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After killing thousands of Iraqis U.S. troops under greater attack

Only answer is, Bring them home now!

By John Catalinotto

A car bomb driven into a U.S. convoy on the road to Baghdad International Airport Nov. 30 threatened to make November the most lethal month for U.S. troops since the war began. The Pentagon had already admitted to 135 troops killed, the same number as in widespread fighting last April. And the British Embassy had announced on Nov. 28 it would no longer use the road to the airport, considering it too dangerous.

The official report of U.S. fatalities, widely regarded as under-reporting the real number of war casualties, still reflect the heightened struggle in Iraq following the assault by occupation troops on Falluja.

In November many more Iraqis died—including civilians, resistance fighters, and troops and police collaborating with the occupation. Nevertheless, the resistance to the occupation has grown throughout the country, and fighting continues even in bombed-out Falluja.

The U.S. military finally let the Iraqi Red Crescent Society bring aid into the city on Nov. 24. The organization's spokesperson, Muhammad al-Nuri, said the Red Crescent estimated that more than 6,000 people might have died in Falluja during the U.S. offensive.

"Bodies can be seen everywhere and people were crying when receiving the food parcels. It is very sad, it is a human disaster," Nuri stated.

It's too early to know the full extent of this human disaster. However, individual stories of the U.S. military's war crimes reinforce the large figure put forward by the Red Crescent.

War crimes in Falluja

In an article in the Dec. 13 issue of *The Nation*, Miles Schuman described how "U.S. armed forces killed scores of patients in an attack on a Falluja health center and have deprived civilians of medical care, food and water."

The article quotes an Iraqi doctor and a reporter who said U.S. bombs completely destroyed the Central Health Center on Nov. 9. "According to Dr. [Sami] al-Jumaili, U.S. warplanes dropped three bombs on the clinic, where approximately 60 patients—

many of whom had serious injuries from U.S. aerial bombings and attacks—were being treated." Something like 35 patients, including some young children, and 25 healthcare staff were killed.

The many wounded and ill people in Falluja are unable to get medical care because the U.S. has refused to let Iraqi medical teams open up available local hospitals and clinics. This refusal is itself a violation of the Geneva Conventions and a war crime by any standards.

The Pentagon is treating the Falluja offensive as a great victory. The generals claim they wiped out the base town of the "insurgency"—their word for the Iraqi resistance—and that no uprising took place in Iraq's South as it did last April. They also say that the Iraqi troops fought well alongside the 12,000 U.S. Marines.

This assessment minimizes the political problems the U.S. occupation faces, some of them made worse by the assault on Falluja.

Even more Iraqis firmly moved into the ranks of those who, for the rest of their lives, would hate the U.S. for its attempt to conquer their country.

Postpone elections?

While the resistance may have lost a secure home base, the widespread series of attacks across dozens of cities in Iraq's center and as far north as Mosul shows that it has lost no punch. This heavy military activity against the occupation has led some of the Iraqi parties, including that of former CIA agent and current "premier," Iyad Allawi, to suggest that the upcoming Jan. 30 elections be postponed.

Postponement might seem a wise tactic to U.S. officials, as it appears few people will vote in the populous center of the country and the election will be completely discredited there. But postponement would arouse immediate anger from the leading Shiite clerics in Iraq's South who look to the elections to put their political parties in office in Baghdad. These clerics did nothing this time to spread active resistance in the South during the recent assault on Falluja. They know they will be under heavy

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This week ...

'I'm making a contribution'

Why Melanie takes WW to her food coop

By Leslie Feinberg

"After the U.S. invaded Afghanistan I really wanted to do something," Melanie says with conviction. "I needed to feel like I was making some kind of contribution."

As she talks by telephone about when and why she began getting a weekly bundle of Workers World newspapers to distribute locally, she amuses her toddler Mauro by playing with a ball.

"I saw an article in Workers World about somebody who delivered the paper to various places like laundromats," she recalls, "and that gave me the idea."

The article was an interview with Terry, a Teamster truck driver in Buffalo who gets a bundle of Workers World newspapers every week and drops off papers at local campuses, delicatessens, restaurants, newsstands, coffee shops, bookstores, food coop and other locations. ["Tips on getting out the truth," WW, Nov. 15, 2001]

Melanie lives about three hours away from Terry, in Ithaca, N.Y.—a college town, home to Cornell University.

"Initially I was very ambitious and made a list of all the laundromats," Melanie explains. "But I began to notice that the ones I dropped off at the coop grocery store were going very quickly. Even if I dropped off 75, they were all gone within a few days."

"I was pleased that all those newspapers were getting picked up. So after the second baby came, I decided to simplify life and drop off at the coop market."

Melanie leaves 60 copies on Mondays. "I guess people

have gotten used to the idea that they can get it there because the following Monday all of the previous issues have been picked up.

"There's more demand at some times than at others," she observes. "It seems to be partly the university school cycle, the time of year and what's going on in the political scene and around the world."

Everyone in Melanie's household—who's old enough—reads Workers World newspaper. "The person who reads it the most faithfully is my husband. And one of the topics we've been particularly interested in is Haiti, as well as Latin America."

Melanie adds, "I can't let my 9-year-old son read the regular newspaper—it's too traumatic—photos with blood and gore."

"But I can let him read the Workers World newspapers. I don't have to hide them. One thing that he's interested in and I'm encouraging is the pictures of demonstrations. He reads the signs and the slogans. And he is able to see that there are lots of people who feel like we do."

Raising two young children means, "I can't travel to New York City or Washington to demonstrations," Melanie explains. "This way, I feel like I'm making a contribution." It's a big contribution.

Melanie sends this final message: "Thanks to everybody there for sending the bundle to me."

Bulk orders of Workers World are available for distribution. Just e-mail: bundles@workers.org or call (212) 627-2994 for more information. □

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WW CALENDAR

NEW YORK

Fri., Dec. 3

Workers World Party meeting on Latin America. Guest speaker Héctor Rosario Rivera, an assistant professor, University of Puerto Rico, for antimilitary activism, on: "From words to action: the Puerto Rican example." Berta Joubert-Ceci, a WWP leader in Philadelphia, will speak on "The significance of the revolutionary struggles in Colombia and Venezuela." 7 p.m. (Dinner at 6:30) At 55 W. 17 St., 5th Fl., Manhattan. For info (212) 627-2994.

Sun., Dec. 5

Haiti at the Crossroads. Rally. Speakers include Maxine Waters, Ben Dupuy, Ramsey Clark, Maryse Narcisse, Jonas Petit, Pat Chin. 5

p.m. At New York College of Technology, 285 Jay St., Brooklyn. For info phone Fanmi Lavalas (203) 847-5487 (917) 337-6702, Haiti Progres (718) 434-8100, International Action Center (212) 633-6646, ANSWER Coalition (212) 533-0417.

SAN FRANCISCO

Sat., Dec. 4

Moving the Struggle Forward. Deirdre Griswold, co-founder of Workers World Party and editor of Workers World newspaper, and John Parker, WWP 2004 presidential candidate, will talk about the current struggle—from the resistance in Iraq to the growing workers' movement in the United States. 4 p.m. At Women's Building, 3543 18th St. (between Valencia & Guerrero). For info phone (415) 561-9752.

Dec 4 - No Draft No Way Conference in NYC
Dec 5 - Solidarity Rally with Haiti in New York City
Jan 20 - Counterinaugural Demo in Washington D.C.

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STOP THE WAR WEEK

Actions to focus on military draft and recruiting

By Leslie Feinberg

ACTION. That's what it takes to build a movement to halt the U.S. war for empire and to bring the troops home. And the week of Dec. 3-11 is packed with action.

DEC. 3: The kickoff is the call for a **National Walkout by High School, College and University Students to Protest the U.S. Occupation of Iraq.**

DEC. 8: That Wednesday is the **National Day of Action to Stop Military Recruiting.**

DEC. 10: On this date, known as International Human Rights Day, demands will focus on **Workers' rights — not war—is a human right** and on **freedom for political prisoners in the U.S., including Mumia Abu-Jamal.**

DEC. 11: The week will culminate in local and regional marches and rallies at noon demanding **Bring the troops home now! End the occupation!***

DEC. 4-11: From Saturday to Saturday, anti-war activists will protest in front of mega-stores like Wal-Mart and Starbucks to demand

No business as usual as long as the war and occupation continue!

NEW YORK CITY

DEC. 4: An Emergency Antiwar Conference in New York City will draw activists who are looking to heighten the struggle to stop the war, fight the draft and support GI resistance. The all-day conference—9 a.m. to 6 p.m.—will be held at the Lang Center at the New School University, 55 W. 13th St., between 5th and 6th avenues.

DEC. 5: A Haiti Solidarity Rally will include speakers, film and music. The rally is titled **Haiti at the Crossroads: What is to be done? Stop the killing. End occupation. Restore Constitutional government.** The event will begin at 5 p.m. at New York College in Brooklyn.

DEC. 11: *The demonstration in New York City will begin at Rockefeller Center, 5th Ave. at 49th St., at noon.

DENVER

DEC. 4: A panel of speakers against the Iraq War will include Abdul Henderson, the Marine from the documentary "Fahrenheit 9/11," an Iraqi woman and

a Vietnam veteran. The event is 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. at Auraria Campus, in the Tivoli room, 320 A, B and C. For more information, email: hcrazycat@yahoo.com.

DECATUR, GA.

DEC. 4: A Stop the war now march and rally will meet at Decatur Square (Old Courthouse steps), Ponce de Leon at Claremont, in Decatur, Ga., from noon to 2 p.m. Speakers at the rally will include military families, students and community activists. The event is sponsored by the International Action Center, Georgia Peace and Justice Coalition, WAND, Refuse & Resist and Solidarity. For more information call (770) 989-2536 or e-mail atlantaiac@aol.com.

SAN DIEGO

DEC. 4: The San Diego International Action Center has called an anti-war, anti-occupation protest from noon to 2 p.m. downtown in front of Horton Plaza, at 4th and Broadway. **SNAFU, which organizes resistance among soldiers, will also be reaching out to GIs in this military base town.**

Mark your calendar

JAN. 20: Thousands are expected to converge on the streets of Washington, D.C., for a **Counter-inaugural Protest** to demand an **end to the Bush policies of "endless" war and domestic repression.** The International Action Center will be organizing transportation from all over the country to bring activists.

MARCH 20: An International Day of Action will mark the **Second Anniversary of the War.** The IAC and other antiwar organizations are planning local and regional protests throughout the U.S., including New York City, Boston, Baltimore, Washington, D.C., Atlanta, San Francisco, Los Angeles, Raleigh and Detroit.

How you can help build the movement to stop the war:

- Endorse the Dec. 3-11 Action Plan
- Organize a local action
- Make a donation
- Stay in the streets

For more information & resources:

www.iacenter.org;
www.PeopleJudgeBush.org;
www.antiwar4mwm.org;
www.NoDraftNoWar.org;
www.Join-SNAFU.org;
www.PeoplesVideo.org. □

After killing thousands of Iraqis

U.S. troops under greater attack

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pressure from the masses if the current puppet regime stays in place.

Regarding the U.S.-trained Iraqi troops and police, their successes seem to be greatly exaggerated. First of all, hundreds were killed in November across all of central Iraq. The resistance seems to know all the vulnerable points, indicating it has supporters among these forces and perhaps even among their commanders.

An article in the Nov. 30 New York Times described quite frankly the weaknesses of these troops, how much they are despised by the population, and how much the U.S. troops hold their "allies" in contempt. One sentence in this article concisely characterizes these troops. In the provinces where the resistance is strongest, "many are reluctant to show up and do not tell their families where they

work; they have yet to receive adequate training or weapons, present a danger to American troops they fight alongside, and are unreliable because of corruption, desertion or infiltration."

In Mosul, the article continued, "almost the entire police force and large parts of several Iraqi National Guard battalions deserted during an insurgent uprising this month."

U.S. injured much higher than reported

As the official GI death count mounted to 1,252 on Nov. 30, some discrepancies appeared in the number of wounded. The Department of Defense claims a total of about 9,000 U.S. troops have been severely wounded in Afghanistan and Iraq. But on Nov. 24 the pro-military Stars and Stripes, European edition, reported that the Landstuhl, Germany, hospital has

treated 20,802 U.S. troops from those two occupied countries.

This is double the official number. While body armor and rapid medical attention may have reduced the number of troops killed, this number of seriously wounded will itself have a big impact on combat strength and morale of the remaining troops—and also at home. In addition, it raises questions as to the truth of any of the Pentagon's figures.

Most corporate media coverage of the war claims GI morale is still high, certainly in comparison to the Iraqi puppet troops. But sometimes another story is told or at least hinted.

An article in the Nov. 25 Los Angeles Times reports that members of "a California Army National Guard battalion preparing for deployment to Iraq said this week that they were under strict lockdown and being treated like prisoners rather

than soldiers by Army commanders at the remote desert camp where they are training."

They complain of poor equipment and poor training, and that "they were allowed no visitors or travel passes, had scant contact with their families and that morale was terrible." The military admitted to holding the 680 National Guard members in Doña Ana, N.M., a former World War II prisoner-of-war camp 20 miles west of its large parent base in Ft. Bliss, Texas. The officers claim that this is to assure these troops are trained for battle before they get to Iraq.

This was only one story about the impact of the occupation of Iraq on the U.S. armed forces. And these troops don't really know what they will face when they are shipped to Iraq in January. □

Biggest SOA protest ever



More than 16,000 activists from all over the Americas marched to the gates of Fort Benning, Ga., on Nov. 21. There they demanded that the U.S. Army close its infamous school for torture training, dubbed the "School of Assassins."

This was the largest protest ever held in this ongoing struggle. Actors Martin Sheen, Susan Sarandon and George Wendt and musician Amy Ray of the Indigo Girls took part in the demonstration.

Some activists managed to climb over a 10-foot-high barbed-wire fence and get onto the Army base. Fifteen were arrested. They each face 3 to 6 months in federal prison.

Since its creation by the U.S. military in 1946, the former School of the Americas has trained close to 60,000 Latin American military officers in techniques to crush popular movements.

In 1996, the Pentagon brass were forced

to release some of the how-to training manuals used at the school between 1987 and 1991 that outlined the use of torture, assassination and other forms of terror.

Faced with an international campaign against the training center, led by School of the Americas Watch, in 2001 the Department of Defense gave the SOA a more innocuous-sounding name: the "Western Hemisphere Institute for Security Cooperation."

SOA Watch, which organizes these continuing protests, is made up of activists from religious and pacifist communities in solidarity with the people of Latin America and committed "to change oppressive U.S. foreign policy."

SOA charges that "the new military training school is the continuation of the SOA under a new name."

For more information visit: www.soaw.org.

—L.F.

Lessons of MWM and the election

'Labor is at a crossroads'

From a talk by Milt Neidenberg to the Nov. 13-14 National Fightback Conference.

Our conference thanks you, Sister Brenda Stokely, for your complimentary remarks. We salute you and the other African-American trade union leaders who had a vision and made it a reality with the Million Worker March in Washington, D.C., on Oct. 17.

The MWM brought out thousands of demonstrators who shared the dream of building an independent, class-wide movement of workers and oppressed nationalities to speak in their own names and on their own issues. Under the most difficult conditions, the MWM appealed for unity, sharing the platform with a host of organizations who spoke of the preemptive wars abroad and the war at home as one giant conflict.

In that spirit, I'm reminded of the call, "Dare to struggle, dare to win," made over 40 years ago by the Black Panthers, who fought boldly and courageously to serve the African-American community in the struggle for economic and social justice and self-determination.

The election contest between two factions of billionaires has brought four more years to a right-wing, anti-union, anti-worker, anti-immigrant, anti-lesbian/gay/bi/trans, war mongering and racist administration.

The MWM, with a minimum of resources, proved the correctness of its strategy. Compare its program of an independent class-wide movement to that of the AFL-CIO top leaders, who banked on the anybody-but-Bush strategy.

The AFL-CIO Executive Council tied labor's fortunes to the Kerry leadership and the Democratic Party. Of course, it was correct to oppose Bush with every resource and with rank-and-file mobilizations in the streets as well as at the ballot box. Look at his record: He made the rich richer and the workers poorer. He tore up the rights of the workers and the oppressed whose contracts, civil rights and civil liberties had been won over years of struggle and sacrifice.

The Bush assault, however, drove the AFL-CIO to put all its money and resources behind Kerry—a serious mistake. The Democratic program was molded by its corporate donors. Kerry forces took labor support for granted.

The AFL-CIO mobilized their 13 million members and spent \$45 million on Kerry. The Service Employees union spent \$65 million and its members gave another \$28 million to independent liberal groups. Other unions spent millions more and sent thousands of members into the field.

The AFL-CIO and its member unions alone mobilized 5,000 staff members, more than 225,000 volunteers, staffed hundreds of phone banks, knocked on 6 million doors, and distributed 32 million fliers. And they sent 850 monitors to high-risk polling places such as Ohio and Florida.

One percent of what the AFL-CIO spent on Kerry would have made a huge difference to the Million Worker March, whose leaders had to hock their savings and their pensions to bankroll the MWM.

And what did labor get for all this money and resources?



Milt Neidenberg
WW PHOTO: GREG DUNKEL

They became foot soldiers for the Kerry leadership and the Democratic Party. Kerry's advisors put out their own bourgeois program that

buried most of the labor movement's critical issues. They defended occupying Iraq, seeking international support for the war, and expanding the troop levels—which would mean diverting more funds from social programs.

Hitching their wagon to the Kerry wing of the ruling class was a no-win strategy for the AFL-CIO.

The outcome of the election confirmed the correctness of the decision to organize the MWM. This should be acknowledged by the AFL-CIO at their Executive Council meeting, if they are honest. While they didn't allocate a nickel for the march, they admitted early in the MWM organizing drive that they were for the issues raised. But they were against the timing in the midst of the election. In fact, the timing was exactly right.

The AFL-CIO is now in disarray over what to do. Bitter factional arguments have broken out on how to proceed.

Two contending factions emerged at the Executive Council meeting that just took place. Andy Stern, head of the 1.6-million Service Employees, speaks for four unions who call themselves the New Unity Partnership (NUP). He proposes acceler-

ating the consolidation of the labor movement into 10 to 15 multi-jurisdictional amalgamated international unions. The bourgeois media are having a field day agitating for the idea that a split will take place. For Stern and the other male white union leaders in the NUP to split from the AFL-CIO would be suicidal at a time when the Bush administration is on the offensive and is preparing another four years of anti-union attacks, especially on unions whose members are primarily multinational and women workers.

Hotel workers on strike and locked out in San Francisco must have their say in this factional struggle, along with the millions of other members of these unions.

The struggle to build a leadership must and will come from below. History has confirmed that all profound social change comes from the struggles of the rank and file. This will win the hearts and minds of the workers and the oppressed nationalities. Will both AFL-CIO leadership factions continue to ignore the development of independent class-consciousness that is pervading the low-paid service workers, many of them women and/or from oppressed nationalities? The labor movement is at a crossroads.

Our party and the many allies that helped build the MWM see progress and growth in the post-Bush period. The workers and the oppressed are moving leftward. Leaders who have learned the lessons of the election will take the high road of independent, class-wide struggle. We hope that the pressure from below will be a wakeup call to the top leaders who are currently floundering in dispute and despair. □

Same-sex marriage & class struggle

From a talk by Martha Grevatt to the Nov. 13-14 National Fightback Conference.

"One man and one woman." Haven't we all heard that phrase to the point of nausea? It's as if Bush and his anti-science crusaders want to nullify one plus one equals two—when it applies to two men or two women.

They would like to erase May 17, 2004, from their calendar. On that day the state of Massachusetts began granting marriage licenses to same-sex couples.

With this historic victory in place, we saw an upsurge in the movement to win this most basic right for lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans people. Couples massed on city and town halls everywhere to apply for marriage licenses.

Some mayors—from New York to New Mexico, but most visibly in San Francisco—openly defied the laws of the land and granted those licenses by the thousands. Workers World Party members in Boston helped form Equal Marriage Solidarity, calling for demonstrations around the country on or near May 17.

Why, with so much going on in the world, would a revolutionary working-class party devote energy to this issue? One might argue that all of our energy should go to resisting the wars against Iraq, Haiti, Afghanistan and elsewhere. Or that, with unemployment rising and real wages falling, with so much poverty in the land of plenty, "the class struggle is what's important."

In fact the struggle for equal marriage rights is a class struggle. Most LGBT workers still don't have health insurance for

their life partners. Where they do, it is considered taxable income, forcing them to typically cough up an additional \$1,000 to the capitalist state each year.

Often we are denied paid bereavement leave, family medical leave and the option of leaving our companions our hard-earned pensions. Outside the job, Pride At Work has identified 1,049 legal benefits that we are denied. The automatic right of inheritance, the right to collect a departed spouse's social security check, the right to sue for wrongful death, visitation rights in a hospital—the list is endless.

By denying LGBT people the right to marry, the ruling class is effectively forcing us to take a pay cut.

Marxists speak of profit, or the portion of the workers' labor that they aren't paid for, as surplus value. The battle goes on every day between labor and capital over how much surplus value the bosses steal.

A revolutionary party doesn't just observe and analyze. We take sides, whether it's the theft of Iraqi oil, the theft of grocery workers' health benefits, or the theft of LGBT workers' basic equality in the necessities of life.

We also understand that, even if all economic factors were equal, a two-tiered system that only recognizes the heterosexual nuclear family fosters the worst kind of bigotry, and thus threatens working-class unity.

No apology necessary

Now we find ourselves addressing the post-election pain of four more years of that



Martha Grevatt
WW PHOTO: GREG DUNKEL

racist, sexist, heterosexist, worker-hating mass murderer George W. Bush. Eleven states passed anti-same-sex-marriage state constitutional amendments. Some even threaten domestic partner benefits.

Of course there are those asking the question, "What did we do wrong?" Unfortunately, a number of prominent figures in the LGBT community, most visibly Rep. Barney Frank of Massachusetts, are blaming our movement for the Bush victory.

Their argument is that we pushed for "too much, too fast" by demanding freedom to marry all over the country. This, they say, gave weight to the right-wing anti-marriage ballot initiatives, which in turn brought out the Bush voters.

"I think it hurt," Frank stated, complaining about "the spectacle of marriage" in San Francisco. Well, gay culture wouldn't be gay culture without a bit of spectacle! This is the same kind of politics that opposed the open inclusion of trans people, worried that it would hurt the movement's image.

We will not apologize for demanding full equality! We are saddened that tens of millions of workers voted to strip us of our dignity and basic human rights. But we know it's the ruling class that whips up bigotry and religious superstition when it suits their class interests.

The answer to their attack is not to chastise ourselves for our militancy. The

answer is to ratchet up the class struggle, in all its manifestations: resistance to the war, to vicious racism at home, to attacks on labor and women. We must make common cause with all the workers and oppressed around the world. We must stay in the movement of the Million Worker March.

Keep this in mind: a march of a million workers is a march of 100,000 lesbians, gay men, bisexuals and trans people.

The politics of the moderates are the politics of retreat and capitulation. They disorient the movement. Workers World Party will definitely not blame the LGBT movement for being too radical.

The pollsters and the media are saying that it was a vote for "moral values." Well, communists have moral values too. Our moral compass is the class struggle, and we light the path forward with class consciousness.

We will never give up on the working class! We agree with Karl Marx that being determines consciousness. Prejudice is not endemic to our class, it is an alien class ideology. We know that bigotry does not create jobs, it does not provide housing, education or health care.

Our class will embrace class solidarity—which recognizes the right of oppressed nations to self-determination and which upholds equality for all, including the right to marry.

Our class can reject bigotry—as an out lesbian autoworker I bear witness to this fact. We will win the workers, not only to same-sex marriage but to socialism. We will reverse these temporary setbacks. We will win this fight—as sure as one plus one equals two. □

Flight attendants to airlines:

'Pay us or CHAOS!'

By Minnie Bruce Pratt

The Association of Flight Attendants, 46,000 workers strong, is fighting back against big business airlines in the latest battle of the class war. Plans are underway for a nationwide strike by the AFA if any airline uses bankruptcy as an excuse to attack worker contracts.

AFA president Pat Friend issued a statement on Nov. 16, before the AFA's board voted to canvass its workers: "Airline management needs to understand that there will be serious consequences if they persist in their attacks on our contracts." The AFA, the world's largest flight attendant union, is part of the Communications Workers of America, AFL-CIO. The membership is overwhelmingly female, with a substantial proportion of people of color.

A second flight attendant group, at Southwest Airlines, pledged its support for the AFA action. President Thom McDaniel of Transport Workers Union Local 556 said, "We will not stand on the sidelines while airline executives misuse bankruptcy courts to cover up their own mistakes and turn back the clock on the progress that we have all achieved." (www.afanet.org) Additionally, the union representing 25,000 flight attendants at American Airlines has backed the AFA.

Seven airlines with AFA representation are currently in bankruptcy, including US Airways, United Airlines, ATA and Hawaiian.

Unlike individuals who file for Chapter 11 because they are out of work and out of money, big businesses strategically use the process to grab a bigger share of the profits generated by their workers.

If they get the blessing of the bankruptcy court, the airlines plan to force deep pay cuts, cancel union contracts, and wipe out pension plans and the health benefits of retirees. United is asking for \$149 million in yearly concessions from the flight attendants, and a total of \$725 million from all employees.

The airlines are in this fix because they have been "driven into the ground" by corporate mismanagement, said Friend at an Oct. 7 address at MIT's Sloan School of Management.

Upper-level salaries at the airlines are bloated; for example, United CEO Glenn Tilton makes \$700,000 a year. But some newly hired flight attendants get poverty-level wages, as little as \$15,000 a year. And these workers, who deal with heavy meal carts, irate passengers, and medical emergencies in mid flight at 20,000 feet, can work 14-hour days and only get paid for 8 hours because of company regulations.

On Nov. 26 strike-authorization ballots went out to AFA members employed by US Airways, and are being readied for those at UAL, ATA and Hawaiian. (www.unitedafa.org)

New tactic in class war

Create Havoc Around Our System

(CHAOS) is an AFA tactic for an innovative strike that can take many forms. Perhaps only flight attendants on 747s will strike—or perhaps there will be a mass walkout for a day. The AFA gives no notice of when and where the actions will take place.

Because much U.S. air travel is based on a "hub-and-spoke" system of connecting flights, actions that delay or halt a handful of flights could conceivably disrupt the entire system, through a cascading domino effect. CHAOS dramatically increases each flight attendant's power to affect the airline.

The AFA developed CHAOS after the TWA union was broken in 1986, when CEO Carl Icahn replaced striking flight attendants with scabs. With the roaming actions of CHAOS, management cannot predict where and when to send replacements.

Alaska Airlines attendants first successfully used CHAOS in 1993, when AFA flight attendants walked off individual flights at random. After a federal judge ruled that the tactic was legally equivalent to a strike, the union won a favorable contract.

Next: workers' control?

CHAOS is legally possible because the airlines are petitioning the bankruptcy courts to throw out the workers' contracts and pensions. Airline contracts fall under the National Railway Labor Act, which forbids transportation strikes until after a 30-day "cooling-off" period.

But there's a loophole in the law. Because the airline has already announced its intention to void the contracts through the bankruptcy courts, the AFA can resort to "self-help"—a strike—without violating the NLR.

And CHAOS has possibilities beyond strengthening the workers to get a better deal out of the courts. CHAOS could be used to fight for the value of the labor that workers have poured into the airlines' coffers over the years.

Under bankruptcy, the courts appoint a trustee to take over running the business. Typically, the trustee represents the banks that financed the company and want to protect their equity. In United's previous bankruptcy, those financiers included J.P. Morgan Chase, Citibank and Bank One.

But an argument can be made that the flight attendants have equity greater than any bank in their airline. It's the value of the thousands of hours of labor they put in before they ever see a paycheck, their unpaid vacation days, their unclaimed health benefits. And the airline owes over \$4 billion to the underfunded employee pension plan.

What if the flight attendants used CHAOS to demand that the bankruptcy courts appoint the workers as trustees of these bankrupt airlines? With workers' control, even for a brief time, we'd have the beginning of some really friendly skies, where people come before profits. □

Conference in Tijuana, Mexico

Cuban, Venezuelan & U.S. workers to meet

By Cheryl LaBash

An exciting exchange is shaping up for the Cuba/North America Labor Conference taking place in Tijuana, Mexico, on the weekend of Dec. 10-12. In addition to representatives of Cuban workers, a strong delegation from Venezuela will discuss worker participation in the unfolding Bolivarian Revolution with workers from the U.S., Mexico and Canada.

Preliminary registrations show Mexican workers from border maquiladora factories, youth organizers from California, Canadian educators fighting attacks on public education, leaders of the Million Worker March Movement, representatives of hotel workers and solidarity activists from coast to coast.

Workers World interviewed Ignacio Meneses, a Detroit autoworker and a coordinator of the U.S./Cuba Labor Exchange, about the conference.

WW: Workers facing job cuts in the U.S. have registered for this conference.

Why is this meeting of interest to them?

IM: We are having the conference in Tijuana, not only to involve workers from Mexico, but because the intensified blockade and denial of visa requests for Cuban representatives make it extremely difficult for workers in the U.S. to exercise their constitutional right to assemble, meet and exchange with Cuban workers. What is happening in Cuba and Venezuela holds many lessons for workers in the U.S. today. How are two underdeveloped countries using resources for the benefit of their people? The workers of



Ignacio Meneses, a Detroit autoworker and a coordinator of the U.S./Cuba Labor Exchange.

WW PHOTO: ARTURO J. PÉREZ SAAD

Free Trade Area of the Americas and immigration to stress these two organizing areas. The criminal consequences of FTAA increase wealth to already multi-billion-dollar corporations by taking away the few resources poor countries have left. The result takes working people from poverty to misery. Undocumented workers in the U.S. are the modern-day

slaves—super-exploited with no rights, no dignity of human beings.

WW: The U.S./Cuba Labor Exchange just returned from a seminar in which participants attended events in both Cuba and Venezuela. What were the impressions of the Venezuelan part of the seminar?

IM: Representatives of working people have power in the Bolivarian Revolution. The initiatives and results are exciting. The delegation met with worker participants in the Operation Sucre literacy campaign. A single

Cuba and Venezuela have improved lives—not just health, education, housing—but also are building a society that can enhance the minds. By that I mean giving workers an opportunity to live a life without violence, drugs and consumerism, where solidarity with other people is important. Basically, discussion with our guests can show another world is possible and important to defend.

WW: Please describe other issues planned for discussion.

IM: Panels are planned on the so-called

mother of six has enrolled in formal school; a 53-year-old worker now plans to become a lawyer. Their talents and hopes were wasted before the literacy program. Children receive a secure breakfast and lunch. The Bolivarian Revolution inherited a country of 25 million, including 3 million public sector workers, 2.5 million private sector workers and 6 million working in the informal economy—many of them youth. In the past, out of \$54 billion in oil revenue, \$40 billion was stolen for private gain and only \$14 billion was used for the people. The past corrupt government lived high off the oil wealth but didn't construct economic infrastructure or diversify production. Everything was imported. There is still a lot of work to do.

Meneses then provided the following information about how readers can take part in the conference.

Conference registration is \$45 U.S., with an additional \$20 for the Noche Cubana (Cuban Night), featuring famous Cuban singer Emilia Morales Palmero. The event will be held at the Hotel Palacio Azteca, Blvd. Cuautemoc Sur, #213 Colonia Davila 22400, Tijuana, Mexico.

Reservations can be made toll-free from the U.S. at (888) 901-3720; toll-free from Mexico at 01 8000266660. A single room is \$54; double rooms are \$70. Breakfast is included.

Mention the Cuba Labor Conference for the discounted price. Make reservations immediately, because Dec. 10-12 falls on a Mexican holiday.

For more information, send an email to laborexchange@aol.com.

Racism, class and the NBA

By Monica Moorehead

The fight at the Palace arena in suburban Michigan between members of the visiting Indiana Pacers basketball team and Detroit Pistons fans is still the main topic of discussion in the National Basketball Association and U.S. sports in general.

On Nov. 19, Pacers forward Ron Artest committed a hard foul against Pistons center Ben Wallace on the court. Players from both teams reacted with a brief scuffle. As NBA referees were trying to sort out the various fouls to be called, a Pistons fan threw beer on Artest as he lay on top of the scorer's table. Artest went

after this fan in the stands. Other male fans threw more beer, other debris and even a chair at the Pacers players, causing more fighting in the stands and on the court for 10 minutes.

A few days later, three Pacers players—Artest, Jermaine O'Neal and Stephen Jackson—and Wallace were suspended from playing multiple games by NBA commissioner David Stern. Artest has been suspended from playing for the rest of the 2004-2005 season. The NBA Players Association is filing grievances against the suspensions.

The three Pacers players could also face criminal charges following an investiga-

tion by the Auburn Hills police. Some fans have stated publicly that they plan to sue these players.

The sports media have had a field day covering this story, constantly replaying images of African American basketball players going after white fans. While some of the media have criticized the "drunken" behavior of the fans, many sports commentators have stated that the players must bear the overwhelming brunt of responsibility for the fight, especially Artest.

Is the Nov. 19 incident just an isolated situation? Is much of U.S. sports nothing more than supervised violence to make huge profits for sports owners? Opposing hockey players beating each other up on the ice while referees look on is seen as a normal aspect of that game.

There has been an increase in fights during Major League baseball games, with some fans running on the field to attack players and umpires, and players throwing chairs at taunting fans.

However, none of these incidents has come even close to getting the kind of national attention that the Palace incident received. This stems from the issues of both racism and class oppression, which are more intense and omnipresent within the NBA than in other professional sports.

Some 80 percent of the NBA players are African American. An increasing number are going into the NBA straight out of high school because of multi-million-dollar contracts being offered to them. The majority of these players come from the poorer inner cities.

Out of the 30 NBA teams, only a handful have African American head coaches.

Black men still make up less than 1 percent of NBA owners and executives.

Who attends the NBA games? The vast majority of the fans tend to be white and from the suburbs where the majority of NBA games are now played. For instance, the home games of the Pistons are played in the suburb of Auburn Hills, many miles from the predominantly Black city of Detroit.

A ticket for an NBA game is one of the most expensive in all of professional sports. Therefore, the players rarely see fans who look like them or who come from a similar social background. Many of the younger players, like Artest, relate to hip hop culture, which conjures up stereotypical images of violence and other anti-social behavior in the minds of older white suburbanites.

NBA games can be compared to the days of the Roman Empire. Today's gladiators, the players, perform before their "lords and masters," who pay a lot of money to be entertained.

Many of the white fans resent Black players getting paid millions of dollars. These fans feel that because they help pay these salaries it is their "right" to shout racist epithets as well as spit at them if they are from the opposing team.

It is not unusual to see white fans sporting Afro, dread-lock or corn-row wigs, which is a degrading slap in the face to the racial pride that many Black players express.

What happened on Nov. 19 cannot be separated from the larger problem endemic within U.S. society—that is, a heavy dose of racism which is integral to class divisions. □

Community demands investigation

Police let shooter of Black couple walk

By Larry Hales
Aurora, Colo.

On the afternoon of Nov. 18, nearly two dozen members of this city's Black community protested in front of the Aurora Municipal Building. They were calling attention to the recent shooting of a Black couple, Aaron Davis and Benita Coleman-Davis. Aaron Davis died at the scene. Benita Coleman-Davis remains in critical condition.

The shooting happened at 6:30 p.m. on Nov. 15 in front of a Blockbuster video store. The couple was returning home from a wedding shower and stopped to rent movies. Glen Eichstedt, a white man, pulled up beside them. As they exited their vehicles, one car door reportedly dinged the other, and an argument ensued.

Witnesses say Benita Coleman-Davis placed herself between the arguing men. Eichstedt threw a punch at Davis, and then shoved Coleman-Davis, who fell down. The two men exchanged blows and, in the course of the fight, Davis found a pipe-like object and hit Eichstedt, who at 6'3" towered over Davis's 5'6" height.

Eichstedt stumbled and began walking away. When Davis walked toward him, Eichstedt pulled out a handgun and shot him and Coleman-Davis, who was still on the ground.

The community, friends and family of the Davises are outraged that Eichstedt was allowed to walk away from the scene of the shooting. He was not charged with any crime—even though he was still holding the gun when police arrived.

Eichstedt handed police the gun and answered a few questions. He was never handcuffed and was allowed to leave.

The cops, relying solely on Eichstedt's version of the events, immediately ruled the shooting was in "self-defense," even though a witness said Eichstedt had stood over Davis, yelling at him. Witness Eda Ordonez, who was questioned by police for four hours, was told by them to say nothing.

The shooter is the owner of a "blue bar"—an establishment frequented by police.

The treatment of Eichstedt is markedly different from the treatment people of color receive from the Aurora Police Department. The police in this city have a history of being abusive.

Just two months ago, police shot a Black youth who ran from them after the cops broke down the door of his friend's apartment.

In neighboring Denver, police have killed four people of color in the last three years. Two of them were disabled Black men. Earlier this year, a Latino man was shot while holding a soda can.

As the details of this incident come out and more witnesses testify to Aaron Davis defending himself and his partner, it becomes increasingly obvious that police are planning to allow Eichstedt to get away with murder.

However, the family and community aren't sitting still. They are demanding action, saying that Eichstedt must at least be detained, questioned further and made to post bail while a real investigation is conducted. □

A tale of two sentences

By Deirdre Griswold

This is a tale of two sentences—one for selling marijuana worth about \$1,000 and the other for facilitating the theft of millions of dollars in taxes.

One man was sentenced to 55 years in jail with no chance of parole. He'll get out when he's 80 years old, if he lives that long, and his two kids will be gray.

The other man will serve 24 months. Guess which sentence goes with which conviction?

Here are the facts, as reported by the capitalist media itself.

Weldon Angelos, 25, a rap and hip hop record producer with no criminal record, was accused of selling marijuana to a

police informant three times in May and June 2002, each time charging \$350 for eight ounces. When he refused a plea bargain that would have put him behind bars for 15 years, the U.S. attorney's office in Salt Lake City got really vindictive. They reindicted him on 20 charges, including having a gun strapped to his ankle during one sale. He never used or even spoke about the gun, but adding gun possession to the marijuana charges made a mandatory sentencing law kick in for this first offender.

Even U.S. District Judge Paul Cassell, who imposed the sentence, attacked it as "unjust and cruel and even irrational," and called on President George W. Bush to grant Angelos clemency. (Yeah, right.) He

Native people mark Day of Mourning

Several hundred Native people and their supporters rallied and marched in Plymouth, Mass., on "Thanksgiving" to commemorate the 35th National Day of Mourning. Speakers on the program came from several different Native nations; many of them expressed their opposition to the ongoing U.S. war against the people of Iraq and the toll it was taking on Native youth in the military, as well as on Iraqis.

Several speakers explained why they as Native people see no reason to celebrate the arrival of the Pilgrims and other European invaders and the resulting theft of Native land and genocide of Native people. A highlight of this year's Day of Mourning was a fiery speech delivered at Plymouth Rock by Tall Oak, one of the founders of National Day of Mourning.

Speaking of those who were celebrating the "Thanksgiving" holiday, Tall Oak said, "As they all bow their heads to give

thanks for everything that was taken from us, see if there's any room for compassion in their hearts for the Native people who have been the road kill in the Pilgrims' march to progress."

Native political prisoner Leonard Peltier, who was framed up by the FBI and has been unjustly imprisoned since 1976, sent a message to the gathering. He spoke about Native ceremonies and the traditions of respect and sharing in Native culture. Peltier concluded by writing, "So, should Thanksgiving or Day of Mourning come next year and find me gathering golden oak leaves as a free man, it will be because you didn't give up; because you stood for the principles I've mentioned,



WW PHOTO: ARTURO J. PÉREZ SAAD

and because you demonstrated your commitment to truth, charity and justice. I swear to you I will put on a ceremony you

will remember and tell your children and grandchildren about."

—Mahtowin

Behind Wisconsin's hunting tragedy

By Greg Butterfield

On Nov. 21, eight deer hunters were shot during a conflict over a hunting stand in Sawyer County, Wis. Six of them died.

The accused shooter, Chai Soua Vang, is an immigrant from Laos and a member of the Hmong ethnic group. All of those shot were white.

Vang, a truck driver from St. Paul, Minn., told police that the white hunters surrounded him, assaulted him with racist slurs and fired at him first.

Vang says he was hunting on public land. He got lost and wandered onto property owned by Terry Willers and Robert Crotteau. Willers confronted him, called in others riding all-terrain vehicles, and then took the first shot as he was trying to leave, Vang says.

Vang, a U.S. Army veteran and sharpshooter, returned fire. Vang ran into the woods and later surrendered peacefully.

Survivors of the shooting denied any abuse of Vang.

Vang's statement was taken by Sawyer County sheriffs without a lawyer present. The authorities claim Vang waived this right.

On Nov. 29, Vang was charged with six counts of murder and two counts of attempted murder. The state attorney general's office is prosecuting the case. A team of high-profile Wisconsin defense attorneys will represent Vang. They are expected to seek a change of venue from rural, mostly white Sawyer County.

While many details of the case are still unclear, the incident has put a spotlight on the issues of racism and national oppression, class division and property owner-

ship, and the hunting culture in rural Wisconsin and Minnesota.

Racist backlash feared

The shootings have heightened fears of a racist backlash against the Hmong, who are concentrated in regional cities like Minneapolis-St. Paul, Minn., and Eau Claire, Wis. St. Paul is home to 24,000 Hmong immigrants, the largest concentration in the U.S., and their U.S.-born families.

"People are afraid there's going to be some kind of revenge," Ying Vang, director of a Hmong community center, told the Associated Press.

Hmong community members have reported harassment on the job and in school, vandalism, threatening letters and other incidents since the shooting.

Fears of retaliation have been fueled by statements in the media. David Hecker, a friend of Crotteau and Willers, told the Minneapolis Star-Tribune: "Hmong hunters may not be as safe hunting. That could become a reality."

Hmong hunters were urged not to go back into the woods for the remainder of the nine-day deer season, which ended Nov. 28.

Since the shooting, many Hmong hunters have come forward with their own experiences of being confronted by racist whites in Wisconsin and Minnesota.

One man, Tou Vang, told the St. Paul Pioneer Press that his hunting party was run off public land by white hunters who shot at them, just a few miles from the site of the Nov. 21 shootings. That incident was in 2001. A Hmong bow hunter was chased out of a deer stand by two gun-toting men earlier this year, AP reported.

While St. Paul business groups and politicians hurriedly called a news conference to denounce Vang, other people were skeptical and said they wanted to hear more about his side of the story.

Ilean Her, director of the Council on Asian-Pacific Minnesotans, said many in the community empathize with Vang and wonder, "Why did he feel like he had to shoot them? If it's just one against so many, what did they do to him that made him a threat?"

"The community would say they always knew something like this would happen," Her said. "They're shocked that it happened. But at the same time you're not that surprised."

Hmong used, then discarded by U.S.

The Hmong hail from Southeast Asia, primarily Laos and Thailand. During the 1960s and 1970s, the U.S. courted Hmong leaders and recruited their people to fight against the national liberation movements in Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos. Gen. Vang Pao, father of the alleged shooter, commanded a Hmong "secret army" organized by the CIA. (New York Times, Nov. 24)

After the liberation forces triumphed in 1975, Washington offered the Hmong special visas to emigrate en masse, as part of a campaign to destabilize the new socialist government in Laos.

Tens of thousands came, first to California, then to the Midwest. Once they reached U.S. shores, however, the ruling class no longer valued them as a tool of anti-communist propaganda. To the U.S. rulers, the Hmong were just another oppressed group to be exploited and scapegoated for capitalism's ills.

From their agricultural society, the Hmong were transplanted into mostly white cities devastated by corporate restructuring and ill-equipped to provide for the needs of a non-English-speaking

population. Thus the Hmong were a ready-made target for politicians and bosses eager to divert anger away from their own actions.

According to the 2000 census, 60 percent of Hmong in the U.S. live in poverty. A study by the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire's Hmong Population Research Project states that the unemployment rate of Hmong in Wisconsin is five times the state average.

This, along with their homeland's hunting traditions, explains the growing popularity of deer hunting among the Hmong. Nearly a quarter of Wisconsin's Hmong residents took out hunting licenses in 2003.

Like many of their impoverished Native and white neighbors, Hmong families rely on hunting for survival.

The land problem

Conflicts over hunting, access to land, race and class have come to a boil in north-west Wisconsin since a precipitous decline in the timber industry, small farms and mining in the late 1970s.

The Wisconsin State Independent Living Council, an advocacy group for the disabled, notes that "Northwestern Wisconsin is a beautiful place ... [with] lakes and trees ... [but] in socio-economic terms living in Northwestern Wisconsin is less attractive." The council notes that in Sawyer County, where the shootings took place, 21.7 percent of households have an annual income below \$10,000 a year.

Land ownership has been consolidated in the hands of agribusiness, timber companies, tourist resorts, land speculators and wealthy retirees. These landowners have drastically restricted access to

hunters at a time when more people need to hunt to feed their families.

Public lands open to hunting are modest and overused. Options are limited for those who aren't family or friends of landowners or can't pay for the privilege, as many affluent "sportsmen" from outside the region do.

Privately owned lands often abut public hunting areas and are poorly marked, which can lead to tragedies like the Nov. 21 shootings.

The reality is that many poor and working-class hunters have no choice but to take the risk of trespassing in order to feed their families.

Just days after the Sawyer County shootings, another violent confrontation between hunters and a landowner was reported near Baraboo in central Wisconsin. No shots were fired, but the landowner was hospitalized and one hunter jailed on assault charges. All those involved were white. (Capitol Times, Nov. 27)

While media attention focuses on the grieving families of those killed in Sawyer County, progressives in the region have also joined with Hmong community members in vigils against bigotry.

To build lasting unity among poor and working-class Hmong, Native, white and other workers in these areas will require a movement to demand jobs or income, health care, housing and education for all.

The have-nots of all nationalities have a common interest in demanding that those who hunt primarily for food should have first priority and access to uninhabited private land.

The writer grew up near the shooting site and hunted for food in the area during the 1980s.

Task force formed to support Mumia

By LeiLani Dowell
New York

The struggle to free Mumia Abu-Jamal continues, with renewed ardor and energy. On Oct. 2, a meeting was held here to found the National Task Force to Free Mumia Abu-Jamal. Abu-Jamal is a political prisoner and death row inmate who, in the 22 years of his incarceration, has consistently spoken out against U.S. imperialism and the war and racism that it manifests.

A sense of urgency was expressed at the meeting around providing as much support and solidarity as possible to Abu-Jamal in this period. A stay of proceedings was recently lifted on his appeal process before the U.S. Court of Appeals, Third Circuit. Because of the lifting of the stay, it is expected that the case will now move through the courts at a quicker pace. Abu-Jamal's lawyers are challenging a number of issues with regard to his conviction, including the exclusion of Black jurors from Abu-Jamal's initial trial, as well as bias shown by racist remarks made about him by the presiding judge at that trial, Albert Sabo.

A number of initiatives were set forth at the October meeting, including a new internet campaign, op-ed pieces and national speaking tours, as well as a national and international day of action on April 23, the day before Abu-Jamal's 51st birthday. The Task Force intends to work closely with International Concerned Family and Friends and meet regularly to respond to as many developments as possible involving his case.



Task force participants include ICFFMAJ leader Pam Africa; Robert Meeropol, Rosenberg Fund for Children; Sundiata Sadiq, past president, Ossining, N.Y., NAACP; Robert R. Bryan and Steven Hawkins, part of Mumia's legal team; Jeremy Syrop, Free Mumia Coalition NYC youth coordinator; Iyalua Ferguson, Malcolm X Commemoration Comm.; Heidi Beghosian, Dir., National Lawyers Guild; Linda M. Thurston, social justice activist; Monica Moorehead, Millions for Mumia and International Action Center; Herman Ferguson, Jericho Amnesty Movement; Anne Lamb, Peoples Video Network; Frank Velgara, Latinos por Mumia; Suzanne Ross and Gwen Debrow, co-chairs, Free Mumia Abu-Jamal Coalition, NYC; Clark Kissinger, Refuse and Resist; Michael Tariq Warren, former member Mumia's legal team; Mark Taylor, Educators for Mumia and Princeton Theological Seminary; Iglesia San Romero de las Américas-UCC, NYC; Frances Goldin, Mumia's literary agent; Cleo Silvers, Labor for Mumia; attorney Leslie Jones and Jason Corwin, upstate New York reps., ICFFMAJ and Native Youth Movement; and Jeff Mackler, Mobilization to Free Mumia Abu-Jamal. □

pointed out that under the sentencing laws set by Congress, even a rapist or murderer would get out of prison earlier.

And then there's the case of Jerome Schneider, described in the Nov. 18 New York Times as "the nation's best-known seller of fraudulent offshore banks."

In a special interview with the Times before going to jail, Schneider said he had helped hundreds of rich people in the United States evade taxes on incomes ranging from \$100,000 to \$40 million a year.

Schneider did take a plea bargain—and why not? For his crimes, he was offered a sentence of 24 months.

Internal Revenue had known about Schneider for more than 20 years. He sold more than a million copies of his book, "The Complete Guide to Offshore Money Havens," which he advertised in the Wall Street Journal and SkyMall, a magazine provided on many airplanes. One of his clients, he told the Times, was a media billionaire on the Forbes list of the richest 400 people in the United States. He worked with prominent accounting and law firms.

Taxes on the rich are notoriously low—which is one of the reasons the United States has such woefully underfunded social programs. But these blood suckers don't think they should pay anything. And yet they demand "patriotism" from the workers, sending them to die in colonial wars paid for by workers' taxes and benefiting only the big corporations and banks.

And if any one of Schneider's rich clients ever gets charged for defrauding the government, how many days will that crook spend in jail? One? None?

Welcome to capitalism. □

Despite backing of U.S. and France

Haitian puppet regime in trouble

By G. Dunkel

The plan to set up a new, stable Haitian regime concocted by the governments of the United States and France after the Feb. 29 “coup-napping” of President Jean-Bertrand Aristide has failed.

The puppet regime of Gérard Latortue arrested the leadership of Aristide’s party, Fanmi Lavalas. Protesters who came out in massive numbers to demand Aristide’s return have been beaten, arrested and even killed. The coup regime has spent nine months building up a police force.

With all this, the imperialist-imposed rulers have not been able to gain international legitimacy, organize elections or even restore essential civil services like sanitation, roads and medical care.

After briefly occupying Haiti with their troops, the two big imperialist allies/competitors turned over the task of propping up the puppet they had installed to the United Nations. This let them stay in the background while dealing with other interventions—the United States in Iraq, France in Ivory Coast.

The UN set up the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH), recruited about 6,300 troops, mainly from Chile, Argentina and Brazil, and assigned the command of MINUSTAH to Brazilian Gen. Augusto Heleno Pereira. To cover up their tracks even further, the U.S. assigned Canada the task of training the Haitian National Police (PNH) and rebuilding the courts and jails throughout the country.

Canadian Ambassador Claude Boucher, speaking in Jacmel on Nov. 20, promised Haiti that Canada would spend 100 million

Canadian dollars on this repressive project, in a country where only 20 percent of the people have a steady job and 200,000 people are still homeless in the northern city of Gonaïves after a massive flood in September. (Haïti Progrès, Nov. 30)

On Nov. 10, after receiving assurances from MINUSTAH that it would protect the march, a group connected to Fanmi Lavalas organized a mass march from the impoverished Port-au-Prince neighborhood of Belair toward the city center. The marchers walked peacefully, wearing T-shirts with Aristide’s picture on them. Just before they reached Avenue Poupelard near Lalue, the UN soldiers peeled away and pickup trucks pulled up filled with PNH wearing ski masks and carrying automatic weapons.

The PNH jumped out and proceeded to beat up demonstrators, throwing some in the backs of the pickups with their hands bound behind their backs. They singled out leaders of the group, in particular Jean-Marie Samedi, who was badly beaten around the head and thighs. Samedi was charged with organizing violent attacks in Port-au-Prince, a charge vehemently disputed by civil rights organizations, both in Haiti and the United States, that rushed to his defense.

The National Popular Party (PPN) demanded the immediate release of Samedi. Its spokesperson, George Honorat, said the arbitrary arrests and torture “hearken back to the tortures of the dictatorial regime of François ‘Papa Doc’ Duvalier who disappeared, arrested and exiled all those who dared to oppose his power.”

A few days after this demonstration, the employees of the city of Port-au-Prince

went out in a job action because they hadn’t been paid for 10 months. The mayor of the city, appointed by Latortue, hasn’t bothered to unblock the 42 million gourdes—Haitian currency—sitting in the city treasury.

On Sunday, Nov. 24, a group of Argentinean soldiers on their way to the beach were waylaid by armed men, who pulled the driver out of the soldiers’ minibus. Reports from the AP and the official Haitian press agency differ on whether the soldiers were armed and what was taken from them, but both agree that the attack took place. This is a sign that even UN “peacekeepers” are not safe.

Puppet regime not widely recognized

The 15 countries of the Caribbean Community decided early in November not to recognize the Latortue puppet regime. They declared that the regime has “no respect for the fundamental principles of respect for human rights, due process and good governance.”

Many of the Rio Group—19 Latin American countries that met recently in Brazil—have diplomatically recognized the Latortue regime. However, they have proposed a dialog among all the parties in Haiti, including Fanmi Lavalas headed by Aristide, to try to come up with a solution.

France’s associate minister of cooperation, Xavier Darcos, then stepped in, stating the “nuanced” position of both France and the U.S.: It was important to have everyone talk, but it was “undesirable” to let Aristide return to Haiti.

Calling this statement arrogant and an interference in the internal affairs of Haiti

is an understatement.

Then Latortue’s minister of justice, Bernard Gousse, after picking up his orders, issued an arrest warrant for Aristide and demanded his extradition from South Africa, where Aristide and his family are currently living. South Africa termed the extradition request ludicrous and rejected it.

Another sign of the shaky nature of Latortue’s hold on Haiti is the appearance of the Dessalinien Army of National Liberation (ADLN), a guerrilla group that recently attacked and seized a police station in the northwestern town of Gros Morne.

The U.S. government gives as one reason for its interventions in Haiti fear there will be a flood of refugees. U.S. immigration treats Haitians arriving on its shores in a racist and abusive fashion.

The ironic case of Joseph Dantica, uncle of noted author Edwidge Danticat, is a good illustration. (Their names are spelled slightly differently.)

MINUSTAH and the PNH fired from Dantica’s church and school while doing a sweep in the extremely poor neighborhood of Cite Soleil. After the police left, members of the group they had been attacking went to Dantica and asked for money to bury 15 people killed that day.

He didn’t help them and instead fled to the United States on a valid multi-entry visa. When he landed in Miami, he asked for asylum, saying his life was in danger in Haiti. Homeland Security officials, not caring which side he was on, treated him as they do all Haitian refugees—throwing him in prison and taking away his blood pressure and prostate medicines. He died in prison three days later. □

The Yukos affair

What are two Yanks doing running a Russian oil company?

By Deirdre Griswold

If anything should set off whistles and bells for those trying to understand what is happening in the struggle over Russia’s biggest oil company, it is the fact that the two top officials of Yukos Oil are Steven M. Theede, the chief executive officer (CEO), and Bruce K. Misamore, the chief financial officer (CFO).

That’s right. Not Ivan or Igor or Mikhail. Steven and Bruce, who have been in charge of the oil company’s fortunes, are U.S. citizens, not even of Russian descent.

Yukos, according to the Dec. 1 New York Times, “accounts for about 20 percent of oil production within Russia and about 25 percent of exports. It has about 14.7 billion barrels of oil reserves, almost as much as OPEC members Algeria and Indonesia combined.”

Theede and Misamore hastily left Moscow the last week in November. Theede went to Washington, where he has been having meetings with unidentified administration officials. Dick Cheney, perhaps? George W. Bush himself? There are plenty of oil-related people in the administration who would be very interested in talking to him.

The company’s founder, Mikhail Khodorkovsky, once the richest man in Russia, has been in prison for the last year, charged with tax evasion. When he was arrested, \$14 billion worth of stocks he held in Yukos Oil—44 percent of all shares

in the company—were frozen by government prosecutors, who said Yukos owed Russia \$24 billion in back taxes. This prevented him from going through with a \$20-billion projected investment deal with Exxon-Mobil that undoubtedly was behind his downfall.

When Khodorkovsky was jailed, the crème de la crème of Washington’s oil-soaked political elite tried to intervene on his behalf. Khodorkovsky had hobnobbed with George H.W. Bush, the former president; Henry Kissinger, a Rockefeller protégé; former New Jersey Sen. Bill Bradley, who advises the Open Russia Foundation, funded by Khodorkovsky; and former Energy Secretary Spencer Abraham. He had also given large donations to the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace and the American Enterprise Institute, bastions of imperialism.

The Wall Street Journal of Oct. 31, 2003, reported that “a senior Bush administration official placed a call to a counterpart in Moscow to inquire about the case earlier this week. Yesterday, a Yukos representative met at the White House with an official of the National Security Council.” It was almost a full-court press.

Restraining the Bush administration from going all-out to grab Yukos, however, is its need for Russia’s support in its “war on terror.” And perhaps the fear that crude U.S. intervention in a grab for Russia’s oil and gas resources would unleash opposition from the masses of people them-

selves, who are still not reconciled to the idea that the country’s great wealth should belong to a small class of super-rich individuals, whether U.S. or Russian, while millions of workers suffer horribly from the return to capitalism.

Russian president Vladimir Putin, who represents the new class of Russian capitalists, is treading a delicate line with Washington. He doesn’t want the full force of U.S. hostility to be turned in the direction of Russia, but at the same time he is not the pliant buffoon playing Washington’s game that his predecessor, Boris Yeltsin, was. Yeltsin wound up with a popularity rating of 6 percent in the polls—while he was still president!

Putin is not talking about nationalizing Yukos—that would really rev up Washington’s attack dogs—but he is using the tax issue to regain control over the important oil resources that Khodorkovsky wanted to sell to the West. The Russian government is preparing to auction off Yukos on Dec. 19—but at a very low price, one that Russian financial groups can afford.

Why can’t the imperialist oil companies use this opportunity to just step in and buy the oil cheap? Because the government is attaching a huge back-tax indemnity to the company. The opening price at the auction is reported to be \$8.6 billion, but whoever buys it will have to pay \$25 billion more to the Russian government to cover the taxes. (Interfax)

This, say the financial analysts, will

When Khodorkovsky, Russia’s richest man, was jailed, the crème de la crème of Washington’s oil-soaked political elite tried to intervene on his behalf.

keep big U.S. oil companies out of the bidding, and is expected to favor Russian companies like Gazprom.

This whole struggle makes crystal clear what the Cold War was all about. While Russian workers suffer staggering declines in their quality of life, the U.S. imperialist ruling class—great champions of freedom and democracy—are focused on one thing: gaining control over the vast natural resources of the former Soviet Union, which covered one-seventh of the Earth’s surface.

They succeeded in breaking up the USSR and now have not only financial outposts but even soldiers and bases in a number of the former Soviet republics, especially those around the oil-and-gas-rich Caspian Sea. But the big prize is Russia, with its huge area, much of it unexploited, stretching from Europe to the Pacific.

Looking ahead, it is completely predictable that the kind of imperialist arrogance shown in the Yukos affair will help to rekindle not just a bourgeois nationalism in Russia, but a working-class internationalism that unites all peoples against the moneyed class, whose appetite to exploit labor knows no limits. □

Crisis in Ukraine

Imperialism pushes to the East

By Fred Goldstein

The political crisis in Ukraine is not about electoral fraud. It is not because the Ukrainian presidential election runoff on Nov. 21 “did not live up to international standards,” as U.S. Secretary of State Colin Powell declared. If capitalist elections had to live up to such standards, Bush would not have been president in 2000; he would not have won Ohio and a host of other states in 2004.

The political crisis in Ukraine is about Western imperialism, headed by the U.S. ruling class, manipulating the political process and maneuvering among the different factions of the Ukrainian bourgeoisie. The goal is to open the floodgates for U.S. and European corporations to exploit this rich and strategically located country, to weaken Russia by breaking up its political and economic ties with Ukraine, and to accelerate Kiev’s movement towards NATO.

On a broader political and strategic level, this election dispute is about imperialism’s relentless march to the East, the encirclement of Russia and the attempt to reduce it to a neocolony. It is a dangerous, incendiary, aggressive move that is being orchestrated far beyond the Bush administration. In fact, when the list of institutions involved in this subversive putsch is laid out, it constitutes a broad section of the mainstream bourgeoisie, many of whom were opposed to Bush and his adventurist foreign policy.

The Carnegie Institute for International Peace, George Soros’s Open Society Institute, Freedom House and the National Endowment for Democracy (CIA) are in it, among others. The subversive organizations of the European imperialists must be also added to the list.

They have created PORA, the so-called “student” organization on the model of Otpor in Serbia and Kmara in Georgia. They mobilized thousands of “poll watchers” and agitators and propagandists to prepare for the election. They organized a strategy of “exit polls” which put their man, Viktor Yushchenko, ahead by 11 percent; this then became the media event and the axis of all sorts of destabilizing accusations. They organized election campaign slogans, logos, campaign squads, and so on.

Yushchenko’s Our Ukraine movement and the Kiev Press Club are both funded by Washington’s National Endowment for Democracy, which in turn is a conduit for the CIA. This and more has been documented by Michel Chossudovsky (www.globalresearch.ca) and by Ian Trainor in the British newspaper Guardian of Nov. 26.

The imperialist “moderates” are saying to Bush, look what your adventure in Iraq cost and look where it got us. We will show you how to take over a rich, strategic country of nearly 50 million without creating such a mess. The Bush-Cheney-Rumsfeld group are completely preoccupied with Iraq, Iran, the Middle East in general and Korea, and how to salvage their situation. Colin Powell, their connection to the mainstream ruling class, is managing the Ukraine situation as his last act before leaving.

Imperialist move to the East

The movement to the East began with the overthrow of the Polish socialist government by the CIA, which created the Solidarity movement through its stooge, Lech Walesa. It climaxed with the destruction of the USSR and all the social-

ist countries of Eastern Europe.

It then continued with the Yugoslav war of 1999, followed by the “peaceful” overthrow of the government of Slobodan Milosevic and the takeover of Serbia. Washington then moved to oust its former ally, Eduard Shevardnadze, in Georgia and put in a completely U.S.-educated puppet, Mikhail Saakashvili. It failed in its attempt to overthrow the government of Belarus. And now the imperialists are on to Ukraine.

Ukraine borders on Russia, Belarus, Poland, Slovakia, Hungary, Moldova, Romania, the Black Sea and the Sea of Avov. It has 48 million people. It was a colony during the tsarist empire.

Its eastern portion emerged from the civil war after the Bolshevik Revolution as the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic. It became part of the original Soviet Union, formed in 1922.

The western Ukraine was part of capitalist Poland until 1940; it was invaded and occupied by the Nazi imperialists as part of their offensive against the USSR in 1941. It lost 7 million people at the hands of the Nazis. Resistance developed after the initial Nazi invasion destroyed large units of the Red Army.

Under the planned economy of the USSR, Ukraine was transformed from a primarily agricultural and mining region to an industrial power second only to Russia within the framework of the USSR. The planned economy made it possible to recover from the vast devastation of World War II.

After the collapse of the USSR and the restoration of capitalism, the new bourgeois leadership declared it “independent” and moved towards dependence on the West. Production collapsed by over 50 percent. Over 30 percent of the population was soon living in poverty. Social benefits were trimmed and Ukraine, like all the post-Soviet countries that fell victim to capitalist restoration, became a land of insecurity for the workers and the peasants.

But it is a land still coveted by the transnational corporations. A description of Ukraine by an internet think tank, globalsecurity.com, tells a lot.

“Endowed with good natural resources, superb agricultural land, a well-educated population, ethnic peace and a strategic location in Europe, Ukraine was positioned to be one of the most successful of the former Soviet states in attracting foreign investment needed to restructure its economy,” reads the study.

“Ukraine is rich in natural resources. It has a major ferrous metal industry, coke, mineral fertilizers and sulfuric acid. Manufactured goods include airplanes, turbines, metallurgical equipment, diesel locomotives and tractors. It also is a major producer of grain, sunflower seeds and sugar and has a broad industrial base, including much of the former USSR’s space and rocket industry. Although oil and natural gas reserves are small, it has important energy sources such as coal, and large mineral deposits, and is one of the world’s leading energy transit countries, providing transportation of Russian and Caspian oil and gas across its territory.”

This description is enough to have stockholders, CEOs, Wall Street brokers, bankers and the entire global fraternity of profit-seeking capitalist parasites drooling at the mouth. After all, these resources and all the economic infrastructure developed and built up over generations by the working class under the socialist system are now there for the taking.

But so-called “oligarchs” in Ukraine are

not cooperating fast enough. Many of them are trying to take all the loot for themselves. And therein lies the axis of the crisis in Kiev.

The term oligarchs has come to mean the robber capitalists who have used their political connections to lawlessly appropriate formerly socialist property, usually at bargain-basement prices. It is a term of opprobrium used in the capitalist press. And it is fitting. But it ill behooves the biggest oligarchs of all to use that term—the ones at Citibank, J.P. Morgan Chase, Goldman Sachs, and the Fortune 500, who not only use political influence to steal the resources of entire countries, but use the CIA and the Pentagon to get by subversion and military force what they cannot get legally and peacefully.

Imperialism vs. indigenous capitalists

The fierce struggle for the post of president between the present prime minister, Viktor Yanukovich, and the former prime minister, Viktor Yushchenko, cannot be understood on a strictly national, Ukrainian scale. The big business media are trying to cast it in terms of democracy versus corruption and the nationalist Ukrainian west versus the Russian-speaking east. But the struggle can only be understood in terms of the intervention of imperialism.

The giant corporations and the political strategists of Wall Street, London, Paris, Rome and Brussels are seeking to break the strength, if not the back, of the national, protectionist, counter-revolutionary bourgeois factions that have feasted off the privatization process and are trying to amass industrial empires. These indigenous capitalists are busily engaged in dividing up the fruits of 70 years of socialist construction built up by the workers and peasants of Ukraine, but they have resisted sharing them with outsiders.

President Leonid Kuchma, whose second five-year term is expiring, picked Yanukovich to be his successor. Yanukovich had been governor of the coal-rich Donets region. Later, as prime minister from November 2002 to December 2004, he tried to solidify his base in this industrial and coal-mining region of the east, raising wages, pensions and social benefits to counterbalance the suffering of the workers from capitalist restoration and privatization.

Yanukovich’s demagoguery was meant to offset the fact that he was part of the Kuchma grouping that was enriching such capitalists as Rinat Akhmetov, the owner of System Capital Management, Ukraine’s biggest corporation with large holdings in metallurgy. Also in his camp are Viktor Pinchuk, Kuchma’s son-in-law, who owns Interpipe and three television channels and is reportedly Ukraine’s second-richest man, worth \$3 billion. Also behind Yanukovich is the Dnepropetrovsk-based Privatbank, a powerful capitalist grouping. And he was close to Serhiy Tyhytko, chairperson of the National Bank and other business interests who have tried to grab the lion’s share of industry. (Kyiv Post, Nov. 29, and globalsecurity.com)

Unfortunately, there does not seem to be an independent, working-class voice in this struggle. But that is what is desperately needed to expose both camps and revive the struggle against capitalism and exploitation and for a planned economy with workers’ rights.

Yushchenko, during his term as Kuchma’s prime minister from 1991 to

2001, made “progress” in privatization for the imperialists.

In the Russian Independent Internet Digest (RIID at putinru.com) of Oct. 29, the journal pondered the paradox that the Russians might be worse off under the allegedly “pro-Russian” Yanukovich.

“Yanukovich is for regional protectionism, there is no doubt about it,” said Myron Wasyluk, head of the Ukraine office of PBN, a consulting and public relations firm.

“Yanukovich has basically blocked off the Russians and the Westerners and has given everything to the Ukrainians,” Wasyluk said.

“During Yushchenko’s tenure as prime minister, from 1999 to 2001,” continues the RIID, “the prospect for foreign firms was much brighter, said Dmitry Tarabakin, director of Dragon Capital, Ukraine’s biggest brokerage by volume.”

Auction of steel mill shows what’s what

Despite Yanukovich playing the “Russian” card at home, preparing to promote Russian as a second official state language and leaning politically toward Russia, “he approved the results of a privatization auction for the country’s biggest steel mill, Kryvorizhstal, earlier in this year. Global steel majors, including Russia’s Severstal, were all anxious to bid, but parliament’s privatization committee revised the terms of the tender essentially to ban them, driving down the sale price in the process.”

In the end, the auction was won for just \$800 million by a Ukrainian company founded by Pinchuk and Akhmetov, even though Severstal said it was willing to pay \$1.2 billion. (RIID)

What the RIID did not mention, because it was only concerned with Russian capitalist interests, was mentioned by Business Week Online, Nov. 8, about the same auction. Viktor Pinchuk won, complained the U.S. financial magazine, “even though the winning bid of \$800 million was far less than a \$1.5-billion offer from U.S. Steel Corp.”

Business Week shares RIID’s assessment of Yushchenko. “If Yushchenko, a strongly pro-Western politician who jump-started Ukraine’s boom when he was prime minister ... pulls off a victory, Ukraine could see major reforms that will put the country on the international investor map like never before.”

And Business Week has a prescription for how to begin the investment boom. “What’s really needed are big manufacturers” who will be drawn by “a highly educated, cheap work force. Labor costs are below \$160 a month, including all taxes and social levies, vs. around \$400 a month in Poland. And as wage costs in European Union accession countries [former Soviet republics—F.G.] spiral upward, nearby Ukraine looks ever more tempting. ‘EU enlargement has brought the borders of Europe to Ukraine, so from a strategic point of view, a logistical point of view, and a cost point of view, it makes much more sense right now to manufacture in Ukraine,’ says Jorge Intriago, partner of PricewaterhouseCoopers in Kiev.”

Knowing the opportunistic nature of both camps in the struggle inside Ukraine, Business Week, the authoritative organ of the biggest U.S. capitalists, is not too worried. It quotes Garry Levesley, Ukrainian director for the Arlington, Va.-based power company AES Corp., which has two Ukrainian power distribution companies. “Whoever wins, the country will continue

Continued on page 11

Bravo, Canadians!

Bravo to the Canadian anti-war movement. Thousands of activists marched on Parliament buildings in Ottawa Nov. 30 to protest the state visit of George W. Bush. Many had traveled all night on buses from across Ontario and Quebec to reach the capital.

Some tried to break through police barricades surrounding parliament. When riot cops attacked demonstrators, they were reportedly met with hand-to-hand fighting.

"End the massacre in Iraq!" protesters shouted. "War criminal!"

"Canada is not against America. We're totally against Bush," Fredric White, an entertainment company worker, explained. And an Ipsos-Reid/CTV poll released the day of Bush's arrival backed that up: 58 percent characterized his reelection as a "bad thing." Less than half of that percentage approved of Bush.

Bush even had to duck an invitation to Parliament. Still stung from being heckled "Down Under" by Green Party politicians in Australia last year, officials who planned this trip said they feared a "cranky audience." The "booing" would be heard worldwide.

Bush had cancelled a visit to Canada in May 2003 after Ottawa refused to send troops to Iraq. More than 80 percent of people polled in Canada had opposed the deployment. This time, Bush got a warmer—albeit ambivalent—welcome from Corporate Canada.

During diplomatic toasts at the gala formal dinner held at the "Museum of Civilization" that evening, the war in Iraq was the elephant in the room. But another mammal was on the menu: cows. The Alberta beefsteak on Bush's plate was a reminder from agri-ranchers that the U.S. ban on Canadian cattle has cost them some \$4 billion (Cdn) since it was imposed in May 2003.

But the Bush administration is concerned with beefing up the occupations in Iraq and Afghanistan, and is willing to mend some diplomatic fences to do so. The U.S. is also trying to draw Canada into its "Star Wars" continental

antiballistic missile system. But public sentiment in Canada also runs high against cooperation in the "weaponization of space."

Bush and Prime Minister Paul Martin held a joint media conference on Nov. 30 in which the U.S. president strongly defended his "stay the course" policy in Iraq. Bush thanked the Ottawa government for agreeing to send \$200 million to the occupation in Iraq and waiving a claim to \$450 million of Iraq's pre-war debt to Canada, leaving more of the war spoils for U.S. finance capital.

Both leaders also vowed to shut down any nuclear weapons program in Iran. And Ottawa has worked hand-in-hand with Washington in backing the bloody coup that resulted in "regime change" in Haiti.

But both Bush and Martin couldn't avoid hinting at the disagreements and polls that reveal people in Canada feel estranged from the U.S. The Bush administration, for example, is challenging a World Trade Organization ruling that the U.S. must stop imposing an average of 27 cents tariff on every \$1 worth of softwood lumber imported from Canada.

They concentrated instead on the \$1.2 billion in business conducted every day between the two capitalist countries—the largest trading partnership in the world. Canada's \$70-billion trade surplus with the U.S. last year—the main cause of its rising economy—is based on its sending 80 percent of its exports to the United States.

But the strength of anti-war sentiment is so broad and deep in Canada and Quebec that neither Bush nor Martin could publicly ignore it. Bush, whose motorcade was met along its route with protest signs and a lot of middle fingers held high for him to see, had to publicly thank the few Canadians he claimed welcomed him with a friendly "five finger" wave.

A pretty discouraging beginning for the renewed reign of the Emperor of the Universe. □

Art in chains of gold

It's bad enough that this country's big art museums offer such a skewed sampling of human creativity. At least 90 percent of the work on display at the Museum of Modern Art in New York, for example, is by white men. Now MoMA is fixing it so that most people can't even get in to view what is there.

The museum has just reopened after a two-year-long expansion and renovation. The admission fee used to be \$12. Now it's \$20. That's a 63-percent increase. It effectively bars the great mass of New Yorkers—a population whose majority is people of color and working class—from entering the museum.

Oh, excuse us. There's one exception. The kind MoMA trustees have set aside four hours on Fridays for free entry. But forget contemplating Vincent Van Gogh's "Starry Night." The only stars you're likely to see will be just before fainting from lack of air amid the thick crowds forced to squeeze in during the

tiny window of opportunity allotted for regular folks.

MoMA has always been an institution run by and for the moneyed elite. It was founded with Rockefeller funds. David Rockefeller still sits on the board, alongside several family members and others with names like Pulitzer, Niarchos and Lauder. And don't forget His Royal Highness Duke Franz of Bavaria. What gall! What gives these rich thieves the right to keep the rest of us out?

People are angry. Especially artists—most of whom struggle their whole lives and never get recognition or make a living from their art. During the grand reopening week, as swanky receptions took place inside, picketers outside distributed fliers demanding, "Free MoMA!" Among other things, they pointed out that MoMA could have provided free admission for 40 years with the \$858 million spent on the new wing.

Art should be free and accessible to all! □

Lesbians and gay men

Great gains in 1980s East Germany

By Leslie Feinberg

"Finally, in the late 1980s, public discussion backed by the Communist Party and the state was revived," wrote researcher John Parsons in his extensive article about gains for lesbians and gay men in the German Democratic Republic. "It included lesbians and gay men speaking out as self-conscious voices for their community." (OUT/LOOK, Summer 1989)

Scientists and health professionals convened a conference in June 1985 on "The Psycho-Social Aspects of Homosexuality."

Parsons stressed, "An important feature of this conference was that it was organized with the open participation of lesbians and gay men, both as contributors and discussants."

He continued, "Two major demands were voiced at the conference: first, that the discussion should be taken outside of these exclusively professional circles and made a public one; second, that the state should sanction institutions through which lesbians and gay men could discuss and organize among themselves."

A year earlier, this same demand for independent groups had been voiced by a Humboldt University interdisciplinary research group that had been organized at the request of the Berlin city administration. This was the first official gay and lesbian studies committee at a German university, according to researcher Raelynn J. Hillhouse.

The Communist Party's 11th Congress in 1986 debated the recommendations of the research group. Parsons said that a member of the Humboldt University group relayed that there was "a good deal of success in moving the national Party apparatus to support the work of these groups." Parsons talked to other acquaintances who added that there was continued backwardness from some Party officials.

But what is indisputable is that in 1985, an historically unprecedented, state-sponsored campaign set out to eradicate all forms of discrimination based on sexual and emotional preference and to raise social consciousness about same-sex love.

The momentum of gains for sexual liberation in the German Democratic Republic that resulted was dramatic. The facts speak for themselves.

Gov't-backed media campaign

A government-supported public discussion broadened and deepened in the period between the 1985 conference and a second held in the city of Karl-Marx-Stadt in 1988.

Hillhouse concluded in her 1990 article that "The new openness concerning homosexuality was evident not only in literature and scientific publications, but also in print and broadcast media. In 1984 the popular monthly health magazine, *Deine Gesundheit* (Your Health), began

printing a series of readers' letters on homosexuality; soon after, several other major publications published substantial articles on sexual orientation."

More than 200 articles on homosexuality were printed in the GDR during the 1980s, she continued, mostly about gay males. (Slavic Review, Winter 1990)

Articles about same-sex love appeared in the press and were incorporated into some state radio and television station programming. Much of this information was aimed at youth—an audience with many questions about sexuality.

When public media focused on AIDS education, same-sex relations were not portrayed as a central feature. And it is important to recall that everyone in the GDR enjoyed free medical care.

The television health program "Visite" broadcast a report in September 1987 "that described homosexuality as an entirely natural variation of human sexuality." (Hillhouse)

The following year, the state film company DEFA, working with gay and lesbian

Lesbian ♦ gay ♦ bi
and trans
PRIDE
SERIES
PART
22

activists, produced East Germany's first documentary about "the satisfactions and problems" facing same-sex couples, called "Die andere Liebe" (The Other Love).

In 1989 DEFA also released "Coming Out," a feature film about a gay teacher.

The same year, literature with gay themes was published, including a book about the life histories of several gay men in the GDR, compiled and written by a gay man.

Mass education campaign

"Important social institutions also began to implement reforms with great speed," Parsons continued.

"For example, the Commission on Marriage and the Family, which is responsible for running a system of counseling centers, passed a resolution asserting that the national network of sexuality and family counseling centers should aid in dismantling prejudices regarding homosexuality and foster the integration of gay men and lesbians into society."

Same-sex love was significantly included in a new sex education curriculum for the public school system.

A chapter on lesbian and gay identity in the 1984 edition of the standard sex-education textbook presented homosexuality as a natural variation of sexual identity. Lesbianism was part and parcel of this chapter. The book included among its sexually frank and romantic photos two men together and two women lying naked in each other's arms.

And most significantly, the book acknowledged that the main problems faced by homosexuals result from persecution and isolation, which themselves stem from social discrimination and homophobia.

Next: *More gains.*

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PUERTO RICO

Water workers take to streets in contract struggle

By Arturo J. Pérez Saad

Striking workers from the Independent Authentic Union (UIA) of the government-run Sewers and Aqueducts Authority (AAA) effectively stopped traffic on several avenues in the San Juan, Puerto Rico, metropolitan area on Nov. 23. Local police and the National Guard then broke up this direct action with repressive force.

Willie Vega, the UIA's official media spokesperson, said that a number of the workers were hurt.

The union had gone out on a national strike on Oct. 5 over the primary issue of medical care after negotiations with the AAA broke down. It had been in negotiations ever since the expiration of the water workers' contract in June 2003.

The day after the clash with police, the workers marched to La Fortaleza, the governor's mansion, demanding she personally intervene in the collective bargaining over a contract. Gov. Sila M. Calderón retaliated by issuing a statement the following day vilifying the UIA for its actions and demands, attempting to justify the government's brutal actions against the water workers.

On the morning of Nov. 26 the UIA organized eight busloads of workers to go from the different work sites they were picketing to Plaza Las Américas, the largest mall in Puerto Rico. After negotiations with P.R. and mall police, the workers were allowed to enter the mall.

"They went to Plaza Las Américas with their green shirts calmly and orderly to make known to the public that there is still a strike which has not been resolved by the Puerto Rican government," said Juan Ramos, president of the union's bargaining unit. In a festive cultural spirit, the workers sang holiday songs to music called parranda. This was done under heavy police surveillance and intimidation.

Around noon they left the mall, chanting, "Workers united will never be defeated!" and marched to the headquarters of the Department of Labor.

On Nov. 27, "We marched in a well-attended protest from the Grande supermarket to Howard Johnson Hotel and back," said Ramos. (El Nuevo Día)

But the government continues to stonewall the union. On Nov. 28, the government-run AAA made a reduced offer to the UIA. This new economic counterproposal for the next five years is a rancid



Plaza de Las Américas

PHOTO: LUIS ALBERTO LÓPEZ/EL VOCERO

morsel that offers only 1/23rd of what the UIA had originally asked for.

Ramos says the workers "will be more lively" in the days to come, with direct actions similar to those that have taken place, and that "the strike will end when the bosses do the just and reasonable thing that the workers are asking for."

On Nov. 29 hundreds of UIA workers protested the AAA's counter-offer in front

of the State Department and the headquarters of Triple S. (El Nuevo Día) Last August the bosses, without the workers' consent, had chosen Triple S as a substitute for their medical plan. The workers once again stopped traffic and were met with a heavy police force. An elderly resident of the area was hurt by police.

The workers chanted, "There will be no peace if the contract is not settled." □

Africa struggles to control its oil

From a talk by Donatien Bukuba at the Nov. 13-14 National Fightback Conference.

As the Iraqi people are fighting in the streets of Falluja for their sovereignty and independence from the U.S. imperialist grab for oil, we must also look at Africa.

This week a struggle broke out in Ivory Coast when France destroyed the small Ivoirian air force to the cheers of the U.S. The Ivoirian government charged France with supporting a rebel group.

A popular outpouring shut down Abidjan, the capital, and defensively surrounded the president's residence. Ivoirians acted to repel a feared overthrow of their president by the French army with the full support of Washington.

The outbreak of this crisis indicates another chapter of imperialist powers maneuvering to install a puppet regime temporarily more to their liking.

Although Ivory Coast's main export is cocoa, it also has offshore oil and gas reserves and is located in oil-rich West Africa.

On Nov. 16, a planned general strike by Nigerian workers could stop all economic activity in that country, particularly targeting oil production. This strike will include all sectors. Nigeria's labor minister warned oil workers

Nov. 8 not to join the strike or risk losing their jobs.

The strike is being called to reverse a 25-percent increase in fuel oil prices. It follows a successful four-day warning strike last month. Although the October



Donatien Bukuba
WW PHOTO: GREG DUNKEL

strike asked people to stay home, the coalition of unions and community organizations is calling for demonstrations for the upcoming confrontation.

Only two years ago, hundreds of Nigerian women literally took over U.S.-owned ChevronTexaco refineries—stopping production of 1.8 million barrels of oil per day. They demanded that Chevron-

Texaco provide their communities with electricity, schools, water, health clinics, jobs, unemployment insurance and pensions.

Nigeria is the top producer of oil in Africa, the seventh-largest oil exporter in

the world and the fifth-biggest source of U.S. imported oil. Its oil is extracted for the profit of Shell, ChevronTexaco, and ExxonMobil. U.S. imperialism's worst nightmare is that Nigeria could take control of its oil wealth and use it for the benefit of the people, like Venezuela's Bolivarian Revolution.

Africa faces stepped-up intervention by U.S. imperialism as it seeks to elbow aside its junior partners in Europe. Until the collapse of the Soviet Union, the U.S. seemed content to play a more covert role in Africa—financing its pro-imperialist puppets in Congo while supporting the racist South African apartheid regime. Liberation struggles took center stage in Angola, Mozambique, Namibia and elsewhere.

But once the Soviet Union was gone, U.S. intervention in Africa took a more direct form. In 1993, for the first time in recent memory, U.S. troops landed on the continent under the guise of providing food aid to Somalia. Of course, Somalia's strategic location at the Horn of Africa, the gateway to Middle East oil, had nothing to do with this—or so the imperialists said! The Somali people forced the U.S. to withdraw. But today Pentagon bases are being built in Uganda, Djibouti, Senegal, and São Tomé and Príncipe.

The African people need the solidarity of all progressive movements, especially in the imperialist countries, in their struggle for the right to control their own resources and economies. Shell Oil in Nigeria is the same Shell Oil appointed by the U.S. occupiers of Iraq to manage those stolen oil reserves.

Centuries of colonial and neocolonial plunder, including the kidnapping of millions of human beings in the Trans-Atlantic slave trade, requires not only that the U.S. and its junior imperialist partners get out of Africa now—it requires not only unconditional solidarity in action—it requires reparations. □

Crisis in Ukraine: Imperialism pushes to the East

Continued from page 9

to move forward economically, reform and normalize. The only question is the pace of improvement," says Levesley.

The U.S. and European imperialists are huddling now. They have threatened Russia, whose economy, military and space program are heavily integrated with Ukraine. They are backing the candidate, Yushchenko, who wants to bring Ukraine into NATO, and have pushed the Parliament to reject Yanukovich. They inflamed the situation in order to get a beachhead in Ukraine. Now they will try to stabilize the dangerous and incendiary state of affairs they have created so they can have a smooth transition to a breakthrough in imperialist exploitation of Ukraine.

The push into Ukraine is, in the last analysis, an expression of the crisis of world capitalism and imperialism. It is no

accident that German imperialism forced the Bolshevik government to sign away Ukraine in the Brest-Litovsk Treaty of 1918, which allowed Russia to get out of World War I. Ukraine was a valuable and strategic territory that the German capitalists needed and they thought such a monumental loss would cripple the Bolshevik government. After Germany collapsed, the Brest-Litovsk Treaty was nullified.

It is also no accident that Hitler, when planning his offensive against the USSR, made the capture of Ukraine, with its agriculture and minerals, a principal military objective. To Hitler, Ukraine was "lebensraum," living space, a place to colonize, invest in and enslave the Ukrainians. This was essential to Hitler's plan for world conquest.

His mad adventure in the USSR was an

expression of German imperialism's need for colonies. It had few, but possessed the most advanced, most productive capitalist industrial machine in the world. It was a matter of life and death for the German imperialists to grab new markets, new sources of raw material and new wage slaves.

While the social crisis in the United States bears no comparison to the one that Hitler sought to solve, nevertheless, the present relentless and dangerous push to the East, which could also eventually target China, is driven by the same capitalist/imperialist forces that made for his sudden grab at Ukraine.

The movement in the United States must expose the dangerous and aggressive maneuver of the U.S. ruling class and demand that Wall Street and Washington keep their hands off Ukraine. □

NUEVO GABINETE DE BUSH

El Petróleo y los militares fieles en puestos claves

Por Fred Goldstein

Al mismo tiempo en que el Pentágono está sumiéndose en el atolladero de Irak, el Presidente George W. Bush está llevando a cabo una purga en su administración, elevando precisamente aquellos elementos que fueron los defensores más fehacientes de esta aventura colonialista y sangrienta y de su estrategia “unilateralista” y “preventiva” para ejecutarla.

En esta purga, Bush y su vicepresidente, Dick Cheney, quien directamente representa a las empresas petroleras monopolistas y al complejo militar-industrial, están reforzando su dominación en las cúpulas del gobierno capitalista —no solo al nombrar a derechistas, sino al colocar personas fieles a su doctrina en puestos claves.

El Secretario de Estado Colin Powell, el único canal de alto rango de la administración Bush abierto a los imperialistas moderados multilateralistas a quien John Kerry apeló durante su campaña electoral, fue marginalizado de la administración hace mucho tiempo. Ahora ha sido remplazado por Condoleezza Rice.

Rice, una intelectual antisoviética en la época de la Guerra Fría quien estuvo con Powell durante la administración del primer George Bush, tiene vínculos estrechos con el actual presidente y no ha tenido poder real en la administración en su puesto anterior como consejera de seguridad nacional. La política de Washington fue decidida principalmente por Cheney y el Secretario de Defensa Donald Rumsfeld, quienes combatían con Powell sobre estrategias políticas y militares. Rice desertó a Powell en las luchas internas y se abanderó al eje de Cheney, Bush, y Rumsfeld en todas las luchas cruciales.

Fue Rice la que habló de que las “evidencias contundentes” eran tan grandes como una “explosión atómica” cuando la administración trataba de sembrar el miedo para justificar la guerra contra Irak. Ella dijo que los tubos de aluminio vistos en Irak solo podían ser utilizados para fabricar armas nucleares. Y fue Rice la que salía todas las semanas por televisión promoviendo la guerra “preventiva”. Como tal, era la vocera de los más guerrilleros en la administración. En el Departamento de Estado ella mantendrá la misma relación de dependencia que tuvo como consejera de seguridad nacional en Bush, Cheney, y en un grado menor en Rumsfeld.

Stephen J. Hadley, su ayudante principal en el Consejo de Seguridad Nacional, tomará el puesto que ella tenía como consejera de seguridad nacional. Hadley había sido escogido por Cheney como asistente de Rice. Durante la administración de Bush padre, cuando Cheney era secretario de defensa, Hadley había sido su subsecretario.

Hadley se distingue por dos cosas. Primero, el ha abogado a favor del desarrollo y uso de armas “mini” nucleares. Sus discursos sobre la política en este sentido fueron la base de la infame Revisión de la Postura Nuclear de la administración de Bush, sometida al Congreso el 31 de diciembre de 2001, en la cual se declaraba como doctrina el uso de las armas nucleares como parte integrante y continuada de las armas convencionales. El uso de armas nucleares contra países sin armas nucleares también fue aprobado en ese mismo documento.

(www.rightweb.irc-online.org)

El otro servicio de Hadley a la administración de Bush fue el de asumir la culpa por no haber reconocido el hecho de que Bush mentía —lo cual sabía desde el principio durante su discurso sobre el Estado de la Unión de 2003— cuando declaró que Irak había comprado uranio en África durante la preparación para la guerra.

Cheney y Hadley conforman el puntal de la influencia de los monopolios petroleros y las corporaciones militares dentro de la administración de Bush.

Monopolios petroleros manipulan la política de nuevo

Cheney, como ex jefe ejecutivo de Halliburton, ha formulado la política de energía en colaboración con la industria petrolera y ha rehusado revelar la naturaleza de las reuniones que tuvo con los magnates petroleros. La posición estratégica de la Halliburton va mucho más allá del hecho de que es la empresa número 153 entre las 500 corporaciones más ricas en la lista de la revista Fortune y que ha ganado billones de dólares en contratos en Irak. Halliburton, según el número de la revista Multinational Monitor de mayo de 2001, opera en 120 países y tiene 7.000 clientes. Eso fue hace tres años. (Vea a www.corporatewatch.org.uk/halliburton.)

Lo importante es que en esos 7.000 clientes están incluidas las corporaciones petroleras gigantescas, desde Exxon/Mobil hasta Chevron/Texaco y Shell —precisamente las corporaciones que dominan el Golfo Pérsico y la industria mundial imperialista del petróleo. Estas son las mismas corporaciones que querían afianzarse a Irak, que tiene las segundas reservas más grandes de petróleo del mundo. Y Halliburton es el nexo perfecto entre los monopolios petroleros, la administración de Bush y el Pentágono.

Hadley, nombrado por Cheney, no es cualquier intelectual derechista militar. Es parte importante de la firma legal de Shea y Gardner, cuyos clientes incluyen Lockheed Martin y Boeing. Él es parte de la junta de ANSER Analytical Services, basada en Arlington, VA. Un grupo de analistas que se especializan en la “evaluación de amenazas”; sus síndicos incluyen a ex oficiales del Pentágono y de la CIA, junto a oficiales corporativos de contratistas de defensa como por ejemplo Raytheon y Bellcore”. (rightweb)

La transferencia de Rice al Departamento de Estado y Hadley como consejero de seguridad nacional fortaleció la mano de los elementos más agresivos en la clase dominante.

Bush también nombró a su consejero legal de la Casa Blanca, Alberto Gonzáles, para remplazar a John Ashcroft como Fiscal General. Gonzáles fue consejero de Bush cuando este era gobernador del estado de Texas. Como consejero legal de la Casa Blanca, Gonzáles fue el autor de un memorando que declaraba las Convenciones de Ginebra “obsoletas” y justificaba la tortura de prisioneros “bajo la autoridad del Presidente de los Estados Unidos como Comandante en Jefe” de las Fuerzas Armadas. Él apoyó el establecimiento de campos de concentración en Guantánamo como el lugar más apropiado para pri-

sioneros capturados porque estaba fuera de la jurisdicción de las cortes de los EEUU. (Alan Berlow en www.slate.msn.com, del 15 de junio de 2004)

Antes de que Gonzáles aprendiera a tergiversar la ley para las aventuras coloniales de Bush en Afganistán e Irak, él estuvo inventando nuevos conceptos legales para Bush, el verdugo de Texas.

Gonzáles ayudó a Bush a desafiar al derecho internacional en el caso de Ireno Tristán Montoya, un mexicano acusado de asesinato en Brownsville, Texas en 1985.

Tristán se declaró inocente pero no hablaba nada de inglés, no tuvo abogado defensor cuando fue arrestado, y firmó una confesión que después dijo creer que era un documento de inmigración. El gobierno de México protestó porque su consulado no había sido informado de su detención de acuerdo con la Convención de Viena, la cual había sido firmada por los Estados Unidos en 1969. Esta requiere que nacionales extranjeros detenidos en cualquier país tengan el derecho a tener un abogado de su propio país.

El 16 de junio de 1997, Gonzáles, como consejero legal de Bush, escribió un documento al Departamento de Estado declarando que, porque el estado de Texas no había firmado la Convención de Viena, no debía estar requerido determinar si la Convención había sido violada. Dos días después, Tristán fue ejecutado.

Fue un gran salto de las leyes el declarar a Texas exento de la Constitución, la cual dice que todos los estados están obligados a cumplir con los tratados y convenciones firmados por el gobierno federal.

Purga de Goss en la CIA

Como el nuevo jefe de la CIA, Bush ha nombrado a Porter Goss, jefe Republicano del Comité sobre Espionaje de la Casa de Representantes y ex agente de la CIA en América Latina durante los años 60 y 70 cuando George Bush padre era director de la CIA. Según reportes, Goss estuvo involucrado en el intento de rescatar al dictador de Nicaragua Anastasio Somoza de ser derrocado por los Sandinistas. Él se convirtió después en empresario y luego en congresista del distrito de Sarasota de la Florida. Tiene amplias conexiones con George H.W. Bush padre, y Jeb Bush, el gobernador de Florida y hermano del actual presidente.

Como director del Comité sobre Espionaje de la Casa de Representantes, Goss ayudó a Bush durante el escándalo que surgió debido a los fracasos de información conectados con Irak y Osama bin Laden, declarando en público que la CIA estaba “disfuncional”. Esto fue en el momento en que Bush estaba tratando de culpar a la CIA y a su director en aquella época, George Tenet, como chivo expiatorio a causa de toda la información falsa, de los fracasos de espionaje y de las mentiras que la administración había dicho sobre las armas de destrucción masiva, la alegada conexión entre Hussein y bin Laden, y otras alegaciones.

Goss también inició una legislación el 15 de junio para permitir que la CIA investigara y detuviera a ciudadanos estadounidenses—una completa ruptura en la división de trabajo establecida dentro del estado capitalista que señala las actividades dentro de la nación como el campo especial

del FBI. (Newsweek, el 11 de agosto).

Esto es parte de la “reforma” de la CIA que Goss lleva a cabo sacando a los elementos anti-Bush de adentro de la agencia. Según el Baltimore Sun del 14 de noviembre: “Instrucciones de parte de la Casa Blanca promulgan la limpieza de la agencia [la CIA],” dijo un ex oficial superior que mantiene relaciones cercanas a las dos, la agencia y la Casa Blanca. “Le dieron instrucciones a Goss... de sacar de la agencia a esos elementos que filtraron información a los medios de comunicación y a los demócratas liberales. La CIA la consideran como si fuera un vivero de liberales y de personas que han obstruido la agenda del Presidente.”

El obstáculo del gobierno capitalista a las facciones en la clase dominante más amplias política y económicamente está destinado a fomentar descontento en esa clase. Ya se pueden oír murmullos de este descontento en las páginas del New York Times, The Washington Post, The Los Angeles Times y The San Francisco Chronicle, entre otros periódicos. Pero las facciones moderadas de la gran burguesía aguantaron la primera administración. Chillaron y se quejaron pero al final apoyaron la guerra. Ahora todos esperan que Bush obtenga una victoria en Irak, aunque están pesimistas y con razón. Si los Demócratas, quienes hasta ahora han estado totalmente silenciosos y pasivos, empiezan a luchar, será inefectivo y será sólo porque la oposición está desarrollándose dentro de la clase dominante.

El movimiento sindical, el movimiento contra la guerra, y las organizaciones comunitarias no deben esperar que alguna oposición de parte de la clase dominante acuda a su rescate. Primero, la clase dominante no ha mostrado ninguna inclinación a detener realmente las fuerzas reaccionarias de Bush. Están a favor de la guerra o están tomando una actitud de ver y esperar qué pasa.

Además, una cosa es instalar un gobierno derechista y otra es llevar a cabo la política derechista aquí y en el exterior. Ahora, el hecho es que Washington está enfrentándose a la resistencia de Irak, a sus fuerzas militares agotadas, a la desmoralización en sectores de sus tropas, a una economía bastante frágil, y a grandes sectores de la población que van a sufrir de hambre y frío el cruel invierno que viene—especialmente en las comunidades afro-americana, latina, indígena, y blanca pobre.

El movimiento debe mostrar que no está intimidado sólo por el nombramiento de algunos derechistas a puestos gubernamentales. El iniciar movilizaciones de las masas luchando contra la guerra y por las necesidades básicas del pueblo puede cambiar toda la política y poner en postura defensiva a las fuerzas de Bush-Cheney. Esto requiere firmeza e iniciativa, pero sí se puede lograr.

La Marcha del Millón Trabajador@s en Washington, D.C. el 17 de octubre, mostró en un microcosmo, la unidad del movimiento sindicalista, el movimiento contra la guerra, la comunidad y la clase trabajadora no-organizada incluyendo a l@s trabajador@s inmigrantes. La iniciativa MMT debe ser ampliada en el período pos-electoral para abarcar a sectores más y más amplios de l@s trabajador@s y oprimid@s, hasta que el movimiento incremente el ímpetu necesario para hacer retroceder el programa de Bush y parar la guerra. □