

Nov. 6, 2003 Vol. 45, No. 44

WORKERS WORLD

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Estados Unidos 50¢
Millones de millones de dólares pagados por el pueblo para más guerras. 12

MASS PROTESTS IN WASHINGTON, SAN FRANCISCO

Bring the troops home



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By Deirdre Griswold
Washington, D.C.

The last thing the Bush administration needs right now is an active and united anti-war movement challenging its plans to occupy Iraq and make the world safe for Halliburton and Big Oil.

But that's exactly what it got on Oct. 25. Demonstrators marched in Washington, just a stone's throw from the White House, as well as in San Francisco, other cities in the U.S. and around the world.

Protesters gathered here in the capital by the tens of thousands—organizers said 100,000, and even D.C. Police Chief Charles H. Ramsey guesstimated a crowd of as many as 50,000. Their main message was clear and simple: "End the war and occupation—Bring the troops home now!"

Two national anti-war coalitions had come together for this day of protest, the largest since Bush declared the war officially "over." International Act Now to Stop War & End Racism (ANSWER) and United for Peace & Justice (UPJ) co-hosted the rally and march, showing the movement that different perspectives on the war and other issues do not have to be an obstacle to united action as long as there is agreement on common demands.

The Bush administration has been unable to get even its fellow imperialists to join a united front on Iraq. As a result, U.S. forces are dying and being maimed at a growing rate as acts of resistance to the U.S./British occupation multiply. The impact of these casualties on the population here was clear at the protest.

Family members of troops stationed in Iraq, Kuwait and Afghanistan took the stage and held up photos of their loved ones, calling for them to be brought home. Some displayed pictures of relatives killed since the invasion of Iraq started. Veterans from previous wars formed a group near the front of the march.

Many reservists with families have been called up for this war. Their spouses and children have a hard time making ends meet. Injured and sick soldiers have been close to mutiny at Fort Stewart, Ga., where they've spent months without medical atten-

tion, indoor toilets or air conditioning.

Various media observed that active-duty troops were in the crowd at the demonstration and clearly sympathized with its aims. Brian Becker of ANSWER urged the diverse audience to set up Bring the Troops Home Now committees in their communities and schools.

A people of color contingent first rallied at Malcolm X Park and then marched through some of Washington's African American neighborhoods, chanting "Impeach Bush" and "No justice, no peace," before joining the main rally.

Damu Smith of Black Voices for Peace and UPJ pointed out

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that because of U.S. racism and the poverty draft, Black and Latino soldiers are fighting and dying in Iraq in disproportionate numbers. The large crowd grew quiet as it listened to a taped message from imprisoned Black journalist Mumia Abu-Jamal, still on Pennsylvania's death row after 20 years.

Congress is putting the finishing touches on authorization for an additional \$87 billion to be spent on the occupation and "rebuilding" of Iraq. "Don't give Bush 87 billion, don't give him 87 cents; give our troops a ride home," the Rev. Al Sharpton, a civil rights leader and presidential candidate, said to strong applause.

The anti-imperialist character of the ANSWER coalition came through as its speakers from many parts of the world linked the war in Iraq to the Pentagon occupation of Korea and the Philippines and expressed solidarity with popular movements in Palestine, Colombia, Bolivia, Venezuela, Nicaragua and Mexico. The case of the Cuban 5 was raised, along with other targets of U.S. repression.

The group Queers for Peace and Justice shared the program with the president of the United Church of Christ, the American Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee and Black ministers from New York and Washington.

Former Attorney General Ramsey Clark referred to George W.

Continued on page 6



Lead banner of Oct. 25 protest in Washington, D.C.

BETSEY STERGAR

A life dedicated to the struggle

Special to Workers World

“Their whole lives were dedicated to the struggle.”

— Gwen, Betsy's comrade for over 30 years

Betsy Marion Stergar, revolutionary communist, worker, mother, grandmother, great grandmother and so much more died suddenly at her home on Oct. 22 after a massive heart attack. She was 84.

Betsy and her late husband Al Stergar, who died in 1996, were founding members of Workers World Party-Milwaukee branch beginning in 1967. At the time WWP only had branches in New York, Buffalo, N.Y., and Youngstown, Ohio.

Betsy is survived by her daughters JoEllen Seifert and Lauren Sanchez, four children, six grandchildren, numerous friends and relatives and her Milwaukee comrades Art Marburg and Gwen Wood.

A socialist life

Betsy Kelsner was born Feb. 4, 1919 in Milwaukee. From birth she knew the brutal effects of capitalism first-hand.

The daughter of immigrant parents, she lived through the vicious anti-labor Palmer Raid 1920s and the attempted frame-up of the Scottsboro defendants, and suffered near-starvation during the Depression. She experienced with her parents and siblings the day-to-day struggle to survive.

At the same time Betsy was witness to, participated in, and supported the militant struggles of that period. Sit-down strikes, boycotts, anti-racist struggles and more—she was on the front line of many battles of the working class and oppressed.

Introduced to socialism during this time, for over 60 years Betsy never looked back. She and Al married in 1941 during a time of radical ferment in Milwaukee and the Midwest. For a time during World War II Betsy worked in various plants and then waited tables as a permanent job.

At end of the 1940s and beginning of the 1950s, Betsy gave birth to two daughters—JoEllen and Lauren.

During the 1950s rocks and bricks were thrown through the windows of Al and Betsy's home and swastikas were painted on their doors. These actions were in response to their support of the Rosenbergs, charged with spying for the Soviet Union—and because they sought justice for Daniel Bell, a young African American man beaten to death by Milwaukee police; supported open housing and other civil-rights demands; and of course refused to renounce socialism and rat out their comrades and friends.

During the 1960s Betsy helped organized against the Vietnam War, most notably with the organization Youth Against War and Fascism. YAWF's Milwaukee chapter office was firebombed. Members were beaten by cops and fascists. YAWF contended with countless other menaces. YAWF members frequently battled the cops and Nazis.

In the early 1970s the Milwaukee chapters of YAWF and WWP helped the American Indian Movement and other Native organizations fight and win against the first attempted frame-up of Leonard Peltier. Throughout the later 1970s and 1980s Betsy helped



fight against the U.S. invasions in Latin America and the police murder of Ernest Lacy, and participated in thousands of progressive and revolutionary actions.

Although she had carpal tunnel syndrome from years of household, waiting tables and other work, Betsy, was almost always the first one to volunteer for bookkeeping, clerical work, folding leaflets, staffing the literature table, stuffing envelopes, taking minutes and performing the other behind-the-scenes tasks that keep a party and its mass organizations alive and moving.

Betsy was also known for always giving contributions, and gently—and sometimes not so gently suggesting others do the same, despite her fixed income. Whether it was a dollar, ten or more, Betsy's monetary contributions often helped to make that many more leaflets, help someone get on the bus, or keep the office open another month.

Always a faithful subscriber to Workers World newspaper, Betsy emphasized the need for a revolutionary newspaper and other media.

During the mid-to-late 1990s Betsy worked with the anti-racist community organization the A Job is a Right Campaign, most noted for its work fighting against W-2, Wisconsin's Draconian dismantling of Aid to Families with Dependent Children. As an organizer for AJRC she often attended Milwaukee County Labor Council meetings. Betsy always remembered and supported union struggles.

The struggle continues...

In her last years Betsy lit up when talking about the national anti-war demonstrations organized by ANSWER and others. Although she was unable to attend the demonstrations because of her health, Betsy always tuned into CSPAN to catch the broadcasts. She was delighted to see the anti-imperialist movement, especially within the United States, alive and growing.

One of Betsy's last cross-country trips was to New York City to attend a WWP conference celebrating the 150th anniversary of “The Communist Manifesto.”

Although Betsy would be the first one to remind us of Joe Hill's words—“Don't mourn; organize”—we must never forget elders like her who sacrificed so much and never lost their vision, or their iron-clad conviction that socialism is not only possible, it's inevitable.

BETSEY MARION STERGAR: PRESENTE!

Bryan G. Pfeifer contributed to this report.

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WW CALENDAR

LOS ANGELES

Every Friday
Workers World Party weekly meetings at 7:30 p.m. Dinner at 7. At 422 S. Western. Phone (213) 500-0529 for info.

NEW YORK

Fri., Oct. 31
Workers World Party weekly meeting. Topic: Which road for the anti-war movement? Hear Brian Becker on the debate over the slogan "Bring the troops home now." 7 p.m. (Dinner at 6:30) 55 W. 17 St., 5th Fl., Manhattan. For info (212) 627-2994.

Sat., Nov. 1
Demonstrate before Mexican Consulate at 21 West 39 St. at 11 a.m. to protest coverup of murders of women in Juarez, Mexico.

Every Friday

Workers World Party weekly meeting. 7 p.m. (Dinner at 6:30) 55 W. 17th St., 5th fl., Manhattan. For info (212) 627-2994.

SAN FRANCISCO

Sun., Nov. 2

Workers World Party Forum: Iran and U.S. Strategy in the Middle East. Featuring analysis by an Iranian activist. 5 p.m. At 2489 Mission St, room 28. For info (415) 826-4828.

PHILADELPHIA

Sat., Nov. 1

Rally and march to demand FREEDOM NOW for Mumia Abu-Jamal! 11a.m.-2:30 p.m. corner of 6th and Market Sts., Center City Sponsored by International Concerned Family and Friends.

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Vol. 45, No. 44 • Nov. 6, 2003
Closing date: Oct. 29, 2003

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

Selected articles are available via e-mail subscription. Send an e-mail message to wwnews-on@wwpublish.com.

Periodicals postage paid at New York, N.Y. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to Workers World-WW, 55 W. 17 St., 5th Floor, New York, N.Y. 10011.

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

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The battle for slavery reparations

Father and daughter convicted in tax case

By Monica Moorehead

The U.S. government and the super-rich capitalist class that it serves wish that the struggle for reparations would go away. Instead, this struggle will continue to manifest itself in various forms as long as the unfulfilled aspirations for justice and equality exist, as a legal case in Virginia shows.

Robert Forster and his daughter, Crystal Forster, were convicted last July for "conspiracy" to defraud the U.S. government. Both Forsters are scheduled to soon be sentenced in a U.S. District Court in Richmond, Va.

Taking the advice of her father, Crystal Forster had carried out a bold act when in 2001: she filed for a \$500,000 income-tax refund. She did this as a vehicle for compensation for the unpaid labor of her slave ancestors.

Upon receiving the refund, she used some of it to pay back her student loans and to cover the cost of her brother's first-year tuition at a very expensive college, Virginia Tech.

The convictions carry a maximum sentence of seven years. The father stated from jail: "This is not an effort to defraud the U.S. government. This was purely a protest against the U.S. government.Black people are not treated as humans,

but as things by the U.S. government. We were used as resources to enrich this country and we get no inheritance from the wealth we brought." (Associated Press, Oct. 23)

Forster also renounced his U.S. citizenship while in jail. He was denied the lawyer of his choice when he tried to fire his attorney and have him replaced by an Indigenous attorney.

Like most African Americans, Forster has suffered from racist attitudes most of his life. He had sued the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs hospital for denying him a promotion because of his nationality. He reportedly felt very slighted when the courts awarded him only \$5,000.

In 1993, the Black-oriented magazine *Essence* published an editorial urging Black people to file for a delinquent tax rebate of over \$43,000 per household. The magazine viewed this amount as today's dollar equivalent of the 40 acres and a mule that were promised to the freed slaves after the Emancipation Proclamation of 1863.

President Andrew Johnson, the pro-slavery sympathizer who succeeded Abraham Lincoln, vetoed the 40 acres and a mule. Johnson's racist act helped lay the basis for overturning Black reconstruction in the South.

Forster is a tax return preparer. He took

inflation into account and, for some of his clients, increased the amount posed in the *Essence* editorial twelvefold. The Internal Revenue Service stated that more than 80,000 income tax returns were submitted in 2001 asking for non-existent slavery tax credits. The total amount was \$2.7 billion.

'They owe us'

The real criminals are not the Forsters but the in-justice system that keeps alive the legacy of slavery today with institutionalized racism. The primary victims of this racism are African Americans, Latinos, Indigenous people and other peoples of color. Every social institution is tinged with white-supremacist ideology in order to divide and conquer the masses.

If this were not the case, there would have been a federal reparations program in existence long ago. No administration has even officially apologized for the U.S. policy of enslaving millions of African people, let alone offered compensation to the descendants of the slaves.

There are now class-action lawsuits in federal courts where African Americans are suing U.S. corporations for their past complicity in maintaining slavery. The lawsuits argue that corporations such as Fleet Boston Financial, Aetna and CSX are guilty of committing crimes against

humanity along with profiting off of unspeakable human suffering. The lawsuits state that the wealth created by slavery would amount to an estimated \$1.5 trillion in unpaid wages today, considering inflation.

If the class-action lawsuit is won, some of the plaintiffs plan to use the financial restitution to establish a collective fund to provide the decent education and health care that have been systematically denied to African Americans for decades.

Is it just a coincidence that people like the Forsters get caught and convicted, and the rich don't? Absolutely not. There exist so many legal loopholes that the U.S. super-rich can manipulate to avoid paying millions of dollars in taxes without being convicted, much less winding up in court.

This is another example of which class benefits from the capitalist system. It is certainly not the workers, the poor, the oppressed or what is left of the middle class. It is the capitalist class composed of corporate heads and investors who are laughing all the way to the bank.

As long as the horrific legacy of U.S. slavery is alive and well, the struggle for social equality and justice remains inevitable. The Forsters deserve the support and admiration of every working and poor person of all nationalities for taking a heroic stand against racism. □

Congress passes ban criminalizing some abortions

By Sue Davis

By a vote of 64 to 34, the Senate passed the "Partial-Birth Abortion Ban Act" on Oct. 21. The House of Representatives had passed it Oct. 2, by a vote of 281 to 142.

One of President George W. Bush's long-standing campaign promises to the religious right was that he would swiftly sign such a bill.

But three organizations that champion women's rights have vowed that as soon as that happens they will file suit to prevent the law from taking effect.

The three are the Center for Reproductive Rights, the Planned Parenthood Federation of America and the American Civil Liberties Union on behalf of the National Abortion Federation. NAF represents 400 women's health centers that provide more than half of the 1.2 million abortions performed yearly in this country.

Milestone against reproductive rights

Passage of the ban marks a milestone to limit women's reproductive rights. It is remarkable that the federal government has outlawed a medical procedure, thus preventing doctors from practicing medicine—and preventing women from receiving the medical care best suited to their needs. Doctors found guilty of performing the procedure could serve up to five years in prison for a criminal felony and pay unspecified fines.

President Bill Clinton vetoed nearly identical bills twice during his presidency. In June 2000 the U.S. Supreme Court ruled in a five to four decision that similar state bills were unconstitutional since

they did not allow exemptions to protect the woman's health.

Those who oppose women's right to choose abortion coined the term "partial-birth" in 1995 to consciously mislead the public about the medical procedure used for abortions after 21 weeks. The procedure's correct name is "dilation and extraction" (D&X).

Using huge blow-ups of late-term fetuses and gruesome descriptions of the procedure, opponents of choice have purposely sensationalized it so they can use the ban as a stepping stone to end legal abortion.

Indeed, reproductive-rights advocates point out that the ban could be interpreted to outlaw several other procedures used for abortions after 12 weeks. The vast majority of abortions occur during the first 12 weeks after conception.

What those who denounce D&X don't say is that the procedure is rarely used and only under extreme circumstances. It is estimated that D&X accounts for between 0.004 and 0.1 percent of all abortions. The American Medical Association policy restricts D&X use to cases where tests show that the fetus has abnormalities that are incompatible with life, and when D&X is judged safer than all other methods. (AMA Policy H5.982)

Of course, any medical procedure, when described in gory enough detail, seems violent and repulsive—especially if the public is unaware it is used only under highly restricted circumstances. Deliberately keeping the public ignorant about how rarely the procedure is used and not including an exception for use when needed to protect a woman's health shows that the

issue has been consciously manipulated to promote the anti-choice campaign.

Democrats abet Republican agenda

Republicans, who overwhelmingly supported the anti-woman bill, intend to use it demagogically to win votes in the 2004 election. Sure as shooting, that's Bush's agenda. But Bush also has a long-term strategy: By the time the case comes before the Supreme Court he intends to nominate an anti-choice justice who he expects will change the vote to five to four in favor of the ban.

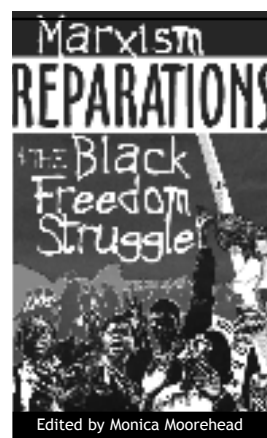
It must be pointed out, however, that the ban would not have been passed if 17 Democrats, most of whom have previously voted pro-choice, hadn't voted for it. Democrats have been doing this sort of thing a lot lately—most recently giving Bush the \$87 billion he requested for the occupation of Iraq. But the trend started under President Clinton with passage of bills that radically limit welfare for poor women and that restrict rights of people on death row.

Women in the reproductive-rights movement are itching to fight back. In fact, Planned Parenthood initiated a call for a march and rally in Washington, D.C., on April 25, 2004.

Some pro-choice groups have announced plans to steer the movement into a dump-Bush, support-the-Democrat direction. But, as the vote on the ban shows, that strategy is a dead end. Democratic candidates cannot be trusted to support women's right to choose abortion.

What persuaded the Supreme Court justices to legalize abortion in 1973? At that time, five Republican appointees joined two Democratic appointees to vote for the decision. It was the upsurge of the independent women's liberation movement, marching in the streets for abortion on demand, that determined the 1973 ruling.

Just as an independent anti-war movement has emerged to oppose Bush's preemptive wars, so too is an independent women's movement needed to demand the many essential components of women's reproductive rights, including the right to choose abortion. □



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Can they split the bosses?

Grocery workers strike-lockout enters third week

By John Parker
Los Angeles

The strike and lockout at Los Angeles supermarket chains entered the third week Oct. 26 with cracks showing in the anti-worker alliance of the three supermarket chains: Ralphs, Albertsons and Vons/Pavilion, which is owned by Safeway.

A United Food and Commercial Workers union official who prefers to remain anonymous told Workers World that Albertsons and Ralphs management were considering breaking from Safeway's CEO Steven Burd and negotiating separately.

UFCW workers can take credit for weakening management unity with their militancy. Also, community support is still strong against the big three grocery chains of Ralphs, owned by Kroger, Albertsons and Vons/Pavilion.

The community's boycott is working. Cash registers are silent as shoppers go elsewhere.

Part of the engine for building this militancy and support has been the frequent rallies at local stores. At a Vons store in the Echo Park area of Los Angeles, UFCW Local 770 organized such an event for the striking workers Oct. 26.

The local has already organized mass rallies with big-name celebrities and labor officials. Other unions supporting the rallies have included the Teamsters, Service Employees, Television and Radio Actors, and Hotel and Restaurant Employees.

Part of the local's strategy to keep up the spirits of striking and locked-out workers is to organize more frequent and smaller rallies of support at each store, especially those located in more remote areas. At the Oct. 26 rally the tactic worked well. Workers not only got the chance to show their militancy through chants but also marched by the store's entrance, where they blocked entry.

After the march, officials from the United Transportation Union, representing striking Metropolitan Transit Authority workers, expressed their soli-

arity, focusing on the demand for decent health care for workers. They were followed by a teacher representing the United Teachers of Los Angeles. He said the school he taught at was around the corner, and that all the teachers at that school had been instructed to not patronize this Vons.

Health care is key issue

Health care is one of the key issues of the strike and lockout affecting 71,000 UFCW workers in Southern California. The big three food chains are trying to cut \$1 billion in health-care benefits from UFCW workers.

After Safeway's proposal for drastic cuts, over 95 percent of UFCW workers voted to strike. When this happened, Ralphs and Albertsons locked out their UFCW workers without giving legal notice.

Miguel Arrow lives not far from this store. He was observing the rally. Asked what he thought, he said: "We can't let these big corporations get away with murder by denying basic health care to workers. If they take it away from these people, who's to stop my boss from making eyes at my health-care benefits. I'm with them."

Former customers of the big three have shown unprecedented support for the strike, which demonstrates this struggle's universal nature. Not only health care, but workers' basic right to have a union, is at issue.

Ralphs has proposed opening up new stores that will be non-union.

The big three are proposing a two-tier wage system that would significantly lower starting wages for new employees. This would provide great incentive to eliminate workers with more seniority and thereby lower labor costs.

And workers near retirement would face the loss of hundreds of dollars per month in lost medical benefits.

In recent newspaper ads, the corporate executives of Vons, Albertsons and Ralphs falsely stated that the workers are over-



Healthcare is a major issue for UFCW supermarket workers.

paid. In reality, the average worker makes \$312 per week. Many employees earn less than \$10 per hour.

Lying and breaking the law seem par for the course for these supermarket chains. In early October KFMB-TV, channel 8, reported on a videotape taken at a Ralphs in Chula Vista. The video shows how this store was circumventing truckers' refusal to cross picket lines.

Channel 8 reported that on the videotape, scabs could clearly be seen unloading crates of milk from a U-Haul truck without refrigeration. According to the California Department of Food and Agriculture, "Milk must be handled in such a way that protects against temperatures above 45 degrees."

The store is currently under investigation. As it gets pretty hot here in Southern California, especially in a U-Haul cab, 45 degrees would be hard to maintain.

This shows the stores' cavalier attitude toward both the workers who produce their profits and the health of their own consumers. Many of these same wage-and-benefit cuts against the UFCW would help drive down wages and benefits for all workers, including those

who shop at their stores.

However, instead of the government seriously going after these violations, it chooses to harass and intimidate workers with non-legal immigrant status. This took place in raids Oct. 23 in Wal-Mart stores, when federal authorities arrested 250 workers, mostly janitors. Some feel that this may have been an attempt by the government to eliminate workers who might be most sympathetic toward a union drive at these stores.

The move to unionize Wal-Mart is picking up steam. It has become a focus in this strike/lockout. Many workers cheered Jesse Jackson at a Local 770 rally at a Ralphs in South Central Los Angeles when he said, "Organize Wal-Mart."

Solidarity threatens greedy three

Exploiting bitter rivalries among Ralphs, Albertsons, and Vons (Safeway) could be an effective tactic. In targeting Safeway, the UFCW viewed Safeway management as the architect of a non-negotiating hard line that forced the union to strike. Safeway would be particularly vulnerable if the labor movement as a whole could take on the giant supermarket chain.

Safeway owns 330 stores in central and southern California. It is one of North America's biggest supermarket food retailers, with a total of 1,800 stores and over 172,000 workers. Safeway operates in the Western, Midwestern and Mid-Atlantic regions, and western Canada. It operates under different names: the Vons/Pavilion companies in southern and central California, Dominicks Finer Foods in Chicago, Carr-Gottstein Food in Alaska, Genuardi's Family Market in the eastern United States, and Randall's Food Markets in Texas.

Organizing and spreading the resistance could bring this Wall Street food-chain giant to its knees. Here lies a formula for success that would bring economic and social justice to 71,000 UFCW workers who are waging a heroic struggle. In unity there is strength. □

NYC restaurant workers march

Workers from Local 100 of HERE—the hotel and restaurant employees' union—marched from the Four Seasons to Gallagher's Steak House on Oct. 29.

Dishwashers, cooks, wait-people and bussing staff from 25 of New York's upscale restaurants are threatening to strike. Restaurant owners have demanded health-insurance cutbacks and rejected the union's proposed \$20-a-week raise for kitchen workers.

The contract for the 800 unionized workers expires on Oct. 31. If they walk out, it would result in the first shutdown of its kind here in decades.



African American community responds

Racist witch hunt rocks Philly election

By Betsey Piette
Philadelphia

With just over a week left before the Nov. 4 mayoral election, an FBI investigation targeting Philadelphia Mayor John Street's re-election campaign has rallied African American voters in his defense.

The attack may be producing results unintended by the Bush administration, which appears to be behind the attack. In the tight race with Republican Sam Katz in the country's fifth-biggest city, Street seems to be maintaining his lead. Many African Americans see the intense attacks as a federal government assault not just on Street but on their communities.

On Oct. 22, housing activists with the Kensington Welfare Rights Union went to federal court seeking a temporary restraining order to stop the Justice Department from interfering with Philadelphia's municipal election.

The request, filed by attorney Michael Coard, was based on legal precedent established in a 1984 Alabama case, *Smith vs. Meese*. That case involved an attempt to influence an election by selective investigations and prosecution.

KWRU President Cheri Honkala said, "The FBI does irreparable harm to city voters by making the focus of the election the probe rather than issues of housing, jobs and education."

A secret two-year-old federal investigation seems to be examining the entire Philadelphia political system in general and contracts with people-of-color-owned businesses in particular. This investigation came to light when a Philadelphia police sweep discovered an FBI electronic surveillance "bug" in Mayor Street's City Hall office on Oct. 7, just four weeks before Election Day.

Polls taken after the probe came to light showed Street still pulling ahead.

But in response to the exposure, the FBI went on a new offensive. The bureau invited media along to film their dramatic raids of three city administrative offices where boxes of seized records were carted out.

The next day it was leaked to the media that the FBI was subpoenaing Street's bank records—and his wife's, son's, and campaign finance coordinator Ronald White's. The FBI raided White's law office.

The FBI claims to be investigating the Street administration for awarding city contracts to political supporters, in particular African American contractors like White. However, White's legal earnings seem insignificant when com-

pared to the tens of millions of dollars paid over decades to a handful of law firms, all run by white men heavily involved in bankrolling the mayoral campaigns of Street's predecessors.

A 1998 report now being updated by Atlanta-based D.J. Miller & Associates Inc. revealed that from 1983 to 1995 "minority"- and female-owned firms in Philadelphia actually lost millions of dollars because of patronage and cronyism involving white male officials and business owners.

On a statewide level, currently only 2.1 percent of Pennsylvania's contracts are with companies owned by people of color.

The FBI's campaign to single out Street as part of an investigation into alleged municipal corruption involving the awarding of contracts has even come under fire from Jeffrey Miller, a former chief of the Criminal Division of the U.S. attorney's office.

"Presumably, people who contribute to a campaign expect something in return," said Miller, speaking generally. "It goes as high as the president, who often appoints people who contribute to his campaign to ambassadorships. Such relationships are part of the political landscape in this country." (Philadelphia Daily News, Oct. 15).

Where to find corruption

If Attorney General John Ashcroft's Justice Department and the FBI really wanted to go after an elected official engaged in kickbacks and cronyism, they could have stayed in Washington and bugged the White House to probe the billion-dollar contracts for work in Iraq that Bush has doled out to Bechtel and Halliburton, Vice President Dick Cheney's former company.

The intensification of the FBI attack on Street may have also been designed to divert attention away from a scandal that threatened the Katz campaign. On the morning of the FBI raid, the Philadelphia Inquirer ran a front-page story about a civil lawsuit brought against Katz by three former business partners accusing him of deceiving them to the tune of a \$2.1 million.

The former partners also say Katz participated in an embezzlement scheme.

Street and his supporters responded to the FBI raid with an emergency news conference where he described the raid as a "fishing expedition" designed to "hijack the election." The government officials whose offices were raided reported that they had been cooperating with the federal investigation and would have turned over any records the

FBI had requested.

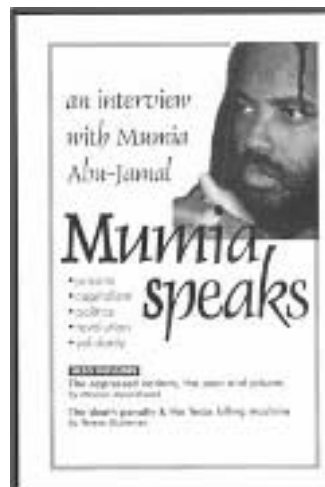
Katz, who appears to be heavily backed by suburban corporate interests, responded to the resurgence of support for Street from African American voters by accusing the mayor of "racial politicking." Katz and his supporters continuously claim that racism is not a factor in this election. But they came under heavy criticism for sending a mailing to voters in predominately white Northeast Philadelphia urging them to help Katz "take back their city."

In Oct. 26 campaign remarks, Katz said it's a "sad state of affairs in this city in which there's a federal investigation and the reaction is sympathy." Thus he once again demonstrated how out of touch he is with concerns being raised in the African American community about the nature of the probe.

During a Saturday afternoon call-in program on WHAT, Michael Coard, leader of the Avenging the Ancestors Coalition and an attorney for Mumia Abu-Jamal, challenged Katz's contention that race is not an issue in the campaign.

Coard compared Street's record—25 years of community and government service, including terms served as president of city council and the fact that he is the sitting mayor—with Katz's. The challenger has never held office. He lacks any experience with community issues.

Coard asked listeners to consider how the media would respond if the situation was reversed—and whether the media would ever give the same consideration to an inexperienced African American candidate as they have to big-business-backed Katz. □



MUMIA SPEAKS:
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Mumia from death row:

BUSH 2: The worst ever?

There is a tendency among the American elite, in the interest of stability, to strive to "play nice" with whichever party is in the nation's capital. You will hear many suggest that it is in the "national interest" to "respect the office" (if not the man), and to "be constructive" if one dares to venture criticism, at all costs.



This is seen as "professional" behavior, and not without coincidence, this "professional manner" protects one's access, and perhaps one's future opportunities as well.

That's why it was striking to read recently of the somewhat blunt criticisms offered by University of California economist George A. Akerlof, a 2001 Nobel Prize laureate. In a recent interview, the Berkeley-based economist offered the following assessment of the presidency of George W. Bush:

"I think this is the worst government the U.S. has ever had in its more than 200 years of history. It has engaged in extraordinarily irresponsible policies not only in foreign and economic but also in social and environmental policy. This is not normal governmental policy. Now is the time for people to engage in civil disobedience." (Dollars and Sense magazine, Sept./Oct. 2003)

Clearly, this isn't the usual stuff one expects from Nobel Prize-winning economists. It is extraordinary. But the essential message from Professor Akerlof was unmistakable: Protest. When asked what kind, he replied: "I don't know yet. But I think it's time to protest—as much as possible."

Millions of Americans, many for the first time in their lives, did just that in the spring, as they tried to make the administration re-think the looming Iraq adventure, but to no avail. The Bush administration, like some hard-hearted Herod, vowed to "shock and awe" the Iraqi state into submission, and delivered almost unprecedented bombing on a major city in recent years. It bombed Baghdad and other major Iraqi cities for days, each bigger than the last. In order to do so, it slapped the UN senseless, and using the prostrate American media, vowed to remake the face of the Middle East.

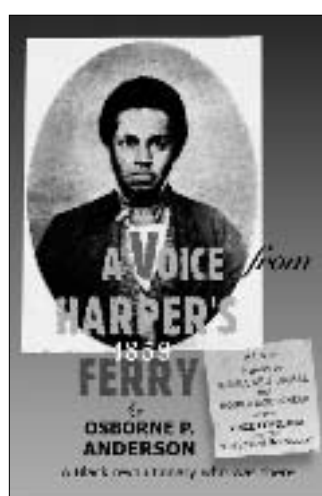
The bombs have burst. Armies have scattered. A satrap of U.S.-approved and chosen puppets have been seated and given titles that seem to mean they have power. Yet this body, this so-called "Iraqi Governing Council" has less power than the meanest borough in the tiniest burg in America. Power, backed by U.S. military death threats, resides in the Supreme Commander, Paul Bremer, who says what goes and doesn't go in the allegedly "free Iraq." The U.S., which brought its boots, guns and bombs onto Iraqi soil ostensibly to "bring democracy," is none too willing to allow the Iraqis to rule themselves.

The U.S. is both hated and feared worldwide. In the councils of the United Nations it is seen as a rogue elephant, huge, powerful, dangerous and unpredictable. When the U.S. speaks of "freedom," "democracy," and "human rights," many diplomats politely cover their snickers for fear of outraging the elephant, who might—who knows?—announce yet another self-proclaimed "War against Whatever."

In polls throughout Europe, when citizens are asked to name a country that poses the greatest threat to world peace, the U.S. is indeed—number one. Meanwhile, George III manages to threaten and sneer against other nations that threaten his version of "world stability." It is like the elephant threatening the grass for being trampled.

The worst ever? I wonder what some historians might say about that. They might have a better perspective than economists. Yet, with the nation experiencing a "jobless recovery", with over 3 million people fired since March, with over 34 million people living in dire poverty, with a war sucking up billions of dollars in a dangerous economy, with fear stalking the U.S. heart like a tip-smacking lion spying an antelope on the veldt, with over 2 million men, women and children in U.S. prisons, these are not the best of times.

It's time for serious change. If you agree, protest! □

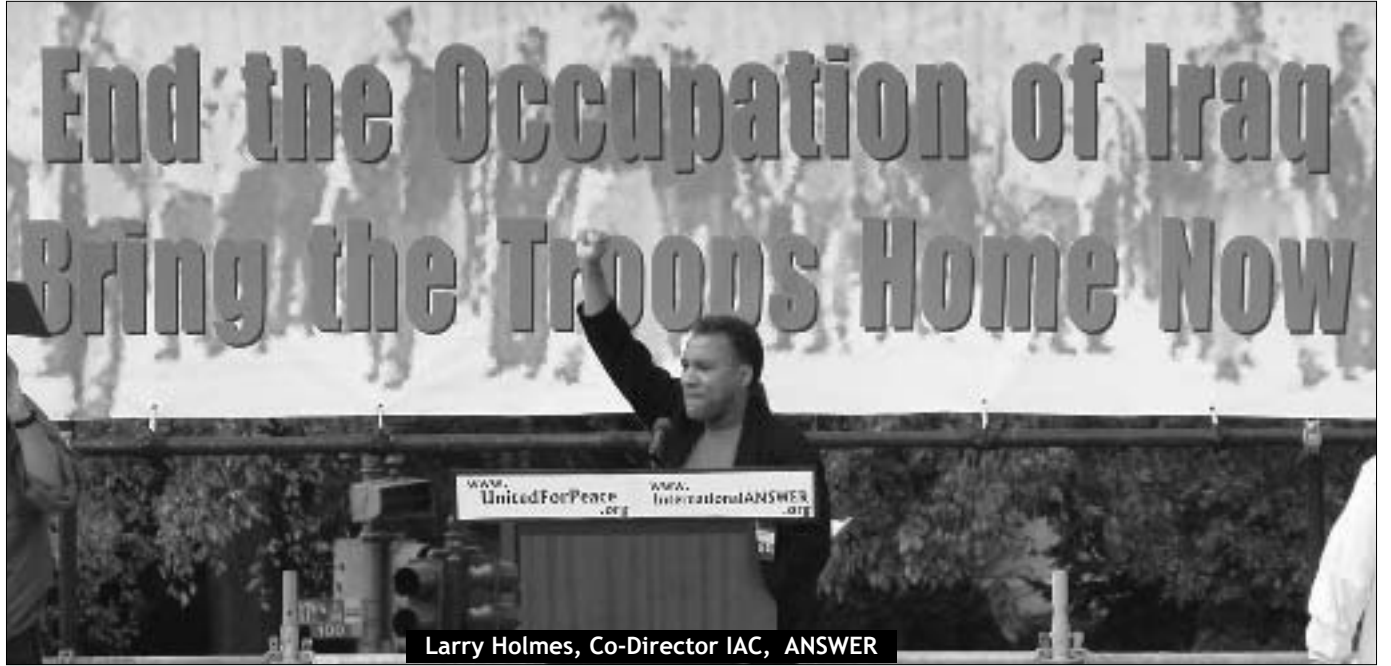


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PHOTOS, ABOVE AND TOP: WERNER PETRIKAT



Luis Adolfo Cardona, Colombian worker in exile



Yoomi Jeong, Korea Truth Commission, ANSWER



Rev. Al Sharpton, National Action Network



Mara Verheyden-Hilliard, Partnership for Civil Justice, ANSWER

WW PHOTOS: DEIRDRE GRISWOLD

WASHINGTON

Bring the troops home now!

Continued from page 1

Bush's humiliating experience in Australia, where he was heckled by members of parliament even as thousands demonstrated outside, and called again for Bush's impeachment.

Many low-paid workers from around the world are now infusing the labor movement here with a sharper sense of class struggle. Larry Holmes of ANSWER and Brenda Stokely, head of New York Labor Against the War, urged the anti-war movement to focus on the struggles of workers who are becoming desperate as

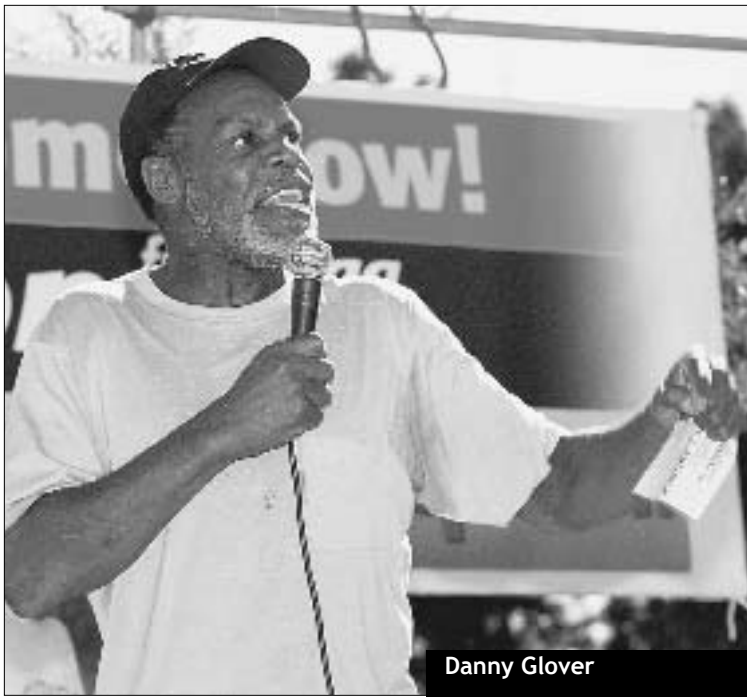
the Pentagon budget eats up social services. Holmes called on the crowd to "hold the dates" for regional actions around Martin Luther King holiday, Jan. 17-19.

A speaker from Peace Action called attention to a global day of action called for March 20, one year after the war's start.

The demonstration coincided with the second anniversary of the so-called Patriot Act, and many hand-made signs and banners assailed Attorney General John Ashcroft and the administration's assault on civil liberties. One parodied the "Pledge of Allegiance" students have to say in school. It read, "One nation under sur-

veillance." Speakers from Muslim and Arab organizations spoke of roundups in their communities that have led to mass deportations and detentions.

Youthful organizers from campuses and even high schools worked on all aspects of the demonstration. Caneisha Mills, Sarah Sloan and Peta Lindsay were part of an energetic group from Youth & Student ANSWER in Washington that did outreach to organizing centers in 145 cities, figured out the logistics of the day, got up before dawn to put the finishing touches on the program, and then spoke at the rally. □



Danny Glover

PHOTO: SF INDYMEDIA/PETER MAIDEN



PHOTO: BERNIE FOX

15,000 march in San Francisco

By Stefanie Beacham
San Francisco

On Oct. 25, a scorching hot day, over 15,000 people marched in San Francisco to protest the U.S. occupation of Iraq and to demand that the \$87 billion planned for Bush's war be used instead for education, health care and jobs.

Buses filled with concerned people reached San Francisco from all over the West. They came from San Diego, Los Angeles, Santa Barbara and Humboldt County, Calif., from Seattle, Phoenix and more.

As the marchers moved through the streets of San Francisco they chanted: "We're all fired up. Won't take it no more. We want money for health care, not for war" and "Bring the troops home now!"

The media and the U.S. government continue to lie, saying the economy is on the upswing and that Iraq is under control. Yet the numbers in the street tell a

different story. The real story is that unemployment is growing by the day and that the Iraqi people continue to resist the occupation of their country.

The Oct. 25 demonstrations in San Francisco and D.C., where there were 100,000, showed that the anti-war movement is growing stronger and is ready for the battles ahead. Anti-war, anti-occupation and anti-imperialist activism is on the rise in the United States and around the world.

The demonstration in San Francisco was sponsored by International ANSWER, Not In Our Name, Bay Area United Against War, United for Peace & Justice, and the Vanguard Public Foundation.

Speaking during the opening rally at the Civic Center Plaza, Leilani Dowell from Workers World Party stressed why it is so important that the movement was again out in the street in large numbers: "Only the mass movement of the people can stop imperialist war against Iraq, Afghanistan, Palestine, Colombia, Syria, Cuba, Iran,

Venezuela, North Korea and everywhere."

At the closing rally at Jefferson Square Park, Ban al-Wardi from the Free Palestine Alliance spoke of the need for the anti-war movement to firmly embrace the struggles of all: "We cannot be truly anti-war without the very heart of the peace and justice movement—that heart is the Palestinian people."

Richard Becker from the ANSWER coalition summed up the feelings of the crowd when he asked, "Is there any reason to stay in Iraq"? The answer from the demonstrators was a resounding "No!" Becker went on to say, "In fact, among all the lies being pushed forward to justify this war and racist occupation probably the biggest one yet is that more money is needed to continue the pillaging of Iraq."

Other speakers included Hollywood actor Danny Glover, former U.S. Rep. Cynthia McKinney and Vietnam veteran Ron Kovic, author of "Born on the Fourth of July." □



Cynthia McKinney

PHOTO: SF INDYMEDIA/PETER MAIDEN

Worldwide marches target U.S. occupation

By John Catalinotto

Including the anti-Bush protests the week before Oct. 25, demonstrations to end the U.S. occupation of Iraq took place in over 60 cities in over 20 countries coinciding with the protests in the United States, based on reports from local organizers.

In the days just before Oct. 25, some special actions took place.

U.S. Secretary of State Colin Powell had been scheduled to visit Athens, Greece on Oct. 22. When the Greek anti-war movement got wind of his visit a few days earlier, they quickly mobilized. On the advice of the Greek government, Powell cancelled his trip and went on to the "Donors Conference" in Madrid, Spain.

Not that Powell got such a popular welcome in Spain. Anti-war organizer Angeles Maestro reports that some 20,000 people marched into downtown Madrid to protest the conference and demand the U.S.-British occupiers get out of Iraq. There were also demonstrations in Barcelona, Bilbao, La Coruña, Oviedo and Tenerife.

On Oct. 25, one of the larger actions outside the U.S. was in South Korea, whose government, along with that of Japan and Turkey, threatens to send troops to Iraq. An organizer there reports that "more than 30 South Korean cities including Seoul held demonstrations to protest against the U.S. occupation of Iraq and the



Tokyo, Japan

PHOTO: AWAC

dispatching of Korean troops to Iraq. More than 5,000 people gathered in Seoul alone."

"The mood was very different from the previous demonstrations. One reason is the recent series of suicides committed by workers in protest to [Korean President] Roh Moo-hyun's neo-liberal policies. One can feel the mood of sadness and rage. 'How many more workers need to die before they could get a decent wage?' was what everyone at the demonstration were thinking."

On Oct. 25 in Japan, an organizer reports that the group "World Action staged rally in Miyashita Park Tokyo. Some 1,500 workers and students gathered in this rally. After the rally, partici-

pants demonstrated to call for the end of occupation on Iraq by U.S. or the United Nations, and to stop the dispatch of the Japanese military, the Self-Defence Forces, to Iraq."

In Lisbon, Portugal, some 2,000 people gathered in the rain in the main square to demand an end to the U.S. occupation of Iraq and that the government desist from sending 200 troops to that country. A favorite slogan was "Iraq for the Iraqis." Another protest took place in Oporto.

Organizers in Italy report solidarity demonstrations at the U.S. Camp Ederle, in Vicenza, in Florence and some other cities. There was a "peace race" in Ypres,



Lisbon, Portugal



PHOTOS: RESISTIR.INFO

Belgium, vigils and smaller protests in many German cities.

Protests were also set in Copenhagen, Denmark, in Oslo and other Norwegian cities, and in Britain, France, Macedonia and Mexico.

In Canada there were marches in Vancouver, Edmonton, Toronto and Montreal, as well as other cities. □

Anti-war protests follow Bush around the world

By Leslie Feinberg

Like a traveling salesman, Commander in Chief George Bush has been on the road, hawking the U.S. "war on terror" like snake oil. It's a tough sell.

As Bush jetted to five countries in Southeast Asia and to Australia in seven days Oct. 17-23, angry demonstrations filled the streets wherever Air Force One touched down.

Thousands of workers protested in Manila when Bush arrived for an eight-hour state visit on Oct. 18, widely seen as a reward to President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo for sending soldiers and police to beef up U.S.-led forces in Iraq. Demonstrators converged on Congress where Bush was addressing the Joint Houses of legislature and other sites in the capital.

Nationally coordinated protests also took place in Baguio, Cordillera, Ilocos, Central Luzon, Cebu, Iloilo-Panay, Samar, Leyte, Negros, Davao, Cotabato, Agusan Provinces, Cagayan de Oro and other major urban centers and provinces. More anti-war protests were scheduled for Oct. 25.

The Kilusang Mayo Uno (KMU)—one of the biggest union federations in the Philippines—issued a statement stressing that the policies of Bush and Arroyo have "brought serious setbacks in the economies of both countries. High unemployment and massive retrenchment caused widespread industrial unrest among workers and labor unions. Poor people and other patriotic and peace-loving sectors continue to protest over the unjust war launched by Bush and supported by Arroyo. We declare them enemies of the working class."

KMU Secretary General Joel Maglunsod castigated the police blockades and use of force against protesters. He concluded, "Bush wants to impose what he failed to achieve during the World Trade Organization Conference in Cancun, which is to forge 'free trade agreements' with Asian states. We urge peoples all over Asia to frustrate the U.S. economic and military agenda in the region."

The Bagong Alyansang Makabayan-BAYAN—the militant Philippine anti-imperialist movement, reported on demonstrations in other parts of Asia during Bush's seven-day trip.

Anti-imperialist and anti-war groups in Japan held nationwide mass actions on Oct. 17 to demand an end to the Pentagon occupation of Iraq and to protest the Koizumi government's deployment of Japanese troops there.

In Thailand, the Workers' Democracy, a coalition united against the U.S. occupation of Iraq, organized demonstrations against its government sending 1,000 Thai soldiers to Iraq. Organizers explained that the march from the World Trade Center in Bangkok to the Siam Center retraced the route of the historic 1975 protest demanding the dismantling of U.S. military bases there.

And mass anti-war sentiment in Britain and Australia have reached such critical mass that the Connecticut Cowboy faced embarrassing rebuffs from the political establishments of these two main imperialist allies.

Bush can run, but he can't hide

The Canberra, Australia, visit was the last leg of Bush's six-nation jaunt. The Australian government has contributed troops and military hardware to the imperialist military assault on Afghanistan and Iraq and backed Washington's war drive politically in the United Nations.

Right-wing Australian Prime Minister John Howard, a servile ally of Washington, welcomed Bush with open arms and an invitation to address a joint sitting of parliament's two legislative houses.

Outside Parliament House on Oct. 23, a massive security apparatus skirmished with thousands of anti-war protesters. Activists pressed against police barricades as Bush's motorcade screeched up to the entrance, banging drums and chanting "George Bush go home and take Howard with you!"

Later, near the U.S. Embassy, anti-war activists broke through the police barriers. After being pushed back by the mass of police force, demonstrators marched to

Howard's official residence, where the Australian leader was hosting a lunch for the U.S. president. Others stood up to security forces and their attack dogs outside the U.S. Embassy compound where Bush spent the night. (CNN.com, Oct. 23)

A day earlier, an estimated 7,000 to 10,000 activists marched against Bush in Sydney.

This popular anger was reflected inside parliament. As Bush tried to defend the Pentagon-led aggression against Afghanistan and Iraq. Two Green Party Senators, Bob Brown and Kerry Nettle, disrupted and heckled the U.S. head of state, challenging him on the war drive and denounced the "free trade" agreement that Bush and Howard are reportedly negotiating in secret. They also demanded the return of two Australian nationals—Mamdouh Habib and David Hicks—held at the U.S. naval base at Guantánamo, Cuba, called on Bush to respect international law.

So hot is the breath of widespread anger on Howard's neck regarding these brutal and illegal internments, that the prime minister reportedly told Bush during their 40-minute private discussion, "It probably suits everybody that their fates be worked out sooner rather than later."

Together with hundreds of other "suspects," Habib and Hicks have been caged in Guantánamo without charges for two years and "both face U.S. military trails with limited access to legal advice, their families and lawyers have said." (AP, Oct. 23) Habib's wife and 18-year-old son Ahmed, and Hicks lawyer were in the parliament public gallery. Ahmed was ejected after standing and calling out to Bush: "What about my Dad's rights?"

Both Senators resisted being removed by the sergeant at arms after the speaker of the House ordered them ousted from the chamber.

Some 13 Labor legislators, mostly women, sat silently, refusing to rise for a standing ovation at the end of the speech. Earlier, 41 opposition lawmakers had signed a letter criticizing the Bush-led war drive, "saying that a clear and present danger in Iraq did not exist." According to the

Oct. 27 Business Day, Labor Party leader Simon Crean had ordered them all to behave during Bush's speech.

Had CNN not defied the Australian government's orders not to film inside the chamber, viewers around the world would not have seen a close-up of Bush's face twitch or the scuffling as Howard and loyal politicians formed a jostling cordon to help the U.S. president make a quick exit. Nettle tried to hand Bush some papers, but he refused to take them.

No pomp due to circumstance

At this point, Bush desperately needs a good photo opportunity. His senior aides thought it would be jolly if the sovereign ruler of the U.S. rode together with the Queen of England in a triumphal procession along London's Mall during the president's Nov. 19-21 state visit.

The regal procession is traditionally the high point of public pageantry when a head of state visits. And meticulous plans were already in the works.

Smiling crowds waving flags on sticks, cheering "bully for Bush!" Unfortunately these best-laid plans went astray because so many people in England think of Bush as just that: a bully.

So the British government had to deliver an unpleasant message to the Oval Office. After consultations with the House of Windsor and Scotland Yard, a senior Palace official announced Oct. 18, "Downing Street, anxious about possible anti-war protests from the start, has now decided to pull the plug on it."

"We are liaising with the White House and they have made no attempt to hide their disappointment," he concluded.

Instead, Bush will be whisked around by helicopter, "to avoid protesters who line road routes," noted the Oct. 19 Sunday Telegraph.

And, the article continued, a prestigious invitation to deliver a speech to the British Parliament has been withdrawn. "Other proposed events have also been curtailed or cancelled, and he will not address Parliament because of fears of a boycott by MPs."

Instead, King George and the Queen of England will be photographed sipping tea inside Buckingham Palace, choreographed and under guard. The message these staged snapshots will deliver to all those outside the fortified walls is "Let them eat cake."

Marie Antoinette was a "neo"-con, too.

□



Supporters to visit war resister

Gloria Pacis, mother of Marine resister Stephen Funk, joined the military families in Washington, D.C. Oct. 25. Funk, a Marine reservist who refused to report for duty in protest last winter, is now serving a six-month prison term in Camp Lejeune, N.C., really for speaking out against the war. Funk also had the courage to come out as a gay man in the Marines.

A number of anti-war, Filipino and lesbian/gay/bi/trans organizations have joined to support Funk's suit asking for clemency. Every Saturday and Sunday between 12 p.m.-3 p.m., Funk is allowed visitors at Camp Lejeune. On Nov. 15, his supporters are converging with

others from the region, to show support and solidarity with this heroic anti-war activist.

Among the endorsing organizations are: International Action Center; Freedom Trainers; Suzanne Kelly, secretary treasurer, Local 334, OPEIU-AFL-CIO, Richmond, Va.; New Jersey Solidarity; Network in Solidarity with the Peoples of the Philippines; Gloria Pacis, mother of Stephen Funk; Queers for Peace and Justice; Support Network for an Armed Forces Union (SNAFU).

To endorse, email freestephen@join-snafu.org



Al-Rashid under fire

Iraqi resistance reaches new level

By Fred Goldstein

There is a torrent of so-called “anti-war” demagoguery coming from the major Democratic Party presidential candidates. And there are reams of complaints and accusations emanating from foreign policy strategists, editorial writers and congressional committees about the way the Bush administration conducted the war and about how it has no strategy for stabilizing the country.

This criticism is bound to multiply and grow more intense in the wake of the suicide car-bombings against police stations and the International Red Cross that rocked Baghdad on Oct. 28, the attack on a police station in Falluja the following day, and the recent revelation that the number of attacks on occupation forces has officially reached between 25 and 35 per day. The attacks on the police force set up by the U.S. show the intense anti-occupation sentiment that is spreading like wildfire.

Every atrocity committed by U.S. forces, every raid, every killing at a checkpoint fuels the resistance in its various forms. But for all the criticism within the establishment, no one on the inside is suggesting that the U.S. get out of Iraq, although this is the only way out of the quagmire.

Despite misgivings in some quarters about the Bush administration’s diplomacy, the U.S. ruling class, with all its media and its bought-and-paid-for Congress, unanimously gave the Bush administration its support to go ahead and invade and occupy Iraq. Furthermore, it was delirious with joy when it thought the war was won and Iraq was in U.S. hands. Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld was the man of the hour.

This assessment was premature. The U.S. ruling class and its representative in Washington made the mistake that all ruling classes are congenitally prone to make—it totally underestimated if not entirely discounted the role of the Iraqi masses.

As exploiters and rulers who give orders that affect millions, who buy and sell corporate empires, whose lobbyists write the laws, who hire and fire workers at will, and whose courts enforce the rights of property and imprison millions in their racist prison-industrial complex, the ruling class plays a role in society that accustoms its members to think that the masses don’t really count.

That is why they and their servants in Washington reduced the struggle for Iraq to the struggle between Saddam Hussein and his Baathist government on the one hand and the U.S. military on the other.

Wolfowitz: ‘Taking it to the enemy’

If this quality of underestimating the masses and overly relying upon military superiority alone is endemic to imperialist millionaires and billionaires, it is particularly pronounced in the right-wing military intellectuals who serve them. And the deficiency in this approach came home to one of the most fanatical advocates of the conquest of Iraq in a very personal way last Sunday, Oct. 26, in the al-Rashid Hotel in Baghdad.

Deputy Secretary of Defense Paul Wolfowitz was staying at the al-Rashid during his three-day tour of Iraq. “Wolfowitz was upbeat when he arrived in Baghdad on Friday,” said the Oct. 27 edition of the Christian Science Monitor. “He

told reporters that the military is ‘taking the fight to the enemy,’ and he expanded upon U.S. successes during visits to the oil-rich northern town of Kirkuk and to Hussein’s hometown of Tikrit.”

An hour after Wolfowitz flew out of Tikrit, a U.S. “Black Hawk” helicopter with the 12th Aviation Brigade, while covering a U.S. combat patrol, was shot down by a rocket-propelled grenade.

Things got worse for Wolfowitz when he got back to his hotel. “In a daring attack anti-American guerrillas yesterday fired a barrage of rockets at the al-Rashid hotel, a symbol of the U.S. occupation, in the heart of Baghdad,” reported Patrick Cockburn in the Oct. 27 edition of the London Independent. The attack killed a U.S. colonel and wounded 15 other people, including the senior coalition finance official, Britain’s Jacob Nell.

“The rockets, fired from a home-made launcher hidden in a blue trailer, smashed into the al-Rashid at 6:10 a.m.,” continued Cockburn, as Wolfowitz was dressing for a breakfast meeting. “In the minutes after the attack American officials fled in their pajamas and underpants to the convention center opposite the hotel, said eyewitnesses.”

The launcher contained 20 three-foot rockets in a trailer disguised as an electric generator. Using a pick-up truck, the attackers pulled the trailer into position on a side street about 800 yards from the hotel just minutes before they fired the rockets.

“The attack on the hotel, which is within the ‘green zone,’” wrote the Los Angeles Times on Oct. 27, “a highly secure area of several square miles—the only one in Baghdad within which the Americans and coalition forces can move with relative freedom—was particularly audacious because it was executed at relatively close range, U.S. officials said.”

The compound has a grey-walled perimeter which towers over Baghdad. It has multiple check points, double helixes of razor wire, high sandbags and “had become a symbol of the embattled American occupation.”

New level of resistance

Toby Dodge of the Royal Institute of International Affairs in London told the Times that “politically it shows people that they [the resistance] can deploy at will.... By attacking the most famous landmark in the compound, they are saying, ‘We rule the street. You don’t.’”

The attack marks a new phase of the resistance. It required not only a high degree of ingenuity, but higher level planning, coordination, surveillance, intelligence, technical expertise, military expertise and boldness. Above all, it involved the active or passive cooperation of many Iraqis. It was carried out despite all the U.S. military raids, roundups, spying, electronic eavesdropping, and every manner of intimidation and bribery. This indicates that the occupation is unable to effectively penetrate the growing mass support for the resistance.

The Oct. 27 Wall Street Journal testified that the al-Rashid attack was a step forward for the resistance: “Until recently, these rocket and mortar attacks—including one on al-Rashid in September—usually failed to hit their targets. But in the past few days, the guerrillas managed to inflict dozens of casualties, several of them fatal, by shelling U.S. bases in the cities of Samarra, Baquba and Balad, and by hitting a power station in Baghdad.”

This information had been suppressed by the Pentagon up to now.

“The ability to hit even the most protected U.S. targets raises new questions about how the American-led coalition can pacify Iraq,” continued the Journal. “There are now as many as 35 anti-coalition attacks a day, most in Baghdad and Sunni areas to its west and the north. In addition, guerrillas regularly kill Iraqis who help the coalition—including the chief of police in the southern Amarah province, who was gunned down this past weekend.”

When Wolfowitz faced the press after the attack on the al-Rashid, he denounced the attackers as “a few who refuse to accept the reality of a new and free Iraq.” But Cockburn of the Independent wrote: “If Wolfowitz had spoken to Iraqis living close to the scene of the attack he might have revised his opinion about the popularity of the U.S.-led occupation. ... In the street below a young man, who did not want to give his name, said: ‘Nobody in Iraq can accept the occupation, absolutely nobody.’” Cockburn quoted other, even more forcefully negative opinions about Wolfowitz and the occupation forces.

In the same way, “Wolfowitz and other U.S. officials have blamed Hussein loyalists and other terrorists” for the suicide bombings in Baghdad, in which civilians were killed along with the police, according to the Oct. 27 edition of the Washington Post. However, “Iraqis at the bombing sites expressed scorn at the American presence in their country, arguing that it has been responsible for provoking the attacks.”

Rumsfeld’s reversal

Whatever the relationship between the forces that staged the bombing attacks in Baghdad and other resistance forces around the country, the fact is that the war of resistance is moving in the direction of a genuine people’s war with widespread popular support. The hatred of the occupation is growing—both passive and active.

All the world can see it. That is why even Donald Rumsfeld was compelled to reverse course in his much-publicized, leaked memo on counter-terrorism in which he said it would be a “long, hard slog” in Iraq and Afghanistan. There is much specula-

tion about the meaning of his memo in the context of the bureaucratic and political struggle within the administration. It can be seen as Rumsfeld trying to seize the initiative by admitting he was wrong but then proposing all sorts of new measures in the phony “war on terrorism.”

But whatever the interpretation of the memo, the resistance has forced him to admit that his entire public posture—that of defending to the end the so-called “successes” of the occupation—was false.

On the other hand, much has been said about the U.S. State Department’s voluminous plans predicting all the problems that would beset the occupation and criticizing the Pentagon for ignoring these plans. To the ruling class pundits who refuse to understand the fierce anti-colonial sentiment of the Iraqi people, all the problems would have been averted if Rumsfeld had only accepted Colin Powell’s advice. But this is a totally shallow view.

No amount of planning could get the Iraqi people to accept a colonial occupation. It might have delayed the struggle slightly or made it somewhat more difficult. But no amount of planning in any colonial office ever reconciled any oppressed people to accepting colonial status or kept them from fighting against it.

And then there is the argument that the occupation would have prevailed if it only had “multilateral” support. Why, one must ask, would the Iraqi people accept “multilateral” occupation and colonialism any more than they would accept it from the U.S. and British imperialists? And furthermore, this was a fantasy in the first place.

The French and German imperialists and the Russian capitalists, with all their investments in Iraq and all the money owed them by the Iraqi government, were not going to help U.S. imperialism conquer Iraq and thereby undermine their own interests.

Now that the resistance is rising, the U.S. rulers want to blame their servants, their “allies” and everyone but themselves. It was their mad lust for colonial loot that led them into this adventure. And it will be the combined struggle of the Iraqi people and the worldwide movement of solidarity against war and occupation that will ultimately force them out. □

Everything’s OK in Iraq... They’re just taking it down for repairs





Congress & Cuba

The Senate didn't vote 59 to 38 to ease the ban on people from the United States traveling to Cuba because the wealthy patricians on Capitol Hill are any great friends of that workers' revolution. But the move was welcomed in the Caribbean nation, where the economic warfare of the illegal U.S.-led blockade takes a deep toll.

Weeks earlier, the House had also voted, 227 to 188, to refuse to appropriate funds to enforce the travel restrictions, as part of its \$90 billion bill to fund U.S. Transportation and Treasury Department programs.

President George W. Bush's aides vowed that he would veto the entire appropriation to fund Treasury and Transportation if the amendment loosening the travel ban were part of the bill.

The Bush administration, of all the groupings in the capitalist political establishment, has lied the loudest about how dreadful the Cuban Revolution is and how terrible life is there. Of course, when Bush and his neo-con cronies talk about how hard life is in Cuba, they don't mean because the United States is using an economic cudgel to bludgeon the population of the island nation.

In early October, Bush used a Rose Garden ceremony to announce that his administration was tightening restrictions on people from the United States traveling to Cuba. And he said he'd use the Department of Homeland Security to target and punish any U.S. citizens who defied his edict.

Therein lies the contradiction: If Cuba is so bad, why can't people from this country go there and see for themselves?

In truth, for 40 years U.S. administrations have tried to keep a barricade around the Cuba to prevent much-needed aid and trade from traveling in and to pre-

vent the revolution from traveling out. The Cuban Revolution is very impressive. Those from the United States who have challenged the travel ban—labor unionists, health-care workers, teachers and others—have returned inspired by the successes of the planned economy there and the human relations it produces.

People in the United States, fed on the pabulum that this is the freest country on earth, don't want to be told where they can or can't travel and what they can or can't see. And two years ago the struggle of a virtually united Cuban population standing shoulder to shoulder with Juan Miguel Gonzalez seeking the return of young Elian—held captive by anti-Cuban forces in the United States—moved many in this country.

The imperialist establishment is united in its goal of overturning the Cuban Revolution. But they aren't of one mind about how to achieve that objective. After 40 years of frontal assault, they're looking for other ways to undermine the revolutionary process there. Still, this doesn't rule out hostile moves toward Cuba by sectors of the U.S. ruling class.

On the other hand, Bush needs the support of farm-state legislators, many of them from his own party, who are clamoring to ease travel and trade restrictions on Cuba. Since the ban on farm sales to Cuba was loosened in 2000, U.S. agribusiness has sold \$282 million in agricultural goods to the island.

Cuban officials hailed the Senate vote as confirmation that the majority of people in the United States want to improve relations with Cuba.

The best way to build that solidarity is to strengthen the demand here in the belly of the beast to lift the brutal U.S.-led embargo against Cuba—now!

10 million strike in Italy to save pensions

By John Catalinotto

On Oct. 24, some 10 million workers shut down Italy with a four-hour general strike and mass demonstrations.

The CGIL, CISL, UIL and COBAS union confederations called the strike in an attempt to stop brutal cuts in pensions and other social services. Train, air and local transport were completely stopped.

The right-wing government led by media magnate Silvio Berlusconi has proposed severely cutting pensions and the public-health, school and university systems and other social services.

John Gilbert, an English teacher in Florence and a labor unionist, told Workers World that 65,000 people demonstrated in that Renaissance capital as part of the action. All told, said Gilbert, "CGIL-CISL-UIL held 100 demonstrations in 100 cities with an estimated 1.5 million people participating despite the rain in many places."

Gilbert also said that "the COBAS-left-wing, grass-roots unionists held a national demonstration of 10,000 striking workers, many of them schoolteachers, in Rome."

According to the Oct. 25 *Il Manifesto* newspaper, hundreds of thousands came out in Rome, Milan and Naples. And there were tens of thousands in many other cities, including Palermo in Sicily and Genoa, Turin and Venice in the north.

Il Manifesto noted that the Milan demonstration was made up not only of the industrial work force but of service workers, temporary workers, retired workers, neighborhood and consumer groups, youths and students, and the opposition political parties. It also pointed out that many women participated, and that they were especially angry that the government is trying to raise the age of retirement when the women work "two jobs, in the factory and at home."

Along with economic demands and attacks on the Berlusconi government, said Gilbert, "there were peace flags and signs and slogans calling for the withdrawal of Italian and other Western occupation troops from Iraq and Afghanistan."

Berlusconi's Council of Ministers agreed on the new draft law for pensions on Oct. 3. According to the proposal, starting in 2008 workers and other employees must have paid in 40 years of contributions before receiving a pension, or have reached a minimum age of 65 for men and 60 for women. Otherwise, pensions will be considerably reduced. Currently the retirement age is 57 after 35 years of contributions.

This is especially threatening at a time when unemployment is growing—especially for the young—and more of the available jobs are short-term, low-paid or both.

In 1994, a mass turnout of millions of workers protesting similar pension counter-reforms ended the first Berlusconi government after only seven months. This time, though 70-80 percent of the work force took part in the strike, it appears unlikely that the government will retreat or resign.

The unions' bargaining position is strengthened by the strike's success and the fact that they struck together. Last spring Berlusconi was able to divide the different confederations. But even such a massive action, which would be earthshaking if it took place in the United States, has its limitations at a time when Italian bosses and the European capitalists in general plan overall cuts in workers' true wages.

Pensions and social services are under attack throughout the European Union. This attack has aroused mass protests not only in Italy but in France, Germany, Austria and Portugal. Workers' actions will have to go beyond symbolic protests to force a change in policy. A decisive struggle over the pension cuts is still to come.

UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE STATEMENT OF OWNERSHIP, MANAGEMENT AND CIRCULATION

1. Publication Title: Workers World-WW
2. Publication Number: 0043-809X
3. Filing Date: October 30, 2003
4. Issue Frequency: Weekly except first week of January
5. Number of Issues Published Annually: 51
6. Annual Subscription Price: \$25.00
7. Complete Mailing Address of Known Office of Publication (Not printer): (Street, City, County, State, and ZIP+4) 55 West 17 Street, 5th Floor, New York, NY 10011-5513; Contact Person: R. Neidenberg; Telephone: 212-255-0352
8. Complete Mailing Address of Headquarters or General Business Office of Publisher (Not printer): 55 West 17 Street, 5th Floor, New York, NY 10011-5513
9. Full Names and Complete Mailing Addresses of Publisher, Editor, and Managing Editor (Do not leave blank): Publisher (Name and Complete Mailing Address): WW Publishers, Inc., 55 West 17 Street, 5th Floor, New York, NY 10011-5513; Editor (Name and Complete Mailing Address): Deirdre Griswold, 55 West 17 Street, 5th Floor, New York, NY 10011-5513; Managing Editor (Name and Complete Mailing Address): John Catalinotto, 55 West 17 Street, 5th Floor, New York, NY 10011-5513
10. Owner (Do not leave blank. If the publication is owned by a corporation, give the name and address of the corporation immediately followed by the names and addresses of all stockholders owning or holding 1 percent or more of the total amount of stock. If not owned by a corporation, give the names and addresses of the individual owners. If owned by a partnership or other unincorporated firm, give its name and address as well as that of each individual. If the publication is published by a nonprofit organization, give its name and address.): WW Publishers, Inc., 55 West 17 Street, 5th Floor, New York, NY 10011-5513; Hillel Cohen, 55 West 17 Street, 5th Floor, New York, NY 10011-5513; John Catalinotto, 55 West 17 Street, 5th Floor, New York, NY 10011-5513
11. Known Bondholders, Mortgagees and Other Security Holders Owning or Holding 1 Percent or More of Total Amount of Bonds, Mortgages or Other Securities. If none, check box: None
12. Tax Status (For completion by nonprofit organizations authorized to mail at special rates.) (Check One) The purpose, function, and nonprofit status of this organization and the exempt status for federal income tax purposes: (Check one): Does not apply
13. Publication Title: Workers World
14. Issue Date for Circulation Data Below: November 6, 2003
15. Extent and Nature of Circulation: Average No. of Copies Each Issue During Preceding 12 Months: a. Total Number Copies (Net Press Run): 6365. b. Paid and/or Requested Circulation: (1) Paid/Requested Outside-County Mail Subscriptions Stated on Form 3541 (include advertiser's proof and exchange copies): 1793; (2) Paid In-County Subscriptions (include advertiser's proof and exchange copies): 137; (3) Sales Through Dealers and Carriers, Street Vendors, Counter Sales, and Other Non-USPS Paid Distribution: 195; (4) Other Classes Mailed Through the USPS: 1272. c. Total Paid and/or Requested Circulation (Sum of 15b (1), (2), (3) and (4)): 3397. d. Free Distribution by Mail (Samples, complimentary, and other free): (1) Outside-County as Stated on Form 3541: 86; (2) In-County as Stated on Form 3541: 38; Other Classes Mailed Through the USPS: 60. e. Free Distribution Outside the Mail (Carriers or other means): 1934. f. Total Free Distribution (Sum of 15d and 15e): 2118. g. Total Distribution (Sum of 15c and 15f): 5515. h. Copies Not Distributed: 850. i. Total (Sum of 15g, 15h): 6365. Percent Paid and/or Requested Circulation (15c divided by 15g times 100): 62.95%.
- No. Copies of Single Issue Published Nearest to Filing Date: a. Total Number Copies (Net Press Run): 5000. b. Paid and/or Requested Circulation: (1) Paid/Requested Outside-County Mail Subscriptions Stated on Form 3541 (include advertiser's proof and exchange copies): 1663; (2) Paid In-County Subscriptions (include advertiser's proof and exchange copies): 109; (3) Sales Through Dealers and Carriers, Street Vendors, Counter Sales, and Other Non-USPS Paid Distribution: 72; (4) Other Classes Mailed Through the USPS: 42. c. Total Paid and/or Requested Circulation (Sum of 15b (1), (2), (3) and (4)): 1886. d. Free Distribution by Mail (Samples, complimentary, and other free): (1) Outside-County as Stated on Form 3541: 23; Other Classes Mailed Through the USPS: 8. e. Free Distribution Outside the Mail (Carriers or other means): 2082. f. Total Free Distribution (Sum of 15d and 15e): 2185. g. Total Distribution (Sum of 15c and 15f): 4267. h. Copies Not Distributed: 733. i. Total (Sum of 15g, 15h): 5000. Percent Paid and/or Requested Circulation (15c divided by 15g times 100): 44.2%.
16. Publication of Statement of Ownership. Publication required. Will be printed in the October 25, 2002, issue of this publication.
17. Signature and Title of Editor, Publisher, Business Manager or Owner: Deirdre Griswold, Editor, October 29, 2003 I certify that all information furnished on this form is true and complete. I understand that anyone who furnishes false or misleading information on this form or who omits material or information requested on the form may be subject to criminal sanctions (including fines and imprisonment) and/or civil sanctions (including civil penalties.)

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Workers World on the socialist countries

This was written in response to a reader in Britain, who asked about Workers World's position on the socialist countries.

Dear Bertolt:

On your question as to whether Workers World considers "the former Soviet Union, the Eastern European countries before 1989, North Korea, Cuba, etc. as socialist countries," the answer is yes. But let me elaborate.

Beginning with the 20th century, the relentless expansion of the capitalist system generated imperialist wars, socialist revolutions and national liberation struggles, as Lenin put it. The period of transition from capitalism to socialism on a world scale began with the Russian Revolution, but it has lasted much longer than he and earlier Marxists expected, and has seen grave setbacks for socialism. In this period, however, no third social system and no new propertied class have appeared in the world.

We broadly define as socialist those countries where the old state of the exploiting classes was smashed and the new regimes expropriated the means of production and established some form of planned economy. Freed of the profit motive, economic development could be reorganized to satisfy basic human needs. This generally came about through the revolutionary intervention of the masses (USSR, China, Cuba, Vietnam, Korea and others). However, in most of Eastern Europe, the destruction of the old state structures came not through mass revolution but through military defeat of the bourgeois fascist regimes by the Soviet Red Army at the end of World War II.

There have been other very significant revolutions that we do not characterize as socialist. They have remained within the framework of capitalist property relations but have achieved much greater independence from imperialist control—the bourgeois nationalist revolutions in Iraq and Libya, for example.

Those who argue that the growth of bureaucracy and political repression in the USSR represented a new form of class society cannot explain why it collapsed. The answer is that the bureaucracy was not a new class but a privileged grouping with a dual character. On the one hand, it was a drag on the struggling new socialist system, but on the other it organized the economy at a time of many remarkable gains for the workers and peasants. Because of its planned economy, the Soviet Union was able to grow from a semi-literate, semi-feudal society to an industrial space-age power in just two generations, and despite suffering immense destruction in World War II. But it could not sustain its socialist development against the hostility of the entire bourgeois world, fascist and "democratic" alike.

The governing group before Yeltsin had no special property rights in the Soviet system—that is, it was in no way a ruling class in the Marxist sense of the word. But it did have privileges, both legal and illegal, that separated it from the masses and whet the appetite of many in its ranks for ownership of the means of production they managed. The imperialists alternately threatened the Soviet leaders with nuclear extinction and tried to seduce them with grandiose promises. Once the workers' state was dismantled, many members of this stratum of Soviet society found it easy to make the transition to capitalism. But it was only then that they were able to take possession of the country's wealth, and even then it was often through trickery and gangster tactics.

They had been members of a grouping that enjoyed privileges within the workers' state. Some then made the transition to being members of a capitalist owning class that has usurped the workers and reintroduced the most vicious forms of exploitation.

The pulling down of the Soviet state and the looting of what had been socially-owned property—much of it done by the same imperialists who had been totally concentrated on its destruction—has brought a world of woes to the workers there and the revival of the most bitter national antagonisms, pulling apart the union itself. All the social indices prove what a devastating development this has been.

It has also created great hardships for oppressed, underdeveloped countries trying to progress economically that had greatly benefited from the existence of a socialist bloc, which helped them acquire technology and hold the imperialist robbers at bay.

We feel totally vindicated in having been staunch supporters of the USSR against imperialist intervention and internal reaction, even as we warned again and again of the growth of bourgeois elements within, and differed with the policies of the leadership on many world questions. If you look at our web site—www.workers.org—you will find a very comprehensive analysis of the USSR by the founder of Workers World Party, Sam Marcy.

In his book "Perestroika: A Marxist Critique," for example, Marcy wrote:

"From the point of view of administration, the Soviet state is in the hands of a vast bureaucracy. But the ownership of the means of production, meaning the bulk of the wealth of the country including its natural resources, is legally and unambiguously in the hands of the people—the working class, who make up the overwhelming majority of the population. Those in the governing group are merely the administrators of the state and state property. ... The ownership of the means of production in the hands of the working class is truly the most significant sociological factor in the appraisal of the USSR as a workers' state, or socialist state as it is called in deference to the aspirations of the people."

That was written in late 1989, before the breakup of the Soviet state led to the widespread selling off of the people's wealth.

Each socialist revolution has been shaped—and, in that sense, limited—by the material and social conditions it has inherited from the past and by whether it has any allies to turn to or is isolated in a sea of hostile capitalist states. Whatever subjective failings one can point to flow from these hard facts.

The fall of the USSR has had a profound effect on working-class movements and national liberation struggles around the world. It has especially emboldened the U.S. monopoly capital-

ists, who now openly flaunt their imperial ambitions. But it has in no way negated the class struggle. That is on the rise again, driven forward by the insatiable need of the capitalists to extract greater surplus value from the workers, especially as technology advances and competition for markets becomes more vicious.

We are confident that the worldwide struggle for socialism must revive, not only in oppressed countries but especially in the imperialist centers. What the oppressed all over the world need in order to shake off their chains are strong working-class movements that can challenge the imperialists at home—right in the belly of the beast, as our Cuban comrades say. It will happen. The spread of capitalist globalization—capital moving to where wages are lowest and destroying local economies, forcing workers and peasants from around the Third World to seek jobs in the imperialist countries—makes international class solidarity and struggle all the more needed by workers of all nationalities.

Let's fight for socialism as we want it to be, and as it can be when imperialism is defeated, while valuing and learning from the great sacrifices and struggles that have been taking place all over the world.

Deirdre Griswold
Editor, Workers World newspaper

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La desaparición de 2 trillones de dólares: Lo que es y lo que podría ser

Por Deirdre Griswold

¿Qué son \$87 mil millones de dólares? Se ha convertido en un símbolo más que en una cifra. Es decir brevemente que el gobierno ignora las necesidades del pueblo aquí en los Estados Unidos mientras gasta gigantescas sumas de dinero en la conquista y ocupación de Irak y Afganistán.

¿Será la última gota de agua que rebasa la cubeta?

Se oye mencionar cuando otra pieza de la infraestructura se desmorona, o cuando los trabajadores gubernamentales pierden sus empleos o los servicios vitales sufren más recortes. Cuando la prensa le pide sus comentarios a la gente en la calle, esta con coraje menciona los \$87 mil millones.

Es mucho dinero. Son \$300 por cada persona en los Estados Unidos. Cualquier trabajador que se le haya dicho que el gobierno no gastaría ese dinero y se los daría en un reintegro, lo consideraría como un día muy especial.

Una pequeña muestra de \$87 mil millones

Pero en realidad, esa cifra de \$87 mil millones es sólo una muestra.

Se refiere a una apropiación "suplemental" aceptada por el Congreso en adición al gigantesco presupuesto militar del próximo año.

He aquí el desglose del gasto militar para los años fiscales del 2003 y 2004:

Para el Año Fiscal 2003, el cual cubre el período del asalto masivo contra Irak, el Congreso aprobó un presupuesto para el Pentágono de \$364.4 mil millones. Pero en abril de este año, le dio a los guerrilleros otros \$62.4 mil millones "suplementarios" para cubrir la guerra contra Irak.

Ahora viene el Año Fiscal 2004. Tomó sólo 25 minutos el 17 de septiembre para que el comité que reconcilia las versiones del proyecto de gasto militar de la Cámara

de Representantes y el Senado aprobara una apropiación mucho más grande que la del año pasado: \$368.2 mil millones.

Después, echándole sal a la herida, la administración de Bush dijo que eso no era suficiente. Que se necesitaba más dinero para la ocupación y la "reconstrucción" de Irak y Afganistán. Así que lograron que los generosos guardianes del tesoro público les dieran otros \$87 mil millones de dólares "suplementarios". Si se suman las dos cifras el total es de \$455.2 mil millones para el Año Fiscal 2004.

Si se suman los presupuestos de ambos años para el Pentágono, más los "suplementarios", el total viene siendo \$882 mil millones. Si revisamos nuestra matemática veremos que durante estos dos años, la familia promedio de 4 miembros se espera que pague cerca de \$12.160 o más de \$3.041 por persona, para la guerra.

¿Qué podría hacerse con ese dinero?

Los trabajadores de este país tienen muchas otras cosas que podrían hacer con ese dinero. Como arreglarse los dientes, o pagar los préstamos estudiantiles para que la cuenta bancaria no sea tomada por el Departamento del Ingreso, o hacer más pagos a la tarjeta de crédito.

Pero en vez, este gobierno de los ricos, por los ricos, y para los ricos lo usará para construir submarinos, aviones de combate y proyectiles.

El pasado enero, antes de comenzar la guerra, William D. Nordhaus, economista de la Universidad de Yale, predijo que la guerra contra Irak podría costar a la economía de este país un total de \$1.6 mil millones de dólares en el transcurso de la década. (Washington Post, 8 de enero)

Con la creciente resistencia a la dominación extranjera en Irak y la reticencia de otros países de querer ayudar a pagar una guerra que pensaron que no debió ocurrir, el estimado de Nordhaus sin duda alguna será menos de la realidad.

Nuevas casas para una cuarta parte de la población.

Cuando se habla de miles de miles de millones (trillones), a la mayoría de la población se le hace difícil imaginar tan inmensa suma de dinero. Vamos entonces a desglosarla.

Por ejemplo 2 trillones de dólares. Ese es el estimado que la Oficina del Presupuesto del Congreso en un reporte publicado en enero estimó que el gobierno gastaría en los próximos 5 años en la "defensa nacional."

Piense en esto por un momento: Dos trillones de dólares es suficiente para construir casas nuevas, cada una valorada en \$100.000 para 20 millones de familias, más de la cuarta parte de la población de los Estados Unidos.

¡Que gran reintegro de los impuestos sería para la gente de pocos recursos! Imagínese terminando con el desamparo y las viviendas inadecuadas de un solo golpe. E imagínese cuántos millones de empleos esto crearía, no sólo en la construcción sino en la manufactura de todas las cosas necesarias para amueblar una casa cómoda y atractiva. En este momento todos menos unos pocos estados están en crisis debido a la caída en ingresos estatales, y no pueden imprimir dólares como el gobierno federal. Sus recortes presupuestarios están afectando también a los gobiernos de los condados y de las municipalidades. Como resultado, los recortes más grandes en años acaban de ser implementados en escuelas, bibliotecas, departamento de bomberos, parques, programas médicos, en centros para ancianos y en veintenas de otros servicios vitales.

Cerca de un millón de personas están perdiendo su cobertura de Medicaid este año, según el Centro de Prioridades de Política y Presupuesto. La ayuda para universidades ha sido recortada en 13 estados. La de la educación primaria y secundaria ha sido recortada en nueve. Las sub-

venciones para el cuidado infantil para familias de bajos ingresos han sido recortadas en 18 estados al igual que en Washington, D.C. Los padres desesperados, tienen que escoger entre arriesgar la seguridad de sus hijos o perder sus empleos.

Con estos recortes, el empleo de cientos de miles, hasta de millones de maestros, bibliotecarios, bomberos, asistentes sociales, inspectores de carne y otros empleados públicos están en peligro.

Mientras los despidos entran en vigor, la economía ya debilitada recibirá otro choque severo en el sector de servicios que era el que supuestamente iba a compensar por la disminución en la fuerza laboral industrial.

Eliminar los déficit presupuestarios

¿Y cuán grande son los déficits presupuestarios que generan todo este dolor?

En el año fiscal de 2003, los déficits presupuestarios estatales sumaron aproximadamente \$76 mil millones, según la Conferencia Nacional de Legislaturas Estatales. Sólo los gastos "suplementarios" federales para la guerra en Irak durante el mismo año hubiesen cubierto esa cantidad.

Para el año fiscal de 2004, los déficits estatales se espera que lleguen a \$85 mil millones. Pero esto todavía hubiera sido cubierto con los \$87 mil millones de las apropiaciones "suplementarias" recientes para la guerra y la ocupación militar.

Si la clase trabajadora estuviera en control del destino de este país, ¿no es cierto que el bienestar del pueblo sería nuestra prioridad y no una guerra costosa sin fin que hace que los EE.UU. sea más odiado y menos seguro?

Los soldados de los EE.UU. están muriendo a diario en Irak y Afganistán, al crecer la resistencia a la ocupación extranjera. Los \$87 mil millones no sólo pagan por esta represión del pueblo sino también para instalar gobiernos títeres de exiliados como Ahmed Chalabi, un ladrón financiero convicto que no ha estado en Irak por los últimos 40 años hasta que fue instalado como líder por las tropas de los EE.UU.

Este dinero también va destinado a corporaciones de los EE.UU. amigas de la administración de Bush, como la Halliburton. Su afiliada, Kellogg Brown & Root recibió contratos para reconstruir la infraestructura en Irak -no para ayudar al pueblo iraquí- sino para que otras empresas estadounidenses puedan sacar el petróleo y el gas natural, asegurándose así enormes ganancias. El Vicepresidente Dick Cheney, mientras ocupa su puesto en la Casa Blanca, recibe \$1 millón anual en pagos de "jubilación" de sus días como Ejecutivo en Jefe de la compañía. Entonces eso es- el problema es la clase dominante criminal corporativa, no la cantidad de riqueza disponible. Hay riqueza suficiente para poder construir una sociedad armoniosa en la cual nadie pase hambre, viva sin techo o sufra de ninguna necesidad humana. El problema es como deshacernos de este sistema capitalista, el cual está adicto incontrolablemente a las ganancias y a las guerras. □

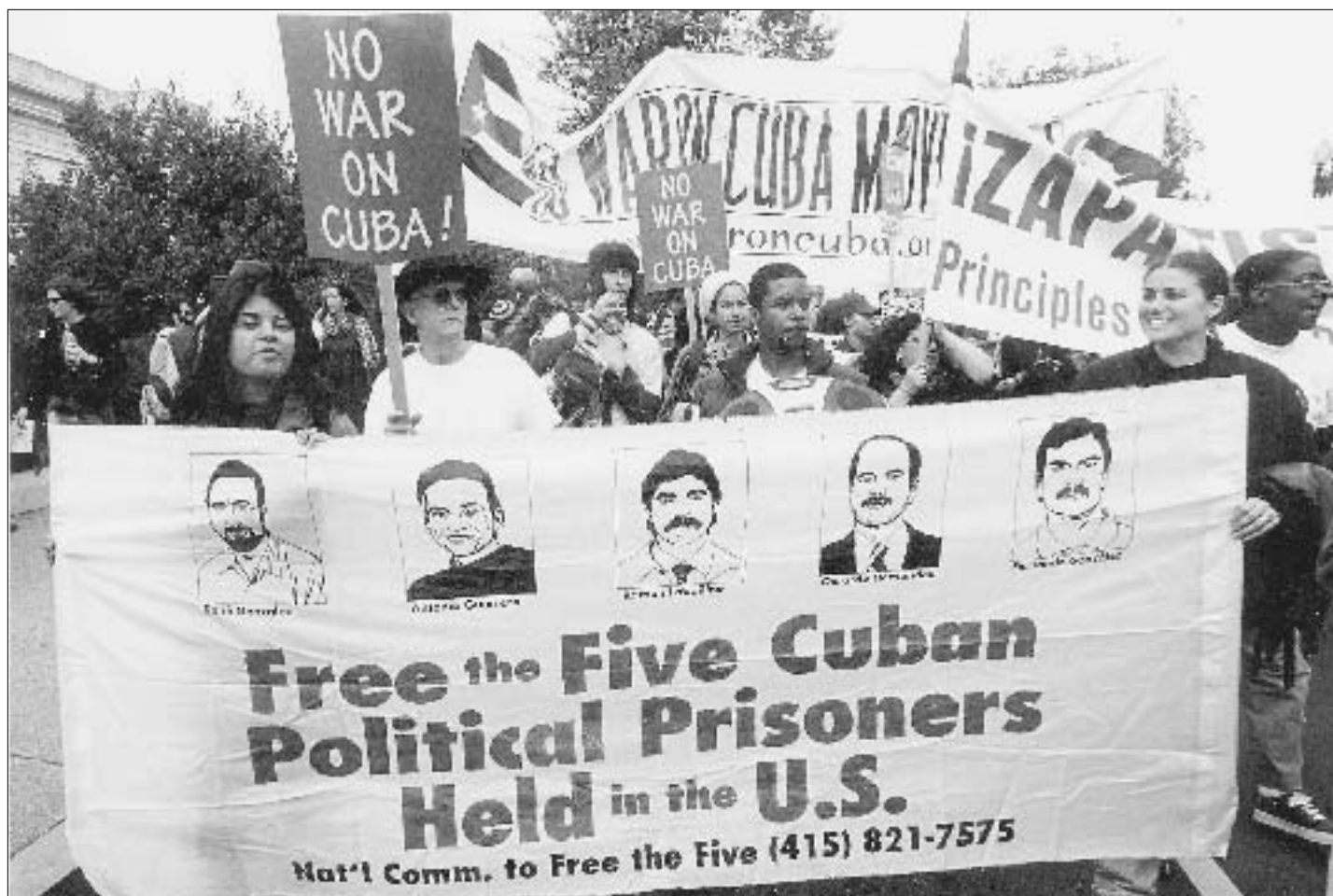


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