their bases in the Gulf. Asked to comment on Cheney's threats against Iran made two days earlier aboard the USS John C. Stennis, Ahmadinejad replied, "What are these outsiders doing in our region?"

The UAE, along with Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Oman, Bahrain, Qatar and even Jordan, are all ruled by semi-feudal monarchies whose power and vast wealth are maintained by the force of U.S. arms and bases in the region. Each of these regimes is fearful that the continued U.S. war in Iraq and the threat of war on Iran can undermine their hated control. In each of these monarchies any efforts at democratic change are brutally suppressed.

In addition to the large force the Pentagon has in Iraq, more than 40,000 U.S. troops are based in other Gulf countries, along with 20,000 sailors and Marines on aircraft carriers and ships.

Ahmadinejad left the UAE for a two-day visit to the neighboring Sultanate of Oman, where the U.S. has use of four airbases. Iran and Oman face each other across the strategic Strait of Hormuz, through which two-fifths of the world's oil shipments pass.

Iran's state news agency, IRNA, reported May 14 that Ahmadinejad hopes to establish government trade offices in Oman's capital of Muscat and the port city of Khasab, which sits near the strait, just across from Iran. Khasab is also the site of an airport that has been used as a base by the U.S. military.

Cheney sold nuclear technology to Iran

Until the explosive upsurge of millions of Iranian workers and peasants in the 1979 revolution, Iran was also ruled by a hated and fabulously wealthy royal family—the Shah of the Pahlavi dynasty. As the largest and most populous country in the region, Iran was considered the U.S. police force or gendarme for the entire area.

The dictatorship of the Shah was imposed on Iran after a CIA-orchestrated coup in 1953 overthrew the democratically elected government of Prime Minister Mohammad Mossadegh. During the years that the Pentagon was the real ruler in Iran, when its oil wealth flowed into U.S.

oil corporations, banks and to U.S. military contractors, Washington was anxious to build a massive nuclear energy industry there.

It was Cheney, Donald Rumsfeld and Paul Wolfowitz, all officials in the Gerald Ford administration, who in 1976 arranged the sale to Iran of nuclear power plants and large quantities of plutonium and enriched uranium—the very technology that President George W. Bush and Cheney now say Iran must be prevented from acquiring or developing.

In 1976 Cheney was White House chief of staff, Rumsfeld was secretary of defense and Wolfowitz was responsible for non-proliferation issues at the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency. Their view then was that Iran should spend billions of dollars to purchase, from U.S. corporations, over 20 nuclear reactors. (Washington Post, March 27, 2005)

All this technological development was cut off after the 1979 Iranian Revolution. Iranian nuclear energy became a "threat" as soon as U.S. oil corporations no longer had unlimited access to Iran's fantastic oil wealth and as soon as U.S. imperialism lost its Iranian police force in the region.

U.S. control eroding

Under the Shah's dictatorship, Washington was able to dominate the entire region by arming the Iranian military. The Pentagon did not need to station tens of thousands of U.S. troops in the Gulf. It did not need a whole string of bases. Iran policed all the surrounding states. But after the Iranian Revolution, Washington's global position changed dramatically.

In 1979, after U.S. corporate power had lost control of the largest, most populous country in the region, it had to get Washington to begin sending U.S. troops and position bases elsewhere in an effort to hold on to its fantastic profits.

Today—even with two aircraft carrier groups in the Gulf, tens of thousands of troops in the region and 150,000 troops in Iraq—the U.S. imperialists' hold on the region is clearly slipping.

Every effort to shore up their position through wars and invasions has led to further erosion.

Washington tried to weaken the states in the Gulf by arming both Iran and Iraq during the Iran-Iraq war of 1980 to 1988. The strategy, as Henry Kissinger explained it, was, "I hope they kill each other." More than a million people died in the war.

In 1990, with the Soviet Union collapsing, Washington again tried to re-establish its former position through enormous destruction in the 1991 war on Iraq. Next, through the years of U.S./U.N. starvation sanctions on Iraq, the U.S. was able to maintain a stranglehold on trade in the entire region.

The 2003 U.S. invasion and occupation of Iraq was the next step in trying to re-colonize the area. But the Pentagon and the oil corporations did not calculate on the enormous resistance of the Iraqi people. Four years after the invasion, it is clear that the war to re-conquer Iraq is a howling disaster and is considered unwinnable by even top Pentagon generals.

The U.S./NATO war in Afghanistan is also in serious trouble. Washington's major ally in that region, the Musharraf dictatorship in Pakistan, is facing a crisis of demonstrations, strikes and shutdowns.

Cheney's frantic trip through the region and his threats from the deck of an aircraft carrier will not restore U.S. imperialist domination. The hatred of the U.S. has now reached a fever pitch throughout the region. Further war would only lead to greater resistance. □

RAINBOW FLAGS FOR MUMIA

put out a call for LGBT people to mobilize for the May 17 Mumia Day actions in Philadelphia. The call and signers can be accessed at www.millions4mumia.org.



Meeting mobilizes to stop U.S. war on Iran

By John Catalinotto
New York

People filled the seats, sat on the floor and stood in the back of the meeting room at the Judson Memorial Church here May 12 to launch a struggle to stop the U.S. from unleashing a military attack on Iran.

While both Iranian and U.S. anti-war speakers had various ideological and analytical viewpoints, they all agreed on the need to fight against any U.S. intervention in the region. All also agreed that the U.S. should pull out of Iraq immediately.

Speakers included former U.S. Attorney General Ramsey Clark, Larry Holmes of the Troops Out Now Coalition, Nada Khader of the WESPAC Foundation, Larry Everest of World Can't Wait, and Kazem Azin and Ardeshir Ommani, both of the American-Iranian Friendship Committee and both of whom, as youths, participated in the revolutionary movement that overthrew the U.S.-backed Shah Reza Pahlavi.

Sara Flounders of the International Action Center chaired the meeting and spoke, outlining how the 1979 Iranian

Speakers and performers at meeting in solidarity with Iranian people.

WW PHOTOS:
DEIRDRE GRISWOLD



revolution brought gains to the bulk of the population. Holmes, Flounders, Everest and Dustin Langley, who also spoke for the IAC, had been arrested together in Washington in March while protesting Congress's funding of the Iraq war.

Hossein Aghabeikzadeh set the mood by singing a famous 800-year-old poem by Sheikh Saadi, considered the king of Persian poets. His daughter, Nina Aghabeikzadeh, accompanied him on the balaban, an ancient Azeri instrument.

The speakers all agreed that the U.S. had no right to intervene in Iran and that the Iranian state could no longer be used by U.S. imperialism as a client or junior partner to police the oil-rich Middle East and South Asian region. Most believed that the Iranians would resist and confound any U.S. military aggression and that such an aggression would boomerang

against U.S. interests.

Clark said that the result of a military attack would be catastrophic, as it would be a U.S. declaration of war on 1.5 billion Moslem people.

At least three of the speakers brought up the news that U.S. Vice President Dick Cheney had just threatened Iran while standing on the deck of a U.S. aircraft carrier in the Persian Gulf with the deadly firepower of five F-18 Super Hornet jets behind him. (See article by Sara Flounders in this issue of WW.) Holmes raised the point that Cheney was able to make such a statement because the majority of the U.S. ruling class and the top politicians of both political parties support strong measures to stop Iran from developing nuclear power.

Azin described U.S. policy changes since the collapse of the USSR as going

from "containment to re-conquest." He also exposed Bush's program of promoting "democracy in Iran"—and the U.S. support for various Iranian opposition groups—as an attempt to weaken the Iranian state and its anti-imperialist stance.

Ommani, who was about to leave for an extended visit to Iran, pointed out that Iran's 72 million people were living in a society that was the product of one of the most popular revolutions in the 20th century. He said he was exuberant because of his upcoming trip and to be among friends who would continue to struggle to prevent any attack on Iran.

Langley ended the formal talks by announcing an initiative by www.StopWarOnIran.org to collect 100,000 signatures protesting a possible U.S. attack.

A podcast of the meeting can be heard at www.StopWarOnIran.org.

AFGHANISTAN

Anger at U.S. rises with civilian casualties

By Caleb T. Maupin

"Foreign troops are killing Afghans every day," said Haji Ibrahim, a resident of a village in the Helmand province in southern Afghanistan. On May 8 he endured the terror of an air strike by U.S. planes against his village.

The U.S. government first claimed that only "terrorists" and "al-Qaeda fighters" were killed in the bombings. A Pentagon media release claimed "three terrorist compounds were destroyed."

Residents of the area reported that three local homes had been hit and contained scores of dead bodies. "There were no Taliban in our area," said another local resident, who, like Ibrahim, spoke to the Middle Eastern newspaper Alarab.

The governor in charge of the region—part of the U.S.-sponsored regime—has placed the blame on the Afghan resistance fighters he called "the Taliban." He is reported to have said that because the resistance fighters hid and didn't remain out in the open to be bombed by U.S. forces, therefore they—not the U.S. invaders—were responsible for the deaths.

On May 10 Reuters quoted witnesses who estimated that a total of 40 people were killed in this massacre, though the number could be much larger.

A Pakistani web news source stated, "There is growing alarm over a wave of U.S. bombing raids in which 110 civilians have died in the past two weeks. Twenty-one people were killed last week after U.S. Special Forces called in air strikes on the town of Sangin in Helmand province." (onlinenews.com)

The same day that its planes were attacking the village in Helmand province, the U.S. military was forced to apologize to the families of 19 people killed and 50 wounded in March by Marine Special Forces who fired on civilians in eastern Afghanistan.

It announced it would pay compensation for the dead—\$2,000 per body.

"We don't want their money and apologies. If somebody loses one of his family members, an apology won't bring

him back," said Haji Lawania, who was injured in the shooting and whose father and nephew were killed. (AP, May 9)

The Pentagon also says it is looking into reports from Afghan officials that 51 civilians died in air strikes and fighting in the western province of Herat last month.

Legislators call for withdrawal

Demonstrations against the Bush administration and the U.S.-installed regime of Hamid Karzai are growing inside Afghanistan as well as in Pakistan. This mass anger pushed legislators in Afghanistan's upper house to pass a resolution on May 9 calling for an immediate cease-fire, negotiations with the Taliban,

and the setting of a date for the withdrawal of foreign troops.

Since the 2001 U.S. invasion, said one Afghan civilian, the country has not been rebuilt to the point of even having paved roads. "My province has only dirt roads and it takes me nine to 10 hours to get from Kabul, when if we had proper roads it would be three."

The U.S. funded and trained a mercenary "contra" army to overthrow the 1978 democratic revolution in Afghanistan, led by the People's Democratic Party. That revolution built roads, opened up literacy for women, and aligned with the socialist bloc.

Today, under U.S. and British military

occupation, Afghan civilians are being killed daily and countless others are held in prisons where human rights are violated and torture is carried out.

Resistance to the occupying force of 50,000—mostly U.S. and British troops—has grown. In the month of January this year, according to the China Post, there were three times as many attacks on them as the same time last year.

With resistance flowing strong in Iraq and Afghanistan, Bolivarian socialism gaining strength in Venezuela, Zimbabwe standing up to the colonialists and imperialists, and increasing anguish and anger on the "home front" in the United States, it is clear that imperialism is in crisis. □

Strike wave rolls through Egypt

By G. Dunkel

A wave of labor strikes is rolling through Egypt, both in the Nile Delta, where Egypt's large textile factories are located, and in Cairo, its major city and capital, where transportation and metro workers have struck. The most common demand is for higher pay and payment of bonuses and profit sharing, an important part of an Egyptian worker's income.

There were 56 strikes recorded in April and 15 in the first week of May, according to Joel Beinin and Hossam el-Hamalawy in the online edition of the Middle East Report. Egypt is the Arab country with the largest population—80 million—of whom 22 million are workers.

The General Federation of Trade Unions (also known as the Egyptian Federation of Trade Unions) was set up in 1956. All government workers were required to join the union. The GFTU up to now has never called a strike and there has never been a legal strike in Egypt.

In the current strike wave, in areas where local federations of the GFTU are supporting the workers' struggles, workers have been able to win relatively easily. The workers have held sit-ins, hunger strikes

and mass meetings but not picket lines, which might be broken up by the cops.

Where the GFTU local federations have supported the government, which has generally been the case, workers have had much more difficulty. The workers' committees are forced to organize not only against their bosses—often banks and foreign companies that have bought privatized companies—but also against the official union. Still the workers have won some concessions.

To support and organize themselves, workers set up centers, which they legally organized as companies to get around the government's labor laws and registration requirements. The most prominent of these centers is the Center for Trade Union and Workers' Services (CTUWS), whose general director is Kamal Abbas. The CTUWS grew out of two very militant strikes at the Egyptian Iron and Steel Company in 1989 in which Abbas played a leading role. The government shut the CTUWS down the last week of this April.

An unusual aspect of the workers' struggles in Egypt is the support they have gotten from some of the Muslim Brotherhood, an Islamist group with deep roots in Egypt. The Brotherhood is

a major opponent of Egyptian President Mubarak and also contains many very well-off businessmen.

In February, one of the Muslim Brotherhood members of parliament, Abd al-Aziz al-Husayni, announced his backing for the walkout of the Misr Spinning and Weaving workers in Kafr al-Dawwar, south of Alexandria. His parliamentary colleague, Sabir Abu al-Futouh, from Alexandria, followed up by issuing several statements supporting another strike. Husayni and Futouh are both from the Nile Delta, where the Muslim Brotherhood has more members who are not affluent.

Marxist groups have also organized support for the striking workers. Both the Marxists and the Muslim Brotherhood face severe repression from the Mubarak regime.

Egypt is one of the major recipients of U.S. military and economic aid, which reflects its position as a historical and cultural center of the Arab world. But this has not kept its workers, when lashed by globalization, privatization and increasing poverty, from taking on the bosses and the state apparatus designed to keep their struggles under control. □

¡Proletarios y oprimidos de todos los países, uníos!

Racismo, resistencia y la pena de muerte

Por Gloria Rubac
Houston, Tejas

Horas antes de que fuera ejecutado el 7 de marzo, Joseph Nichols le dijo a su madre lo que le había pasado mientras la prisión se preparaba para transferirle de la celda de los condenados a muerte en Livingston, Tejas, a la celda de la muerte en Huntsville.

“Me cortaron la ropa y me dejaron desnudo. Finalmente me dieron un par de calzoncillos pero mis pies estaban encadenados, mis manos estaban encadenadas y otra cadena que me ataba los pies, me pasaba sobre un hombro atada a mis manos. Así es como nuestra gente fue traída de nuestra madre tierra, desnuda y encadenada, y así es como me voy de esta vida.”

Nichols fue ejecutado a pesar de los artículos de primera plana y de opinión en el periódico Houston Chronicle que explicaban su inocencia. Ya en la camilla y con la inyección llena de veneno en sus venas, él condenó al personal de la prisión quienes le habían ordenado la noche antes de su ejecución, que se afeitara o si no sería disciplinado.

Más y más en Tejas, los prisioneros no se van pasivamente a sus ejecuciones, sino que siguen luchando hasta el final. Ellos también están protestando más activamente las condiciones de aislamiento severo y de tortura. El Movimiento DRIVE, una organización de activistas que se encuentran condenados a la pena de muerte en Tejas, ha sostenido varias huelgas de hambre en este último año, al igual que otros prisioneros individualmente.

Roy Pippin, quien firmemente mantuvo su inocencia, fue ejecutado el 29 de marzo, después de mantener una huelga de hambre por un mes, exponiendo así las horribles condiciones de los condenados en Tejas. Esto logró gran atención de la prensa.

En su última declaración mientras se encontraba en la camilla de muerte, Pippin dijo: “Condeno al jurado, al juez, al fiscal que hicieron fraude para obtener esta condena. Los condeno a cada uno de ustedes por el asesinato de un hombre inocente. Desde la CCA, la Corte Federal, la corte del Quinto Circuito y la Corte Suprema. Todos responderán a su creador cuando Dios se dé cuenta que han ejecutado a un hombre inocente. Que Dios los perdone... Prosiga carcelero, asesíneme. Jesús, llévame contigo.”

El verano pasado, Michael Johnson, otro prisionero en Tejas que siempre mantuvo firmemente su inocencia, se suicidó cortándose el cuello para evitar que fuera el estado quien lo matara. Antes de que muriera desangrado, escribió en la pared de su celda con su propia sangre, “Yo no maté a ese hombre.”

En noviembre del 2006, después de que Willie Shannon fuera ejecutado, su cuerpo yacía en el féretro vestido con el uniforme de las Panteras Negras, como símbolo de su convicción política. Él fue miembro de la organización Panteras Unidas por la



Joseph Nichols

Educación Revolucionaria—PURE, por sus siglas en inglés—una organización de los condenados a muerte en Tejas.

Las ejecuciones en los Estados Unidos han descendido a su nivel más bajo en 10 años. El número de condenas a muerte y la población de condenados a muerte también están disminuyendo. Por primera vez, el Gallup Poll ha reportado que hay más gente que favorece la cadena perpetua sin opción a libertad condicional, que la pena de muerte.

Durante la década de los años noventa hubo cerca de 300 sentencias de muerte cada año. Ahora la cifra es de cerca de 125. Aún en Tejas, las sentencias a muerte han bajado en un 65% en comparación con hace diez años.

Por la cuestión de inocencia, los jurados están más reacios a condenar a una persona con la pena de muerte. Más de una docena de estados han suspendido las ejecuciones por esta razón y también porque la evidencia que va en aumento, de que el método de inyecciones letales mata al prisionero mientras todavía está consciente. La legislatura del estado de Nueva Jersey tenía una vista programada para principios de mayo que podría resultar en el abandono de la pena de muerte en ese estado.

En años recientes, un número de periódicos importantes ha cambiado su posición frente a la pena de muerte y ahora están llamando a su abolición. Durante el mes pasado, el Chicago Tribune y el Dallas Morning News invirtieron la posición que por largo tiempo tenían de apoyar la pena de muerte. Y el periódico el Sentinel de Pennsylvania simplemente caracterizó la pena de muerte como algo “inútil”.

Amnistía Internacional reportó que las ejecuciones alrededor del mundo disminuyeron en un 25% el año pasado, de 2.148 en 2005 a 1.591 en 2006. De todas las ejecuciones que ocurrieron en el 2006, un 91 por ciento fueron llevadas a cabo en seis países: China, Irán, Pakistán, Irak,

Sudán y Estados Unidos.

Más de la mitad de los países del mundo ha abolido la pena de muerte, ya sea por leyes o en la práctica.

En los Estados Unidos, la pena de muerte está siendo utilizada principalmente en los estados que anteriormente practicaban la esclavitud en la antigua Confederación. Entre el 85 y el 90 por ciento de todas las ejecuciones en los Estados Unidos ocurren en los estados sureños. Esto no es pura casualidad. El racismo juega un papel tan grande en la aplicación de la pena de muerte porque es un legado directo de la esclavitud y los linchamientos.

Durante los últimos 125 años han ocurrido miles de linchamientos ilegales y extrajudiciales en los EEUU, principalmente en los estados del Sur del país, principalmente por blancos contra negros. La mayoría ocurrió a fines del siglo XIX y principios del XX.

Hoy, en el siglo XXI, es la época de los linchamientos legales.

Todavía se llevan a cabo principalmente a manos de los blancos y mayormente son en contra de la gente de color. Un 98 por ciento de los fiscales en los EEUU son blancos, y sólo un uno por ciento es negro. Son estos fiscales los que deciden si un acusado enfrenta o no la pena de muerte.

Los estados que sentencian el número más grande a la pena de muerte también son los estados que tuvieron el número más grande de linchamientos ilegales en el pasado, según un estudio publicado por sociólogos de la Universidad del Estado de Ohio.

Históricamente injusto

El factor que más determina si una persona acusada será sentenciada a la pena de muerte, es la raza de la persona asesinada. Aunque blancos y negros son asesinados en igual cantidad, un 80 por ciento de las personas ejecutadas desde que la pena de muerte fue permitida de nuevo en el 1976, involucra casos donde la víctima es blanca.

Sólo 14 personas han sido ejecutadas por el asesinato de una persona negra, mientras que 215 personas negras han sido ejecutadas por el asesinato de blancos.

Por el contrario, las mujeres blancas representan sólo un 0.8 por ciento de las víctimas de asesinato, sin embargo un 35 por ciento de las personas ejecutadas desde 1976 fueron condenadas a la pena de muerte por haber asesinado a una mujer blanca.

En general, la práctica de la pena capital muestra que la nacionalidad tiene mucho que ver. Si una persona blanca es asesinada, no importa si los acusados son negros o blancos, es cinco veces más probable que al acusado se le confiera la pena capital que si la asesinada fuera una persona negra.

Las personas afro-americanas son las menos probables que sean jurados en casos de pena capital, sin embargo son las que más probablemente sean con-

denadas a muerte.

En Tejas el racismo del sistema de justicia estuvo practicado abiertamente hasta hace poco. L@s abogad@s de la defensa en Dallas recuerdan que hasta mediados de los 80, los asesinatos llamados “negro contra negro” fueron conocidos en los tribunales como “asesinatos de delito menor”. El abogado Fred Tinsley reportó en 2000 que “En una época, un asesinato de “negro contra negro” se podía anular el juicio si el acusado pagaba los gastos del entierro.”

El Tribunal Supremo de los Estados Unidos decidió que la forma de seleccionar el jurado en Dallas era inconstitucional. Como respuesta, el fiscal de distrito de Dallas Henry Wade desarrolló un sistema de entrenar a l@s fiscales a excusar la gente de color, a las mujeres, l@s judi@s, y la gente con diferentes capacidades.

Wade regañó a un fiscal a finales de los 50 por permitir a una mujer negra servir en el jurado, diciéndole, “Si vuelve a poner otr@ negr@ en un jurado, serás despedido.”

Un afro americano, Thomas Miller-El, fue condenado a muerte en Dallas en 1986. En el 2005, la Corte Suprema de los Estados Unidos ordenó otro juicio porque tod@s l@s afro american@s menos uno, fueron exclud@s del jurado. Él está actualmente en la Cárcel del Condado de Dallas esperando un nuevo juicio.

En Filadelfia, donde el preso político Mumia Abu-Jamal fue condenado a muerte, la posibilidad de recibir una sentencia de muerte es 38 por ciento más alta en caso de que el acusado sea negro. De hecho, en Pensilvania más del 70 por ciento de los que recibieron la pena de muerte son afro-americanos; esta es la proporción más alta en el país.

Estados Unidos tiene un poco más de 225 años. Fue establecido en tierra robada de los pueblos indígenas y de México, y construido sobre las espaldas de l@s esclav@s african@s. Se hizo altamente industrializado durante los últimos cien años y hoy en día es el mayor poder imperialista porque explota a su enorme clase trabajadora, de la cual, una proporción creciente es afro-americana, latina, árabe, asiática e indígena americana.

La opresión nacional y el racismo están tan entrelazados en la tela de la vida de este país que matizan todos los aspectos de la vida, desde el nacimiento hasta la muerte, incluyendo la muerte a manos del estado.

“El movimiento para abolir la pena capital está creciendo y aprendiendo que si las ejecuciones se van a terminar, tenemos que ser un movimiento de todo el pueblo, especialmente aquellos de nosotros que formamos la mayor parte de los condenados a muerte. Ningún cambio ha ocurrido voluntariamente. Debemos luchar por él. Pero con la unidad y la lucha veremos el final de este crimen llamado la pena capital,” dijo Njeri Shakur, un líder por más de una década del Movimiento para Abolir la Pena Capital en Tejas (MAPCT).

La escritora es una organizadora desde hace muchos años con el MAPCT. □