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WW PHOTO: JOHN CATALINOTTO

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**WORKERS WORLD NEWSPAPER**  
55 W. 17 St. NY, NY 10011 212-627-2994  
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# Health care under attack

## GM cries poverty to cut benefits

By Milt Neidenberg

Is General Motors, the largest automaker in the world, being reduced to a second-rate empire? Will this giant transnational corporation go the way of the dinosaurs?

Not likely, for now. Its combined assets total \$479 billion and it operates in over 32 countries. Yet slick, high-paid GM managers cried poverty to the United Auto Workers in recent negotiations over health coverage.

They claimed not to be able to afford the full medical coverage that some retirees have been receiving at no charge. In a tentative agreement between GM and UAW, announced on Oct. 17, retirees would now have to pay \$752 per family or \$370 per individual each year in deductibles, co-payments and premiums. Currently employed GM workers would have to forgo \$1 an hour out of their cost-of-living and wage increases in 2006. Starting in December 2006, additional cost-of-living adjustments would be deferred.

GM built its empire on decades of exploitation of the sweat and skills of hundreds of thousands of UAW members, many now retired. Years of strikes and other forms of struggle forced GM to cover health care for 750,000 U.S. hourly employees, retirees and their families and offer the highest wages in the industry. Auto workers paid dearly for this by adjusting their lives to intense productivity and new and changing technology.

Eliminating these wages and benefits is GM's real target. This new agreement is just the first bite out of the apple. And Wall Street and Corporate America are loving it.

It's all about profits: "From a financial perspective, it will cut health-care liabilities for unionized retirees by about \$15 billion, or about 25 percent of the liability related to those retirees. Its total retiree health-care liabilities were \$77.5 billion at the end of 2004. The cuts will reduce retiree health-care expenses by about \$3 billion annually on a pre-tax basis, GM said." (Wall Street Journal, Oct. 18)

UAW President Ron Gettelfinger and his top negotiator, Vice

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## Medicaid cuts spell death for the poor

By LeiLani Dowell

In the British Medical Journal of Oct. 22, David Atkins and Ernest M. Moy of the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality write, "The gap in health between white and black Americans has been estimated to cause 84,000 excess deaths a year in the United States, a virtual Katrina every week.... The same factors that placed the poorest residents of New Orleans in harm's way—unemployment, poverty, neglect of communities, and alienation—contribute to health disparities for poor children and adults and those from minority groups throughout the United States."

In a government that placed the needs of its people before profits, numbers like these would be a clarion call to ensure that everyone received adequate and effective health care and prevention. The U.S. government, however, is planning the exact opposite.

### Florida to cut Medicaid spending

On Oct. 19 the Bush administration approved a plan for Florida that will limit spending for many of the 2.2 million people in that state who use Medicaid, the government's health care program for the poor. Under the new plan, each recipient must enroll in a private health insurance plan—and if a recipient does not choose one, the state will select one for them.

Florida will then pay a monthly premium to the chosen private plan. However, there will be a ceiling on spending by the state per user—so that if a person's health expenses were to exceed that limit, s/he could feasibly be charged for any additional services. Private companies will make many of the decisions as to just how much and what kinds of services are provided to individual users.

According to the Oct. 20 New York Times, insurance plans will be allowed to limit "the amount, duration and scope" of services in ways that "current law does not permit."

The Times reports that other states are already looking towards similar plans for Medicaid in their states. Medicaid

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WW PHOTO: G. DUNKEL

'Forging a United Front' is the sign on the podium at a meeting Oct. 22 in New York. Seated on the panel is Chris Silvera, Brenda Stokely, Malcolm Suber, Saladin Muhammad and Monica Moorehead. Larry Holmes is speaking at the podium.

**NEW YORK CITY**

# Fire exposes lack of safety on subways

By G. Dunkel  
New York

Several hundred thousand New York City commuters were delayed getting to work on Friday morning, Oct. 21, by an electrical fire in the West 4th Street station. Instead of dealing with the conditions that created this fire, however, the city is planning to spend hundreds of millions on a new surveillance system in the subways.

The fire started around 8 a.m. and shut down seven subway lines until the afternoon. Thirteen firefighters were reportedly treated for smoke inhalation. Eight subway trains carrying 2,000 to 2,500 people had to be evacuated through the smoke at West 4th Street, which was "absolutely safer than evacuating them through the tunnels," according to NYC Transit President Larry Reuter.

Tens of thousands of people wandered the subways looking for trains that never came and waiting for information on how to get where they were going.

Station agents, part of whose job is to provide information, didn't have a "clue as to what's running," as one of them explained to a tourist who wanted to get to the former World Trade Center site from 57th Street and 7th Avenue.

Some stations, especially in Manhattan, have public address systems that are generally hard to hear. Often the information is confusing, incomplete or wrong. On Friday, some stations in Manhattan announced that just one of the seven lines was out of service.

The people evacuated through the smoke at West 4th Street weren't told anything more than to "please leave as

fast as possible." Even train crews didn't know what was going on, and took their passengers into potentially dangerous situations.

Of course, 131 stations out of the 490 in the system don't even have a PA system. The Transit Authority has a plan to put PAs in 60 of these stations by 2009, but hasn't announced any solution for the others. (Daily News, Sept. 7)

However, the TA is planning on spending \$791 million to install 1,000 video cameras and 3,000 motion sensors in 299 stations. (New York Times, Aug. 24) This job is so complicated that the TA is going to hire Lockheed Martin, the defense contractor, to plan it and do the actual work. They claim it could prevent a London-style bombing.

Preventing a London-type bombing was also the justification given for random searches earlier in October of some of the 8 million daily riders on the MTA.

While the TA is willing to spend three-quarters of a billion dollars on high-tech surveillance equipment and a substantial, but unspecified, amount on random searches, it can't get its act together to install PAs that would inform its passengers and personnel on what is happening, or rewire its stations so it can more effectively fight electrical fires, or even pick up the trash that overflows from containers. These are steps that would obviously improve the physical security on the subways and cost far, far less than the cameras and motion sensors.

Given their budget priorities, the TA and the city administration of billionaire Mayor Mike Bloomberg are far more interested in surveillance and control of the people of New York than in providing for their security. □

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**WW CALENDAR**

**LOS ANGELES**

**Fri., Oct. 28**  
Eyewitness Report from Haiti. John Parker will report from the delegation, led by Ramsey Clark, that went to Haiti in early Oct. Video footage from Haiti. 7:30 p.m. At IAC, 5274 W Pico Blvd #203. For info (323) 936-7266.

**Sat., Oct. 29**  
Workers World Party Marxism class. 3 p.m.-5 p.m. For info (323) 936-1416

**Thurs., Nov. 10**

Bolivarian Venezuela, 7 p.m. At Immanuel Presbyterian Church, 3300 Wilshire Blvd. Phone (323) 936-7266 to volunteer.

**NEW YORK**

**Fri., Oct. 28**  
Workers World Party Meeting: Fred Goldstein, WW contributing editor, on the Plame scandal, Iraq war, Katrina and the crisis of the Bush administration. Also: Special Tribute to Rosa Parks. 7 p.m. (Dinner at 6:30) At 55 W. 17 St., 5th Fl., Manhattan. For info (212) 627-2994.

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E-mail: editor@workers.org  
Web: www.workers.org  
Vol. 47, No. 43 • Nov. 3, 2005  
Closing date: Oct. 26, 2005

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

A headline digest is available via e-mail subscription. Send an e-mail message to WWnews-subscribe@workersworld.net.

Periodicals postage paid at New York, N.Y.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to Workers World, 55 W. 17 St., 5th Floor, New York, N.Y. 10011.



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**CURTIS MUHAMMAD** of Community Labor United  
**LARRY HOLMES** of Troops Out Now Coalition  
**NATHAN HEAD** of the Metro Detroit Coalition of Black Trade Unionists  
**TERESA GUTIERREZ** of the International Action Center

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# ROSA PARKS *remembered*

BY MONICA MOOREHEAD

“My husband, Isaac T. Moorehead, and I were employed at Alabama State College in Montgomery in 1955 when Rosa Parks made her historic, courageous stand (or should I say sit-in) on the Montgomery City Transit bus. We owned a car but with us both being Black Southerners, we still knew firsthand the humiliation and utter disrespect of racism we had to endure when traveling by bus, train or car throughout the South. It’s hard to put into words the pure elation we felt when we heard that Mrs. Parks would not move back further on that bus in order to allow a white man to have her seat. We felt liberated at the time. We became involved in an organized effort to transport our people who refused to ride the segregated buses, to work and to shop during the boycott. When the boycott claimed success, at last we would be afforded our choice of seats on vehicles of mass transportation in Alabama. Thank you, Rosa Parks, for being the catalyst in launching a movement to liberate Black people in the South from legal segregation.”

—CONSUELA LEE,  
jazz pianist & composer,  
resident of Snow Hill, Ala.

“Rosa Parks was a conscious, disciplined Black woman who was chosen by civil-rights leaders in 1955 to help spark the movement against segregation in Montgomery. Fifty years later, she stayed committed to the struggle for social justice until the day she died. A lot of people even today continue to belittle the dangers that she faced when she refused to give up her seat to a white man. She was not just taking on individual white people infected with racism, but she was taking on the whole capitalist system, including the business sector and the police. We should elevate the lives of women like Rosa Parks, Fannie Lou Hamer, Ida B. Wells, Harriet Tubman and countless other Black women who took heroic actions against racism and other forms of injustice. The best way to honor the memory of Rosa Parks is to mobilize nationwide protests against racism, war and poverty on Dec. 1, the 50th anniversary of the day that she said ‘no racist segregation.’”

—BRENDA STOKELY,  
trade union & anti-war leader,  
New York City

“Rosa Parks is great not because of the powerful movement that sprung from her single act of courage. She is great because she was an ordinary woman who’d had enough. She was not a career activist. She was not an ambitious politician. She was just a Black woman who decided that she answered to a power higher than white law and contempt, and that she had freedoms that were not dependent upon white permission and disposition. She signifies a powerful truth: It is the everyday person that will make change. It is the individual among the masses that will galvanize us to work toward freedom. It is the right action of one person that will inspire us for centuries to come. Rosa Parks is my inspiration.”

—NANA SOUL,  
Black Waxx recording artist  
& community activist

These tributes from three respected Black women to Rosa Parks, who passed away Oct. 24 in Detroit at the age of 92, reflect the deep gratitude that millions of people had for this former Black seamstress who created

the spark of hope amongst the African American masses in the South on Dec. 1, 1955. On that day, Rosa Parks said “enough is enough” when she refused to go to the back of a segregated bus in Montgomery, Ala.

This act was not just a whim on Parks’ part. It reflected a conscious decision by the NAACP, of which Parks was a member, to challenge the entire system of racist laws in the city and state.

After Parks’ arrest, the historic Montgomery bus boycott that began on Dec. 5 propelled 40,000 Black people, most of them poor and bus riders, into a powerful movement for social change. Dr. Martin Luther King, then a young pastor in Montgomery, rose to prominence as the main spokesperson during the boycott, and eventually the leader of the civil rights movement.

No amount of racist repression or intimidation could defeat the organized Black masses in this effort.

Parks’ action, along with the defeat of bus segregation in Montgomery, created the

momentum needed to challenge legal segregation in the Deep South, which had kept Black people in semi-slavery conditions in the aftermath of the Civil War. For instance, on Feb. 1, 1960, just a handful of Black college students began sit-ins at segregated lunch counters at Woolworth’s department stores in Greensboro, N.C. By a few months later, thousands of Black students were organizing similar sit-ins at lunch counters throughout the South, which eventually defeated the racist segregation laws. These sit-ins helped to launch the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee, or SNCC.

What is the legacy of Rosa Parks? It is a legacy of struggle. But that legacy is not just to review the past for nostalgia’s sake. More important, it is to take the lessons of the past and apply them to today’s struggles.

Hurricane Katrina and the criminal neglect of the government exposed the ugly truth that social conditions for Black people - especially in the Deep South - have not changed fundamentally since 1955. The

struggle for the right to return to the Gulf Coast by displaced African Americans has sown the seeds of a united front of Black activists who are organizing for a caravan march of Katrina survivors from Jackson, Miss., to New Orleans on Dec. 10.

On Dec. 1—the 50th anniversary of Rosa Parks’ blow against racist segregation—community, labor, anti-war and other social forces will be remembering this significant anniversary with a nationwide day of absence and protest against racism, war and poverty. In New York on Oct. 27, City Councilperson Charles Barron will host a news conference to announce that he will introduce a resolution declaring Dec. 1 “Rosa Parks Day” in New York.

The resolution will call for employers to allow workers to leave work and for students to leave classes on Dec. 1 to participate in a march and rally on Wall Street in protest of the war makers. Student organizers will be organizing walk-outs from their schools in honor of the struggle-oriented legacy of Rosa Parks. □



## A National Day of Absence

### December 1 The 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of ROSA PARKS’ Arrest

## Against Poverty, Racism & WAR

### No School – No Work – No Shopping Marches & rallies in cities across the country

- Bring the troops home now
- Justice for Katrina evacuees
- Jobs at a living wage
- Military recruiters out of our schools
- Cut the war budget – not healthcare, education & housing

To find out what’s being planned in your area or to help plan a December 1 activity contact: [Troopsoutnow.org](http://Troopsoutnow.org) or call 212 633-6646. You can endorse online, or email your endorsement to [actioncenter@action-mail.org](mailto:actioncenter@action-mail.org)

**Rosa Parks Anniversary Nationwide Day Of Absence And Protest initiators.** Over 1000 groups and leaders including: Troops Out Now Coalition; Million Worker March Movement; Black Workers for Justice; Teamsters National Black Caucus; Michigan Emergency Comte. Against War & Injustice; New York Labor Against The War; Baltimore NAACP; Ramsey Clark; Rev. Herbert Daughtery, Presiding Minister House of Lords Church; Rev. Dr. Kwame O. Abayomi; Trent Willis, Pres. ILWU Local 10; Charles Barron, NYC Council; Guyanese-American Workers United; Chuck Turner, Boston City Council District 7; Minister Don Muhammad, NOI Mosque No 11; Consuela Lee, Montgomery Bus Boycott Participant & Jazz Musician & Composer; Harlem Tenants Union; East Bay Homeless Union, Oakland; Code Pink, Bremerton, WA; Artist & Activist United for Peace; Louisiana Peace Action Community; Richmond Action Center; Virginia Anti-War Network; Orlean Area Coalition for Peace & Justice; SBA Farms Anti War Collective, Winnie, TX; So. Jersey Coalition for Peace & Justice; N.E. Ohio Antiwar Coalition; Minneapolis Anti-war Comite.; Peace & Justice Advocate, Methodist Fed. For Social Action; Des Moines; Latinos For Peace, Concord, CA; South Miss. United for Peace Stonewall Warriors; St. Pete for Peace, St. Petersburg, FL; Queers for Peace & Justice; High County Peace & Justice; United Actors for Peace, Great Barrington; Vietnam Veterans Against The War, Denver; Voices Of Peace, Battle Creek, MI; We Are Michigan, Traverse City, MI; New College Alliance for Peace; Topanga Peace Alliance & Progressive Democrats of the Santa Monica; F.I.S.T. Fight Imperialism Stand Together; Steven Funk, GI resister; Elena Everett, Chair NC Green Party; Colo. Communities for Peace & Justice; Episcopal Peace Fellowship; Steve Gillis, Pres., USWA Lo. 8751 Boston School Bus Drivers; Father Luis Barrios, Pastors For Peace; MLK Jr. Bolivarian Circle; Mumia Abu-Jamal; Abayomi Azikiwe, Editor Pan-African News Wire; Al-Awda; BAYAN; Puerto Rican Alliance of LA; Arab American Civic Organization; Asia Pacific Action; Philippine U.S. Solidarity Org.; Seattle; Action Center for Justice, Charlotte, NC; Arise for Social Justice, Springfield, MA; NY Committee to Free the Cuban 5; United American Indians of New England; Haiti Support Network; Andre Powell, AFSCME 112 Dele. CLC Balto.; Puerto Rican Alliance of LA; Fanmi Lavalas; Eugene Craig, Steward SEIU Lo. 715 San Jose; Crockett Peace & Justice Coalition, Crockett, TX; Jane Franklin, Historian, Montclair, NJ; Susan E. Davis, Delegate, Book Div. Co-chair NWU Lo. 1981; Dave Sole, Pres., UAW Lo. 2334, Detroit; MI; Michaelann Bewseeq, Pres., Arise for Social Justice, Springfield; Jerome Bibuld, Hat City Independent Media Center; Danbury, CT; Abayomi Azikiwe, Editor Pan-African News Wire; Eugene Craig, Steward SEIU Lo. 715 San Jose; Capricorn Rising, LA, CA; Comm. to Defend The Somerville 5, MA; East Bay Coalition to Support Self-Rule for Iraqis; Center for Alternative & Responsible Education, Lafayette, CO; Blauvelt Dominican Sisters Ministry of Social Justice, New Rochelle, NY; Center For a Livable World, Darien, NY; Lost Colony, Mocksville, NC; Minjok-Tongshin (Korean-American Internet Daily), LA, CA; Power Speaks, Baltimore; Free People’s Movement, NY, NY; Metrovoice Youth Entrepreneurs Program, Inc., Washington, DC; October 22nd Coalition to Stop Police Brutality, LA, CA; Lesbians for a Better America (LBA), Phila., PA; North Fork People Of Conscience, Southold, NY; North Shore No to Draft, Stoneham, MA; Pattern Interrupt, Mission Hills, CA; Pax Christi, St. Peter’s College, Jersey City, NJ; Peace Presence, Grand Rapids, MI; Radio Free Maine, Augusta, ME; Religious of the Sacred Heart Of Mary, Monterey Park, CA; Freedom Socialist Party; Full Circle Studios, Chapel Hill, NC; The Garden of Radical Presence, Santa Fe, NM; IndylragAction, Concord, CA; IWLU 465, Bonfield, IL; Politicim’ With The Sisters, Boston, MA; Atlantic Institute of Applied Psychophysiology, St Simons Island, GA; Wolf Enterprises Human Rights Advocacy, Whitefish, MT; Judy Greenspan, Bld Mbr, CA Prison Focus; San Francisco, CA; Larry Hales, Denver IAC, Denver; Michael Letwin, Frmr Pres., UAW Lo. 2325\*, Co-convenor, NYC; All Peoples Congress, Balti., MD; Aztlan Media Kollektive, East LA CA; Buffalo/WNY Int’l Action Center; Christians Against Murder & Exploitation, Lacey, WA; Citizens Initiative Omega, Manzell, Germany Deist Gamse, San Diego, CA; Denver IAC, Denver, CO; DestroyIndustry, Raleigh, NC; Disabled Rights Alliance, Victoria, BC, Canada The Great Peace March For Global Nuclear Disarmament 1986, Fredonia, NY; Hitec Aztec, Concord, CA; The Humanistic Party, Bronx, NY; Independent Consulting Services, Glendora, CA; Multicellular Organism, Kent, OH; NPLA-New Patriot Liberation Assoc., Whitestone, NY; Old Hippies Sharing Higher Intellect & Thought, Norfork, AR; Peoples Video Network; Planetary Crisis Action Group(reforming), Taos, NM; Public Intellectuals for Social & Spare Change, NNY; Queertoday.com, Boston, MA; Russian River Times, Monte Rio, CA; Spiritbody Resources Healing Center, Kennett Square, PA; Texas Death Penalty Abolition Mvmt., Houston, TX; Mountains, Woodland Hills, CA TPA / PDSMM, Woodland Hills, CA; Troops Out Now, Gainesville, FL; Two-edged Sword Incorp., Newman, GA; United American Indians of New England; UP (United Progressives) for Democracy, Bearsville, NY; W.Mass.Troops Out Now; Windy Hill Apple Farm, Newark, OH; Women’s Fightback Network, Boston, MA; YCL Stanislaus USA, Turlock, CA; Yes You Can Cable Show, LA, CA; Nadin Abbott, Pres., Deist Gamse, San Diego, CA; Fatemeh Abdollatzadeh, Prof., Central Conn. State U., New Britain, CT; Scott Ainslie, CEO, Cattail Music, Ltd., Brattleboro, VT; Sydney Akerstein, Arroyo Grande, CA; Melissa Alexander, High Point, NC; Sean Alexandre, Bishop, CA; Ellen Allen, Melrose, FL; Mazen Alimoukhdad, Pres., Arab American Of Anaheim, Anaheim, CA; Sydney Alonso, Norwich, VT; Patricia Altomare, Pelham, NH; Jon Anderholm, Retired Teacher, United Educators of San Francisco; Sue Anderson, Pagosa Springs, CO; Franki Andrews, Media Workers, MITF, Santa Rosa, CA; Erica Anthony-Benavides, San Antonio, TX; Blair Anundson, Campus Organizer, Washington, Olympia, WA; Louis J. Arcese Jr., Chairperson, Center for a Livable World, Darien, NY; Mike Arraji, San Francisco, CA; Rose Ashbach, student, Arcata, CA; Brooke Atkinson, St Louis, MO; Azmi & Salwa Audeh, Retired, Boulder, CO; Russ Austin, Denver; Lynn Azar, Bonny Doon, CA; Barbara Back,

## CHICAGO

# Multinational coalition protests anti-immigrant Minutemen

By Eric Struch  
Chicago

As the African-American nation and its allies rose to their feet in Washington, D.C., on Oct. 15 in the biggest display of unity in a decade, the racist Minutemen were meeting behind closed doors in Arlington Heights, a suburb of Chicago. These fascist cowards needed the protection of more than 100 heavily armed cops in body armor to continue their "fundraising and organizing" meeting at the Christian Liberty Academy campus, in the face of determined opposition from united immigrant communities from Chicago.

This attempt by the fascists to organize support for anti-immigrant racist violence was met by a peaceful demonstration of more than 300 people, organized and led by the Coalition of African, Asian,

European and Latino immigrants of Illinois (CAAELII). CAAELII mobilized its allies in the Cambodian, Korean, Indian, Pakistani, Mexican and Latin American communities, filling eight buses with demonstrators. They ranged in age from high school students to the elderly, many of whom were undocumented. Many were attending this demonstration at great risk to themselves and their families, due to their legal status. The demonstration also drew several left organizations and anarchists.

More than 100 riot cops, some with rifles, heavy wooden batons and Plexiglas shields, responded violently to the peaceful demonstrators, despite the obvious threat of Minutemen dressed in camouflage uniforms on the roof of the Academy, who might well have been armed. The police were there to protect the fascists,

not the demonstrators.

The Minutemen have demonstrated their capacity for violence and have made statements condoning the use of violence. The presence of what may well have been Minutemen snipers on the roof posed a clear danger to the demonstrators below, but the cops did nothing to protect the people against this very real threat.

The cops assaulted Sabah Khan, an activist from the Chicago neighborhood of Albany Park, before arresting him. Penny Brown, a World Can't Wait organizer, and Linda Flores, a writer for Revolution newspaper, were themselves arrested while attempting to intervene on behalf of Khan to prevent her arrest. Flores was charged with resisting arrest and battery. Brown was charged with two counts of battery to a police officer.

In addition to the Arlington Heights

Police Department, cops from Barrington Hills, Des Plaines, Franklin Park, Gurnee, Lake Forest, Mt. Prospect, Palatine, Round Lake Beach and Skokie were mobilized in an attempt to intimidate the demonstrators.

Those in the cross-hairs of militant racists like the Minutemen cannot expect the careerist politicians of the Democratic Party to help. Success in the struggle against the Minutemen and their friends in the Democratic and Republican parties can only come through more mobilizations of this type and more unity, under the leadership of the communities that the Minutemen target.

Nor will any protection come from the police, defined by Frederick Engels as the "special bodies of armed men and women" who make up the repressive arm of the capitalist state. They certainly showed it in Arlington Heights. □

## Teachers for a Just Contract

By G. Dunkel  
New York

Several independent organizations of teachers are organizing a "vote no" campaign against the contract negotiated by the United Federation of Teachers with the New York City Department of Education. Over 200 teachers demonstrated outside the UFT headquarters on Oct. 21 urging the "no" vote.

The UFT is the largest local in the American Federation of Teachers and represents over 100,000 teachers and paraprofessionals employed by the DoE.

Teachers for a Just Contract and the Independent Community of Educators-

UFT organized the protest.

The voting, conducted by the American Arbitration Association, started in the schools on Oct. 24; the result will be announced on Nov. 3.

The proposed contract sounds good: a 15 percent raise over four years, compared to just 5.17 percent for the city's largest union, District Council 37 of AFSCME. But the raises are back-loaded. For the first six months covered by the contract, members will get no raise. The last raise of 3.25 percent will be on Oct. 1, 2006, just 12 days before the contract expires.

What bothers teachers the most is that these raises really amount to payments for a significant amount of increased work

time. Schools are going to be open for a new 37-minute period on Monday through Thursday; its exact purpose is unclear.

New teachers, who are struggling to learn their trade and create lesson plans, are worried that this new period will mean a new class, with more lesson plans, and that their supervisors will observe them in this class.

Many other teachers are angry that they will have to return from their summer vacations two days early, before Labor Day, to do whatever the DoE wants them to do.

The union also gave up grievance rights and seniority rights—which are very important when schools are closed. It



WW PHOTO: G. DUNKEL

Oct. 21 protest at UFT headquarters.

accepted harsher disciplinary rules and allowed the principals to assign teachers to monitor bathrooms and lunchrooms.

As one teacher put it, "Why do I need a master's degree to be a potty monitor?"

Members of the UFT voted down a contract in 1995. There is a good chance they will vote this one down, too. □

## GM cries poverty to cut benefits

Continued from page 1

President Richard Shoemaker, cooperated with GM's demands and reopened the contract. Out of fear and weakness, they agreed to the tentative settlement. They said in a joint statement that the decision was reached after "in-depth analysis of GM's financial situation and intense discussions with GM."

What financial situation? GM had announced earlier that it would distribute \$2 billion this year to its investors. But on March 16 of this year, the company announced that instead it had a \$2 billion deficit—a \$4 billion discrepancy.

The company has plenty of cash flow—otherwise it would have threatened the union with bankruptcy. It plans to sell GMAC, its money-making financial arm. That will bring in billions.

This manipulation of the statistics should have sent up the red flag to the UAW that the books were cooked. This is nothing new for Wall Street and Corporate America's wheelers and dealers.

The top bond agencies knew what to do to protect investors. Standard & Poor's cut the credit ratings of both GM and Ford to junk status, sending its borrowing costs through the roof.

The UAW leaders should have protected their members. Instead they bought into GM's slick-talking cries of "we're all one big family in trouble." GM posted a loss of \$1.63 billion for the third quarter. So the union leaders gave them over \$1 bil-

lion in concessions at the expense of active members and retirees.

It didn't have to be. They could have exposed the lies of GM. They could have said no and mobilized the retirees, their families and communities, along with the active members, to plan a fightback strategy. The existing contract was in force until 2007. The givebacks in health-care benefits and cost-of-living raises are a cut in real wages.

UAW President Ron Gettelfinger and VP Shoemaker are playing it cagey. No date has been announced for the members to ratify the tentative agreement. They want to sell it to the regional and local presidents.

### The economy worsens

In September, inflation rose to its highest monthly rate in more than 25 years. It reflected the sky-rocketing costs of gasoline and natural gas after Hurricane Katrina hit New Orleans and the Gulf Coast. According to a Labor Department report, the overall consumer price index surged 1.2 percent last month, the highest monthly rate increase since March 1980. Another report from the same agency showed that average weekly earnings for about 80 percent of the nation's labor force—people in manufacturing or non-supervisory jobs—fell 1.2 percent from August to September, when adjusted for inflation.

Unemployment among workers of color

and youth, primarily Black, is already at an alarming level. The markets are glutted from overproduction. Workers, the poor and oppressed nationalities can't buy the goods and services they produce.

Add to this the government's racist, criminal neglect of the working poor, unemployed and overwhelmingly Black population in New Orleans and the Gulf Coast.

All these widespread attacks should have been a wakeup call for the UAW leaders, the AFL-CIO and the Change to Win Federation, which split from the AFL-CIO. The message: there is a war going on, not only in Iraq and Afghanistan but against the workers, organized and unorganized, and the oppressed nationalities in this country. Business as usual is no longer an option.

The U.S. industrial empire is shrinking. The auto Big Three—GM, Ford and Daimler Chrysler—are losing their share of the world market. They have plans to reduce benefits, close plants and lay off thousands of workers.

Delphi, the global giant auto parts dealer spun off by GM in 1999, is in bankruptcy and leading the anti-union chorus. At great cost to millions of industrial workers, the auto giants are in a bitter struggle to survive.

GM, which only two years ago employed around 400,000 workers, will soon be down to 84,000. It plans to lay off 25,000 members in the future.

The magnitude of the fallout is incalculable, especially for workers in industries that are an integral part of the auto industry: steel, glass, chemicals, aluminum, rubber, paint and a substantial section of the service-oriented work force, which is linked to the industrial workers in a myriad of ways.

The crisis in the auto industry is following in the footsteps of bankruptcies in airlines and steel and, before that, in textiles and apparel. It is a capitalist crisis gathering momentum.

Racism and national oppression are on the rise. The strategy of class war rather than class collaboration will move to center stage.

Katrina, Iraq and Afghanistan are indivisible in presenting the urgency to build anti-imperialist, anti-racist unity. These catastrophes have laid bare both the problems and the perspective to build a united front.

This united front will emerge from the disunity of the past. There is the beginning of movement from below, from the more militant and class-conscious sectors of the workers. Leaders of the most oppressed nationalities will be in the forefront of this movement. The struggle in solidarity with the poor and nationally oppressed people of New Orleans and the Gulf Coast is key and primary. A victory for their cause will confirm the birth of a united front movement. □

## Blow to campus workers

# Mass. governor vetoes \$42M in pay raises

By Bryan G. Pfeifer  
Boston

As cost-of-living expenses skyrocket, especially in housing, Massachusetts Republican Gov. Mitt Romney has leveled yet another vicious assault on union workers at the state's 28 public colleges and universities.

On Oct. 5 Romney vetoed about \$42.2 million in retroactive raises for thousands of workers, including unionized graduate student-workers, many of whom live at or below the federal poverty level.

Romney, a multimillionaire venture capitalist who recently announced the state has hundreds of millions of dollars in a "rainy-day fund," is fond of blithely telling workers and the oppressed that they need to make more "sacrifices." At a press conference last summer a media worker forced Romney to admit he didn't know the cost of the subway fare in Boston.

Over the past year Romney has been touring the country—recently in Southern states—to gather support and curry favor with various right-wing forces for a possible 2008 presidential run. During this time he has attacked Muslims repeatedly, calling them "terrorists" and calling for the wiretapping of mosques. He has attacked same-sex marriage, abortion, pensions, the disabled, welfare recipients and more.

Romney brags fondly of "improving government efficiency" in Massachusetts, something known to workers as privatization and/or deregulation. He is a firm supporter of the U.S. war on Iraq and works closely with the Department of Homeland Security and other repressive local, state and national agencies in Massachusetts to terrorize primarily immigrants and those of Middle Eastern descent.

### Workers want their money now!

A \$131 million spending bill passed Sept. 21 by the Massachusetts legislature had included money for the pay raises. Romney approved \$88.6 million but cut the rest because he said he doesn't believe in "giving" retroactive raises. This despite the fact that all the campus unions to receive these raises have successfully agreed to contracts with their respective college administrations. The

raises are part of numerous legally negotiated and binding contracts.

Those affected include 4,500 union members at the University of Massachusetts at Amherst. Romney vetoed \$30.27 million of their retroactive raises for the fiscal year July 2002 to July 2003. Romney vetoed another \$11.91 million in retroactive raises for the same time period for administrators and support staffers at state and community colleges.

Unions at public campuses in Massachusetts bargain separate contracts with each campus administration. The contracts are then passed on to the governor's office for consultation. When the legislature votes for the necessary funding, the governor historically has approved the contracts.

Traditionally, once the legislature allocated funds for the contracts, the governor signed off on them with minimal problems. But former Acting Governor Jane Swift, a Democrat, set in motion the governor's office veto activity when, in July 2002, citing a "fiscal crisis," she vetoed the pay raises of all campus workers, even though in 2001 she had signed off on the contracts. Swift is believed to be the first Massachusetts governor to veto contract funding for campus workers. Romney is continuing this trend.

It will now take a two-thirds vote in

each of the state's legislative branches to override Romney's new veto. The legislature early this year approved other retroactive raises for a different time period. Romney vetoed them, too. But legislators, under mass rank-and-file and labor/community pressure, unanimously voted to override that veto.

Some of this pressure included mass actions such as protests at the statehouse and on various campuses, letter-writing /e-mail campaigns, building alliances with progressive community and campus-based organizations, work-to-rule days, and other bold and creative actions.

These and many more protest actions will increase until all union members receive what is rightfully theirs, according to the 2,500-member Graduate Employee Organization-UAW at UMass Amherst, a leading force in this struggle.

GEO encourages supporters to call Romney's office "to express outrage and disappointment that he continues to blatantly ignore the state's legal obligation to fund collective bargaining agreements with state workers." Call Romney's office at (617) 725-4005 or fax (617) 727-9725.

For more information, contact GEO at (413) 545-0705 or see [www.geouaw.org](http://www.geouaw.org).

*Pfeifer is a 2005 Labor Studies graduate of the University of Massachusetts-Amherst.*

From Mumia Abu-Jamal on death row

## The Empire's attack on Ojeda-Rios & Independence



The Sept. 23 attack and armed assault on Puerto Rican nationalist Filiberto Ojeda Rios left the family and his island without his proud and noble presence, but it did not achieve its real desired objective.

The armed agents of Empire attacked the home and family of the 72-year old revolutionary, shot him, and left him to bleed to death for hours in his home in Hormigueros in the island's mountainous regions.

Dr. Hector Pesquera, president of the Hostosiano independence movement, nailed it when he said of the heavily-armed FBI assault, "They did not come to arrest Filiberto Ojeda, they came to kill him."

Nor was it mere coincidence that the date the FBI chose to raid the Ojeda home was the island's day of national historical significance. Sept. 23 was the 107th anniversary of "El Grito de Lares," when thousands of Puerto Ricans annually mark a day of resistance against the Spanish colonizers.

Today, it remains a colony of the Americans.

By the slaughter of Filiberto Ojeda Rios, the issue of independence has arisen like a flame within the hearts of Puerto Ricans.

When word arrived of his assassination, I flashed almost immediately back to Dec. 4, 1969, when Fred Hampton, Deputy Minister of Defense of the Black Panther Party chapter in Illinois, and Peoria's Black Panther Capt. Mark Clark were assassinated in their home in Chicago.

The FBI was behind those murders also. And just like that assassination, the government reacted to their political assassinations with lies.

The objective of the Empire was to extinguish the fires of freedom and independence from the heart of the nation. If reaction to Ojeda's murder is any indication, then they have failed miserably.

There are events in the life of a people that mark them. That spark them. That move their minds and hearts from acquiescence to resistance.

This may prove just such a moment.

Dylcia Pagan, former Puerto Rican political prisoner, wrote, within hours of the slaughter:

"What occurred was a political assassination of a Puerto Rican warrior orchestrated by a U.S. FBI Federal Task Force. Even the municipality mayor Pedro Garcia in a radio interview stated that this occurrence was not a coincidence. The initial strategic firing by the FBI took place at 3:00 pm; at 6:00 to 6:30 pm another follow-up firing occurred. The president of the Utier Union, Roberto Santos, that represents the electrical workers of Puerto Rico, called a major radio station to inform the Puerto Rican people that he had been informed by the FBI that all electrical power to the municipality of Hormigueros would be cut off. It took two days for all of us to know their justification which was that they needed to utilize their [infra]-red equipment for security measures. Hormigueros has been under federal seizure for the last four days. All of the Puerto Rican press has not been allowed to bring their cameras into Filiberto's residence ..."

Pagan adds: "In 1898 El Grito de Lares was a fight against Spanish colonialism. Today in 2005 a new Grito de Lares emerges against U.S. colonial rule over our nation, Puerto Rico."

The spirit that led to the assassination of Filiberto Ojeda Rios is precisely the spirit that led to the brutal and illegal invasion and occupation in Iraq. It is capitalism run wild. It is imperialism in its nakedness.

It is the spirit that wishes to crush all expressions of human freedom, while doing so in the name of "Freedom!"

It is state terrorism, pure and simple, against the very idea of freedom and true independence.

There is only one real response that can bring change.

Broad, deep mobilization of the people against this neoliberal nightmare.

Resistance. Resistance. And More Resistance! □

## FREE LEONARD PELTIER!



WW PHOTO: ANNE PRUDEN

In New York on Oct. 23, the Jericho Movement sponsored a meeting about the struggle to free Native political prisoner Leonard Peltier. The program featured Bob Robideau, at left, an international spokesperson for Peltier and fellow American Indian Movement warrior. Next week's Workers World will have fuller coverage of this important event.

—Sara Catalinotto

## Medicaid cuts spell death for the poor

Continued from page 1

serves over 50 million low-income people and is jointly financed by the state and federal governments.

### Mandatory health care

In another attack on the many poor living in this country who cannot afford health care—and a boost to the profiteering health care industry—a bill is being written by Massachusetts House lawmakers that would make it mandatory for individuals to purchase health care. According to the Boston Globe, "lawmakers are still settling the details" of this bill—for instance, some politicians say they would like to exclude lower-income people from the requirement, while others, like Massachusetts Gov. Mitt Romney, want to apply the requirement for

everyone, and punish those who can't get insurance with tax penalties and even garnishment of their wages.

Lastly, an article in the Oct. 26 Wall Street Journal tells that both Senate and House Republicans are moving forward with bills that would cut \$39 billion and \$50 billion, respectively, from health and social service programs. House Repub-

licans, according to the Times, cite the cost of hurricane relief as the need to cut the budget, thus trying to pit one group of poor people against another.

At the time of this writing, costofwar.com calculates the cost of the Iraq war at \$203.6 billion, which is enough to provide a year's health insurance for almost 122 million children. □

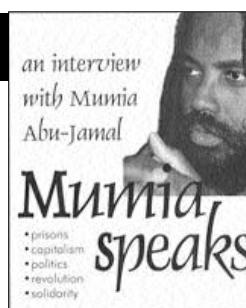
To hear Monica Moorehead's recent interview with Mumia Abu-Jamal go to [www.millions4mumia.org](http://www.millions4mumia.org)

### An interview with Mumia Abu-Jamal from death row

Columns by the Black Journalist on prisons, capitalism, politics, revolution and solidarity. Additional essays on the prison-industrial complex by Monica Moorehead, Larry Holmes & Teresa Gutierrez.

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## LIBERATION, WAR &amp; LABOR

## Black leaders link issues to

Special to Workers World  
New York City

On Oct. 22 in New York, the Workers World newspaper staff hosted an important forum called "Katrina: A Challenge for the Movement: Forging a united front between the Black liberation, workers' and anti-imperialist struggles." The forum attracted an overflowing multinational crowd of progressives and activists from New York, Philadelphia, Washington, D.C., Boston and other areas.

The panel featured prominent African-American representatives based in New York, Raleigh and New Orleans. These leaders talked about the issues of the day from anti-racist, pro-labor, pro-community and anti-war perspectives. The following are excerpts from each of the speakers' presentations. Go to [www.workers.org/2005/us/oct22\\_podcast/](http://www.workers.org/2005/us/oct22_podcast/) to hear and see the talks in their entirety.

**MONICA MOOREHEAD**,  
*Workers World newspaper staff*

Workers World newspaper is hosting this forum because our weekly newspaper is very proud to have covered the ideas and struggles of these speakers, especially those with the Million Worker March Movement. Having these leaders contribute to our newspaper has made our paper so much stronger in helping to provide political clarity to the movement and broader sectors of people in general.

We hope that this forum will play an important role in showing why it is critical to build this type of unity, especially in light of the Katrina disaster, which tore away any doubt that may have lingered that racism and poverty do exist inside the largest imperialist country. We hope that this forum will help bring a greater understanding of the relationship between unity and solidarity, and of the pivotal, strategic and genuine role that Black leadership must have when we talk about national liberation, fighting against war and for workers' rights. □



**SALADIN MUHAMMAD**, *chairperson, Black Workers for Justice in Raleigh, N.C.; Southern Region Coordinator of the Million Worker March Movement*

The U.S. government has become much more repressive since 9/11. The Black working class, therefore, does not feel strengthened by our membership in the trade union movement unless we are also organized as part of an African American liberation movement which has historically been the catalyst for a broader democratic and anti-imperialist movement. The impact of this working-class crisis, particularly the failure of the trade unions as its most organized sector to defend the most oppressed and exploited sectors, has hastened the need and consciousness for a national Black united front.

The Millions More Movement demonstration that was organized by a national Black united front shows that the African American liberation movement is capable of building and anchoring a broad peoples' front against U.S. imperialism. The Black working class must become an organized sector of the national Black united front as it continues to develop leadership in a worker's fight-back movement that seeks to push forward and radically transform the U.S. trade union and workers' movement. The Million Worker March Movement was the only conscious and persistent effort to agitate for organized labor's participation in the Millions More Movement. □



**NELLIE BAILEY**, *Harlem Tenants Council; Troops Out Now Coalition*

While the ruling class feasts on the misery of the poor and the have nots, we must not despair, because the conditions created in the wake of Katrina will create an opportunity for the left that has never existed before. We have activists from the South, we have people from the North, we have people calling for a regional and national plan to deal with what is happening with Blacks in New Orleans as a microcosm of what is happening with poor people throughout the nation. Let us seize this moment to forge a united political front of Blacks, of whites, of workers, of students. Now is the time.



No matter how you feel about the Nation of Islam or the Million More Movement, 1 million people came to Washington, D.C. You cannot ignore that. You can not diminish that. What are we going to do as the left to forge an agenda within that movement to build a working-class struggle? □



**MALCOLM SUBER**, *Katrina survivor from New Orleans; People's Hurricane Relief Fund*

I have been in New Orleans for 27 years, leading many, many struggles of the working-class, oppressed African American nation there. I compare what happened to us in New Orleans to what happened to my ancestors when we were kidnapped and stolen from Africa. The method and means that they got us out was like us on the auction block once again. Men and women, mothers and children, sisters and brothers were split up. When you got on the bus, you didn't know where you were going. They had officers with guns and soldiers with guns on the bus. You couldn't get off of the bus.

Many of us who have been active in New Orleans decided to pull together as a united front all of those who had been active in fighting on behalf of the working class and poor people of New Orleans. And we had a meeting a week after the storm, in Baton Rouge, where we began

to talk about the necessity of building a movement with supporters around the country to allow our people to get back on their feet and to return home. We have to build an action to take on the inaction of the government, which has exposed itself. □

## Gov't inaction deepens suffering for Katrina survivors

By David Hoskins

The U.S. government is pulling back on its promise to provide relief for the survivors of Hurricane Katrina.

The absence of political will combined with excessive red tape has denied most hurricane survivors the opportunity to take advantage of the limited relief plans that have been belatedly implemented.

The Bush administration is reported to be reducing its spending request for new Hurricane Katrina relief to a meager \$20 billion. (Wall Street Journal, Oct. 19) Republican leaders assert that this amount is adequate to address future needs.

Congress has recently removed a forgiveness clause that allowed state and local governments applying for funds to opt out of repaying loans originating with the federal Community Disaster Loan program. (Wall Street Journal, Oct. 18)

This has left localities such as St. Bernard Parish, on the edge of New Orleans and which now has a much-reduced tax base, hesitant to apply for loans it knows it cannot repay.

Meanwhile, hundreds of thousands of families have still not been placed in the trailers that the government promised as temporary housing for those left homeless by the hurricane.

Now it appears that the provision of temporary housing has come at a cost to poor and working people who live on the cheap land the government has identified as necessary for locating the emergency trailers.

Reports from New Orleans indicate that government dealings with landowners in Jefferson Parish have provided an incentive for the eviction of current tenants to free up space. (NOLA.com)

Governor Kathleen Blanco's stay of

evictions expired Oct. 25, exacerbating the problem even further.

Lost in all the noise around budget maneuvering are the personal stories of families who are suffering from government inaction in the wake of Katrina.

Antoinette Landry and her family are among those being evicted from trailer parks in East Jefferson, as part of the government program designed to divide the poor as a prerequisite for providing emergency housing to hurricane survivors.

In response to the trailer park's decision to evict her along with her mother and two children, Landry expressed what many evicted tenants must have felt when she said, "We were their bread and butter for years. Now we're nothing."

This sentiment is echoed in the sometimes haunted faces of survivors who struggled daily and played by the only rules they were given.

These are the survivors who lived just to see the U.S. government—which depends on the exploitation of their labor for its existence—turn its back on them during their neediest hour.

These are the families left behind while the Senate debates whether or not to give itself a 1.9 percent cost-of-living raise.

They are the exact workers whom Congress and the president are attempting to prevent from receiving a modest increase in the minimum wage from \$5.15 to \$7.25 an hour.

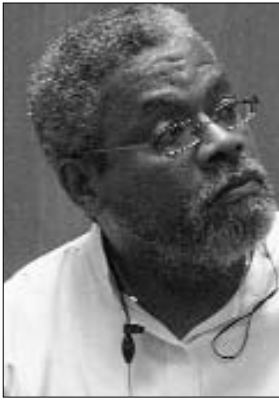
And now this very same government is attempting to leave them with nothing.

If any event in modern times has stripped so-called democratic capitalism of its façade of compassion and justice, it is the brazen manner in which the U.S. government has launched its attack on those fortunate enough to have survived the catastrophe of New Orleans. □

# building united front

**CHRIS SILVERA**, *Million Worker March Movement Eastern Region Co-coordinator; President, Teamsters National Black Caucus*

I believe that with the Millions More Movement, Million Worker March Movement and the Million Woman March, that we need to build on that. We should be having these every six months. You have to render the government inoperable. If on Monday morning, there were 5 million people in Washington, D.C., that locked it down who said nobody is leaving until George leaves, George would have to



go—because the capitalists would demand that he leave, because business has to go on.

How do we ensure that people come back to their places, because there is also culture in New Orleans. If you aren't careful, New Orleans will become a museum where we heard about jazz instead of hearing jazz and all the influences of African people.

We don't need a nuclear bomb. We don't need a dirty bomb. We simply need to organize the people. I believe in the people. I believe that people should have the opportunity to live with dignity, to retire with dignity. □

**LARRY HOLMES**, *Workers World Party, Troops Out Now Coalition*

We don't want to leave out the Latin@s, the Arabs, the Palestinians, all of the people from the Middle East and Asia, Native people—all who must come together because they have a common enemy in their struggle for liberation, and that is imperialism. The Gulf Coast has created an opportunity to revive, or at least strengthen in reaction to this development, the Black liberation movement. A new challenge for other sectors is to show that they understand that here is the time that you can solidarize yourself with the struggle of Black people for self-determination.

The struggle in the Gulf is a struggle for Black power. We must not let the struggle in the Gulf be secondary, be isolated because the bourgeoisie is literally trying to drown it. It is for us to make sure that the militant Black trade unionists and militant Black revolutionary communists who are also nationalists, and I maintain that there is no contradiction—that they are not isolated. We can support the front but we must not allow the most advanced elements to be isolated or marginalized. □

Youth have a special role to play in that movement. We face special attacks as well. They could call Black youth "looters" in New Orleans, but they sure did try to recruit them to the military once they got to the Houston Astrodome. I encourage everyone here to get involved in carrying today's dialogue forward and building the movement. □



**BRENDA STOKELY**, *Million Worker March Movement Eastern Region Co-coordinator; Co-convenor, New York City Labor Against War; Troops Out Now Coalition*

Workers World has presented all of us a critical opportunity to address a lot of questions that will not be addressed at the forum today. We will have to have an ongoing discussion. I started out being involved in the national liberation struggle and tended towards revolutionary nationalism. Been a worker since I was 14, but not a conscious worker in terms of the labor movement. But at some point in my life, these two struggles converged together. I am an African American woman; I am oppressed here in the United States as part of an oppressed nation and I'm also part of the working class. These two struggles are entwined. I consider myself a Marxist-Leninist revolutionary nationalist.

We must never be misguided that our ultimate aim is to bring down the regime of this country, not only for ourselves but for people internationally. That's what they depend on us to do. If people are in agreement that we are in a prisonhouse of nations, then the question of rebuilding a united front is talking about building principled unity and solidarity based on an anti-imperialist agenda amongst all those nations. □

WW PHOTOS: G. DUNKEL; PVN

**MALIK RAHIM**, *resident of Algiers neighborhood in New Orleans; Common Ground Collective*

New Orleans came very close to being plunged into a race war that was perpetuated by an old way of thinking—a plantation way of thinking that fabricated the demonization of young African American males that are poor. Many were slaughtered and many are wasting away under the most brutal conditions. Over 2,000 African Americans are now incarcerated for looting. Maybe over 100 were killed by either law enforcement or white vigilantes.

We have surrounding parishes like Jefferson Parish, our neighboring parish that received very little damage as far as flooding is concerned, that had empty land that could have been used to house at least half of the people evacuated out of New Orleans. But the only thing they did was build bunkers on every major thoroughfare to make sure that no Black from New Orleans was allowed in that parish. That was the parish of David Duke. That was the same parish that denied Black doctors with medicines from entering Algiers. □



**LEILANI DOWELL**, *Fight Imperialism-Stand Together (FIST) youth group; Workers World newspaper staff*

Dec. 1 grants us another opportunity to build the movement we've been talking about here today. With regards to youth, student walkouts are being organized, some spontaneously. About 100 youth are traveling here from the South to march on Wall Street on Dec. 1 for "educational purposes."



## Fighting national oppression

# Road to anti-war unity

By Fred Goldstein

The most important task of the anti-war movement in this country is to build a united front with the workers and oppressed peoples of the United States. The movement must address national oppression and class exploitation in a serious way if it is to become an effective weapon in the struggle against imperialism, and not restrict itself to being a mere protest movement that assembles periodically.

The working class's problems are mounting on every front: from union busting to health-care cutbacks, pension takebacks, wage cuts, unemployment, declining safety on the job, massive super-exploitation of immigrant workers, cutbacks in education and day care, lack of affordable housing, the gender gap in wages, racism in hiring, etc. Fighting the attacks on the working class must be an integral part of the anti-war movement if it is to represent and mobilize the decisive sectors that can actually stop the war—the working class and the oppressed people of this country.

But in its attention to the class struggle and as a special and decisive part of the

struggle against imperialism, the anti-war movement must pay the closest attention to the question of national oppression in this country. It is particularly important at the moment for the movement to reach out and forge unity around New Orleans and the struggle for the right of return, reconstruction and reparations.

This is the cutting-edge issue of the Black liberation movement today. It must be supported by all progressive and revolutionary forces, not just in word but in deed.

It is an axiom of Marxist class politics that the ruling class's foreign policy is a direct extension of its domestic policy. Put simply, this means that their wars abroad are a continuation of their war at home—the war to enforce exploitation and oppression.

Rarely has this connection been symbolized so dramatically as in New Orleans during the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina. The Black community of New Orleans, 350,000 people or more, was overwhelmingly the victim of the hurricane in that city. And it was victimized primarily through criminal neglect by all levels of government during the crisis, which

caused at least a thousand deaths and incalculable suffering.

### Criminal neglect and occupation

But added to the suffering resulting from criminal neglect—being left stranded on roof-tops, in the Superdome, the Convention Center and elsewhere for five days—came a brutal military/police occupation.

The Louisiana National Guard, part of which is serving in Iraq, was mobilized against the community. The 82nd Airborne, which carried out atrocities against the Iraqi people in Falluja, was sent into New Orleans. Heavily armed Blackwater mercenaries—the same group hired by the Pentagon to guard oil wells and train U.S. troops in Iraq—turned up on the streets of New Orleans to control the Black population.

Together with the police, this combined armed force herded people onto buses and forcibly separated families—children from parents, husbands from wives, relatives from relatives—in a manner many victims said was reminiscent of the days of slavery and the auction block.

People were executed on the spot. Over 2,000 were jailed, allegedly for

"looting," often for taking their only means of survival.

Those 2,000—overwhelmingly Black males—lanquish in jail today.

The armed force of the racist capitalist state came to ensure "law and order" in a situation in which people were starving, dehydrated, sick, injured, worried to death over the whereabouts of their families and loved ones and had lost everything they owned.

### Deliberate plan to disperse Black community

Through the command of the National Guard and the regular army, the Pentagon occupiers of Iraq played a key role in the repression in New Orleans.

It was they who orchestrated the occupation. It was they who sent recruiters into the Houston Astrodome to sign up desperate youths for Iraq in the midst of the disaster.

Most importantly, they helped to execute the planned dispersal of the Black population of New Orleans to cities across the country. It was part of a general plan to seize the opportunity presented by the

*Continued on page 8*

## Hurricane Wilma in Cuba, Florida

# Yet another indictment of capitalism

By Deirdre Griswold

Once again, the great contrast in how authorities responded to a natural disaster has illuminated the social and class differences between the United States and Cuba.

Hurricane Wilma hit Cuba twice. First, as it moved northwest through the Caribbean, it dumped an unprecedented amount of rain on Cuba's western provinces. Then, after it hit Cancun in Mexico and swung toward Florida, it slammed the island's north shore with more rain and high winds that drove huge waves into the capital city of Havana.

The recorded annual rainfall in Pinar del Rio, a fairly dry western province, has never gone above 57 inches before. With Wilma and earlier storms, the province's total rainfall for this year is already at 70 inches.

Huge waves kicked up by Wilma breached Havana's seawall and flooded the city up to four blocks from the waterfront. Residents said the flooding, which in places was three feet deep and inundated basement apartments, was even worse than the 1993 hurricane that was dubbed "the storm of the century." The salt Wilma's waves left behind is expected to cause more damage to Havana's buildings.

Despite all this, not one Cuban life was lost to the storm.

For the first time, the Associated Press put out an unbiased article on the effectiveness of Cuba's emergency preparedness system, which has been recognized by the United Nations and many other countries as probably the best in the world.

Entitled "Wilma Floods Havana but Kills None," the AP report from the Cuban capital appeared on Oct. 26 in the New York Times and several other U.S. newspapers.

### Why no Cubans died

"Part of the country's good fortune," says the article, "could be because Wilma never made landfall here, but many also credit the fact people in Fidel Castro's Cuba are instructed from an early age how to move quickly during a natural disaster."

"The United Nations and other international organizations have long praised Cuba's track record in preserving lives during hurricanes that regularly batter the island. When a tropical storm starts brewing in the Caribbean, a well-oiled hurricane-response machine clicks on in Cuba."

The article describes how everyone on the island is kept informed when a storm nears. "Jose Rubiera, head of Cuba's National Meteorology Institute, starts making television appearances, contributing to his near-celebrity status on the island. If asked on the street, most Cubans can recite the storm's latest coordinates and projected route."

If the storm looks like it is going to hit Cuba, the whole country mobilizes for the evacuation phase.

"In the days before Wilma passed Cuba, about 700,000 people were evacuated in this country of about 11.2 million."

"All the state's resources are mobilized, focused on the same goal: to ensure that no one dies."

"Vehicles are rounded up to provide transport for people in danger areas, and

schools and other government buildings are converted into temporary shelters.

"Citizens serving on civil defense committees—organized by community, by neighborhood, even by block—also go into high gear, ensuring that each shelter is properly stocked with food, water, blankets and other supplies. ...

"By the time the storm hits, the streets are empty, with residents tucked away in locations believed to be safe from whipping winds and drenching rains."

Most of those evacuated—80 percent, according to officials—were taken into their homes by other Cubans.

The AP account continued: "Everyone helps each other here,' Dayami Gonzalez said Tuesday while cleaning up her Havana home after floodwaters that had reached more than 3 feet inside began receding. 'In the United States it seems like there's more egoism, where everyone just worries about themselves.'

"Giraldo Garcia, 64 and retired, blamed the U.S. government for the more than 1,000 Katrina-related deaths in New Orleans and the rest of the Gulf Coast.

"It's like those in power don't think about anything but war,' Garcia said. 'It was so painful to see innocent people whose lives could have been saved.' Garcia praised his own country's system. ... 'If there's any risk to human lives, I know that the government won't leave us to lady luck.'"

Not mentioned in this article is that the Cubans also don't have to worry about what will happen to their jobs, or how they will get health care if needed. In socialist Cuba, economic security, education and health are guaranteed rights of

all the people.

It seems to have taken the terrible disaster on the Gulf Coast—where racism, poverty and the protect-property-first attitude of the authorities led to such horrific levels of death and suffering—to force such a truthful article about Cuba into the U.S. press.

### Florida: curfews, no water

News about what is happening in Florida since Wilma struck that very rich state is just now starting to come out. At least six people are dead. Three million are still without power, "including about 93 percent of customers in Broward and Miami-Dade counties." (New York Times, Oct. 26) Miami-Dade County is predominantly Latin@ and Black.

People are lined up in their cars for blocks expecting government deliveries of water and ice that don't come. They are being told to boil their tap water, but have no electricity to do so.

Dawn-to-dusk curfews are in place throughout the region. Who will be stopped by the police? Wealthy whites, or poor African Americans and Haitians?

By contrast, across the state in Naples, "one of the wealthiest cities in the country" near where the hurricane first made landfall, "ice and water distribution appeared to be going more smoothly." By Tuesday, Oct. 25, most of the streets there had already been cleared of fallen trees and debris.

The hurricane also killed people in Mexico, Haiti and Jamaica, where it did great damage. Most media coverage, however, has focused on the problems faced by tourists in Cancun. □

## Fighting national oppression

# Road to anti-war unity

*Continued from page 7*

levees breaking and the consequent flooding to fragment and dissolve the Black community, break up any cohesion and prevent it from returning to New Orleans as a community.

This operation in New Orleans was as much a conscious act of imperialist aggression as the war in Iraq. The political implications for the anti-war movement are as clear as a bell.

The struggle against the war abroad cannot be separated from the struggle against the war at home. And that war, in the case of Katrina, was part of a war of oppression against the Black nation in the same way that the war in Iraq is a war of national oppression against the Iraqi people.

It is no accident that in 2003 President George W. Bush appointed Bernard Kerik, the former New York City police chief under reactionary Mayor Rudy Giuliani, to train the Iraqi police. Having served as head of the racist occupation forces in the biggest Black community in the United States made Kerik eminently qualified to train puppet colonial police for the Pentagon occupiers.

This is yet another living example of the foreign policy being an extension of domestic policy.

Also note that Raymond Kelly, Wall Street's current New York City police chief, was the director of the International Police Monitors in Haiti during 1994 and 1995, training the Haitian police.

If things need to be made any clearer, just look at how the first contracts doled out for New Orleans went to Vice

President Dick Cheney's former firm of Halliburton, the U.S. corporate overseer and prime war contractor in Iraq.

Among Halliburton's tasks in New Orleans was to deal with helping the oil industry. Halliburton's primary but not exclusive role in Iraq is to oversee the takeover of the Iraqi oil industry.

The same corporations that pump oil out of the Gulf of Mexico and refine millions of barrels a day in New Orleans are the ones that backed the invasion of oil-rich Iraq.

The giant oil companies work hand-in-glove with Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld and Gens. Abizaid and Casey in Iraq. They are also a major power in New Orleans, connected to the corporate and banking world there—and they are ultimately responsible, with the rest of the region's industrialists and financiers, for the

poverty, racism and oppression endured by the Black community of New Orleans.

The struggle against the war in Iraq cannot be separated from the struggle of the Black liberation movement to reconstitute the Black community in New Orleans and to exercise the right of self-determination in taking control of the reconstruction effort to rebuild the city, which was 70 percent Black before Katrina.

The intimate connection between imperialist war abroad and national oppression at home, and the absolute necessity to combine the struggle against both, must become a pillar of the anti-war movement.

### Sept. 24: An opportunity for unity missed

On Sept. 24 perhaps 300,000 people assembled in Washington under the general demand to "Bring the Troops Home Now."

The demonstration was a welcome reawakening of the anti-war movement in the biggest demonstration since the war began. It was spurred by media coverage of Cindy Sheehan, who camped out in Crawford, Texas. Yet as excellent as it was, it cannot escape attention that it was overwhelmingly white. Leave aside for the moment that the organized working class was in very limited attendance.

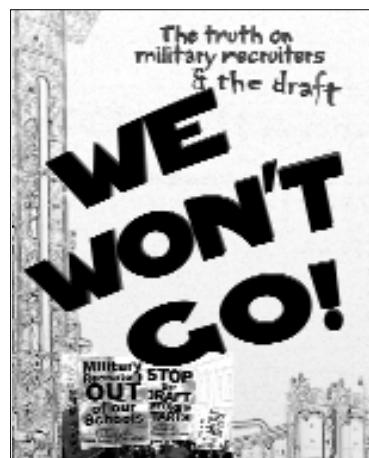
To a certain extent, this is due to historical reasons and material reasons beyond the control of the organizers. The anti-war movement of the Vietnam War era, under the guidance of liberals and social democrats, put up a wall between itself and the African American liberation struggle as

well as the struggle against racism. Major, historic demonstrations—such as the Moratorium of half a million people—took place while Nixon administration's COINTELPRO operations were destroying the Black Panther Party and other Black liberation organizations.

Ironically, it was precisely the repeated uprisings of the African American people against racism, police brutality and poverty, including the simultaneous rebellions in over 100 cities in 1968 after the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., that were a significant factor that frightened the ruling class about continuing the Vietnam War. Nevertheless, the official anti-war movement turned its back on the Black rebellions and the resistance in the Black community; a legacy of disunity was established.

Because today's movement has been largely white, and the Sept. 24 demonstration took place in the midst of a massive crisis for the Black nation, a historic opportunity to take a giant step toward mending relations presented itself. The organizers could have used four full weeks to make it known that this demonstration was going to elevate the cause of New Orleans and come to the aid of Black people in time of need. The Katrina crisis was the domestic equivalent of Iraq for the hundreds of thousands of African Americans displaced and dispersed with callous insensitivity and brutality.

To be sure, a few slogans were added on. A New Orleans speaker was included in the program. But what was needed was to



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## The Bush solution

# Expand the war to Syria and Iran

By Sara Flounders

"When faced with an unsolvable problem—expand the problem." This cynical political advice supposedly hangs on the wall of U.S. Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld's office.

Today it is clear to the entire world that the U.S. invasion and occupation of Iraq is an unsolvable problem. It is a howling blunder, an arrogant miscalculation by the political servants of U.S. monopoly capital.

Lt. Gen. William Odom, former director of the National Security Agency, has labeled it "the greatest strategic disaster in United States history."

The war is a crisis for the increasingly isolated and beleaguered Bush administration, whose approval ratings have plunged to an all-time low of 38 percent.

The generals are complaining that recruiting figures are in a death spiral. The U.S. military machine is stretched beyond its ability to fill the next troop rotation.

Now the official number of U.S. dead in Iraq has passed the 2,000 mark.

In evaluating the orchestrated confrontations with Iran and Syria, which are increasing, it is essential to look at U.S. history. The latest threats of military action and regime change may seem to be political madness. But expanding the problem—or widening the war in the Middle East—is a dangerous Pentagon option that is now under active consideration.

### From Vietnam to Cambodia

Thirty-five years ago the U.S. war in Vietnam became an unsolvable crisis for U.S. imperialism.

President Richard Nixon had promised

to establish a stable puppet government and train a Vietnamese army to take over the fighting from U.S. troops. But the war was unwinnable because the Vietnamese resistance could not be broken. By 1970 the U.S. population had turned decisively against the war.

The Pentagon suddenly opted to "expand the problem" by invading Cambodia, widening the war to engulf all of Southeast Asia.

Today, the corporate media dutifully report on endless charges that the resistance in Iraq is fueled by "foreign" insurgents and that both Iran and Syria are aiding the resistance. On Oct. 15 a New York Times headline read, "GIs and Syrians in Tense Clashes on Iraqi Border."

Top officials discussed cross-border military operations and other "special operations" at an Oct. 1 White House meeting. Two days later, Iranian President Ahmadinejad accused Britain of involvement in bomb attacks in the southern Iranian city of Ahvaz.

On the diplomatic front the United States and Britain pressured the International Atomic Energy Agency board to overrule its own inspectors in order to push a discussion of Iran's nuclear program into the United Nations Security Council. Meanwhile, John Bolton, U.S. ambassador to the UN, warned that if the Security Council doesn't deal with Iran, its relevance will be damaged.

This is a clearly implied threat that the United States will act on its own—as it did in Iraq.

### UN report charges Syria

On Oct. 22 a 54-page report delivered to UN Secretary General Kofi Annan by

German prosecutor Detlev Mehlis, a political appointee, blamed Syrian President Bashar al-Assad for the assassination of Lebanese Prime Minister Rafiq Hariri. Annan had appointed an international committee to investigate the assassination.

The Mehlis report is full of unsubstantiated charges based on secret witnesses and statements from exile groups in the pay of the CIA. Similar charges by the White House about Iraqi "weapons of mass destruction" turned out to be a total fraud.

Much of the U.S. and European corporate media are giving the same uncritical coverage to Mehlis's UN report as they did to reports, leaks and interviews with right-wing exile groups leading up to the U.S. invasion of Iraq.

The very day Mehlis delivered his preliminary report, U.S., British and French officials jumped on it to demand that the UN Security Council meet and take drastic action, including imposing sanctions against Syria. France, it should be remembered, was once the colonial power in Syria and Lebanon.

The role of the UN Security Council in all this confirms that Washington still has enormous leverage there—through economic, political, diplomatic and military pressure on smaller and weaker countries—to fabricate a crisis and push through its resolutions.

The choice of whom to accuse in the Mehlis report is highly political. It names top Syrian military officials and Palestinian leaders, while linking Palestinian and Lebanese charities to terrorist activities.

In order for Syrian President Assad to comply with the continuing investigation, he would have to turn over top officials in his own government, expel leaders of

Palestinian organizations in Syria, and assist in the disarming of Hezbollah in Lebanon.

The steps demanded of Syria amount to an all-out effort to topple the government and impose "regime change." At the same time they further demonize the Palestinian resistance and all Islamic aid organizations.

### People's response

The ruling groups in the United States and Israel clearly had far more to gain from the assassination of the Lebanese president and the resulting destabilization of the area than Syria did. While an all-out campaign has forced the withdrawal of Syrian forces from Lebanon, it is important to remember that the same Western imperialist countries now denouncing Syrian interference in Lebanon continue to say and do nothing about Israel's 38-year occupation of Syria's Golan Heights.

The day after the Mehlis report was released, hundreds of thousands of Syrians poured into the streets of Damascus and Aleppo to protest, rejecting the charges and the outrageous demands made on their government.

This is the real force U.S. imperialism is up against in the entire region. Every effort to pressure, weaken or overturn governments and destroy national sovereignty in the Middle East is an effort to push back the popular movements on which these governments were originally based.

As the struggle in Iraq has shown, it may be possible to sanction, starve and invade a country, overthrow its government and put the president in the dock. But it is a far more difficult task to subdue a whole people determined to resist recolonization. □

embrace the struggle of New Orleans for dear life. The Black leaders fighting for the cause of New Orleans should have been offered the opportunity to convene and discuss with the organizers, reshaping the program without sacrificing the struggle against the war.

What was needed was to develop the most effective methods to use this massive gathering to forge solidarity and unity in the struggle against the Bush administration, state and local officials and corporate parasites, who are all trying to make permanent the destruction of the New Orleans Black community.

Efforts could have been made to merge the anti-war message with an explanation of the profound political meaning of this crisis for the African American community—many of whom regard what was happening as a setback of historic proportions. It was necessary to explore follow-up solidarity and support, to be organized and determined by representatives of the Black struggle taking up the issue.

What was needed was to make an appeal to the hundreds of thousands gathered for a massive solidarity and support network that would mobilize all over the country and render aid and assistance to the New Orleans leadership in getting the dispersed population at least located, possibly registered, and to funnel the information to the organizers of the effort to return.

One thing that would have demonstrated solidarity on the spot would have been to march to an armory near the rally in Washington, D.C. There, evacuees were being housed. Such a march would have served notice to evacuees that they were not alone, and served notice on the government

that the masses of the anti-war movement were standing shoulder-to-shoulder with the African American people.

### Millions More Movement ignored

Another failure to show solidarity with African Americans was the organizers' unwillingness to promote and publicize the Millions More Movement rally that was coming up on Oct. 15, just three weeks later.

The MMM rally was dedicated to helping the victims of Katrina. It was to be a unity rally and a gathering of a broad spectrum of national African American leadership, under the auspices of and at the invitation of Hon. Minister Louis Farrakhan, head of the Nation of Islam. As it turned out, more than a million African American people came to the MMM rally, according to the organizers.

In fact, the MMM rally was very much an anti-war rally as well as a rally for Katrina victims. Most important, though, it was a manifestation of the various currents in the leadership of the Black nation. As such, it was an attempt to take the self-determination of African American people as an oppressed nation a step forward.

It was an attempt to bring broader sectors of the African American population into alliance with Latin@s, Native Americans, poor people in general, with Africa, Cuba and Venezuela—and to move toward independence from the yoke of the oppressor nation dominated by the white racist ruling class.

### National oppression and unity in the movement

The anti-war movement must recognize that the United States is a prison-

house of nations.

This prisonhouse of nations is made up of African Americans, whose ancestors were kidnapped from Africa and enslaved; of Latin@s, whose land in the southwest was annexed when the United States stole one-third of Mexico; of the Native American population, who were consigned to concentration camps called reservations after their land was stolen; of Chinese people, whose ancestors were brought here as indentured servants to build the railroads. It is populated by more and more immigrant nationalities from the Middle East, South Asia and Latin America, people who come here because U.S. imperialist corporations have taken over their countries and they cannot survive at home.

These nationalities make up the oppressed sectors of the population and the multinational working class. They are at one and the same time the most exploited parts of the population and potentially the most militant, dynamic force in the struggle against imperialist war and exploitation.

But the centuries of racism by the ruling class works to break up the unity of our class. The only way to forge that unity is for every organization that is based in the dominant white oppressor nation to demonstrate its independence from the racist ruling class by recognizing the right of self determination of the oppressed and extending every measure of solidarity possible in word and in deed. □

Alberto Lovera Bolivarian Circle, Padre Luis Barrios, Ramsey Clark, Noam Chomsky, Peter Coyote, Marcia Campos, Danny Glover, Bishop Thomas Gumbleton, August Nimtz, James Petras, U.S. Rep. José Serrano, Rev. Lucius Walker and Howard Zinn invite you to:

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## A breakthrough— for whom?

Engineers at Stanford University have made a big breakthrough in laser-beam technology. Their discovery of how to switch a laser beam on and off up to 100 billion times a second is reported in the Oct. 27 issue of Nature. "Such an advance could have broad applications both in accelerating the already declining cost of optical networking and in potentially transforming computers in the future by making it possible to interconnect computer chips at extremely high data rates," comments the Oct. 26 New York Times.

In the early days of capitalism's Industrial Revolution, each new discovery set off a wave of optimism about the future, not just among those who felt they would directly profit from it, but among the general public. Scientific progress was welcomed as offering a better future for suffering humanity.

Today, such sentiments are muted. Of course, those with capital who can take advantage of a cheaper, faster way to do something in order to boost the return on their investments get very enthusiastic. And the military, which helped finance the Stanford project through the Pentagon's Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency, will undoubtedly get first dibs at integrating this new technology into its war-making machine. Hollywood and the "financial marketplace" are other areas of the economy said to have a stake in this development.

But the development of high technology today seems to have little relevance to the problems of millions of people,

here and around the world, who are wondering how they will get clean water to drink, enough food for their children, simple medications that they can afford and other basics of life. All these things are fully possible today, without any further scientific breakthroughs, but for many they might as well be on the Moon.

The human brain is an amazing organ. Combined with social organization, it has succeeded in expanding knowledge of the natural world at what seems like the speed of light. But knowledge is not enough to make a better world. In fact, the explosion of technology driven by the need to expand capital, which subordinates all other considerations, is creating ecological disasters that have already made life more precarious for many.

Marxism has viewed the development of the means of production as the engine of social change—but progress does not take place mechanically. The new, more sophisticated tools on which the economy rests strain ever more against the confines of existing class relations, which become more burdensome, more irrational, more destructive, more dependent on repression and social control. All this sets in motion the struggle of the working class and the oppressed—who today make up the majority of the world's people. It is only their struggles to end this capitalist system that can turn the promise of a better life through technology into a reality. □



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

WW PHOTO: MONICA MOOREHEAD

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## PHILIPPINES

# Tribunal denounces rights abuses

By Sharon Eolis  
Manila, Philippines

An International Solidarity Mission visited the Philippines in August to defend a people under siege from the regime of Gloria Macapagal Arroyo and her government's imperialist backers in Washington.

On the last day of the ISM visit, an International People's Tribunal was held. This event was endorsed by former U.S. Attorney General Ramsey Clark; Noam Chomsky, linguistic scientist at MIT; and Jitendra Sharma, former justice of the Supreme Court of India.

The presiding judge was Lennox Hinds, professor of Law at Rutgers University and vice-chair of the International Association of Democratic Lawyers. The second and third judges were Irene Fernandez (Malaysia), founder and director of Tenagar (Women's Force); and Haliaan Karakus (Turkey), president of the International Association of People's Lawyers (IAPL).

The jury had representatives from Belgium, New Zealand, Canada, Turkey, Australia, Philippines, United States, Britain and the Netherlands.

The prosecutors were all well-known human-rights defenders.

The attorneys questioned the witnesses, asking questions in Tagalog and English.

Two of the witnesses were children who had seen their families murdered. Another witness told about the attack and murder of strikers at a picket line.

An attorney recounted the case of two young children from Mindanao who are in hiding because they were threatened with death if they told what happened. Pictures that were part of the testimony showed how one of these children was injured.

Witnesses spoke of torture in Sammor, the massacre in February in Sulu, kidnappings and executions in Mindoro, and the Hacienda Luisita massacre.

As the tribunal closed, thousands of people marched with banners and flags. Representatives from the ISM spoke and chanted at the rally, which ended with a candle lighting on the ground that read, "Oust Gloria."

It was clear to all that the struggle against human-rights abuses in the Philippines will continue. The international delegation left with the task of bringing the tribunal's message to solidarity movements around the world.

*This is the last of three articles by Eolis on the experiences of the International Solidarity Mission.*

*The first two, on the Philippine economy and on the oppression of the Moro people, respectively, appeared in the issues of WW dated Sept. 15 and Oct. 6.*

### UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE STATEMENT OF OWNERSHIP, MANAGEMENT AND CIRCULATION

1. Publication Title: Workers World
2. Publication Number: 053-990
3. Filing Date: November 3, 2005
4. Issue Frequency: Weekly except first week of January
5. Number of Issues Published Annually: 51
6. Annual Subscription Price: \$25.00
7. Complete Mailing Address of Known Office of Publication (Not printer): (Street, City, County, State, and ZIP+4) 55 West 17 Street, 5th Floor, New York, NY 10011-5513; Contact Person: R. Neidenberg; Telephone: 212-255-0352
8. Complete Mailing Address of Headquarters or General Business Office of Publisher (Not printer): 55 West 17 Street, 5th Floor, New York, NY 10011-5513
9. Full Names and Complete Mailing Addresses of Publisher, Editor, and Managing Editor (Do not leave blank):  
Publisher (Name and Complete Mailing Address): WW Publishers, Inc., 55 West 17 Street, 5th Floor, New York, NY 10011-5513; Editor (Name and Complete Mailing Address): Deirdre Griswold, 55 West 17 Street, 5th Floor, New York, NY 10011-5513; Managing Editor (Name and Complete Mailing Address): John Catalinotto, 55 West 17 Street, 5th Floor, New York, NY 10011-5513
10. Owner (Do not leave blank. If the publication is owned by a corporation, give the name and address of the corporation immediately followed by the names and addresses of all stockholders owning or holding 1 percent or more of the total amount of stock. If not owned by a corporation, give the names and addresses of the individual owners. If owned by a partnership or other unincorporated firm, give its name and address as well as that of each individual. If the publication is published by a nonprofit organization, give its name and address.): WW Publishers, Inc., 55 West 17 Street, 5th Floor, New York, NY 10011-5513; John Catalinotto, 55 West 17 Street, 5th Floor, New York, NY 10011-5513
11. Known Bondholders, Mortgagees and Other Security Holders Owning or Holding 1 Percent or More of Total Amount of Bonds, Mortgages or Other Securities. If none, check box: None
12. Tax Status (For completion by nonprofit organizations authorized to mail at special rates.) (Check One) The purpose, function, and nonprofit status of this organization and the exempt status for federal income tax purposes: (Check one): Does not apply

13. Publication Title: Workers World
14. Issue Date for Circulation Data Below: October 6, 2005
15. Extent and Nature of Circulation: Average No. of Copies Each Issue During Preceding 12 Months: a. Total Number Copies (Net Press Run): 5411. b. Paid and/or Requested Circulation: (1) Paid/Requested Outside-County Mail Subscriptions Stated on Form 3541 (include advertiser's proof and exchange copies): 1856; (2) Paid In-County Subscriptions (include advertiser's proof and exchange copies): 105; (3) Sales Through Dealers and Carriers, Street Vendors, Counter Sales, and Other Non-USPS Paid Distribution: 186; (4) Other Classes Mailed Through the USPS: 1598. c. Total Paid and/or Requested Circulation [Sum of 15b (1), (2), (3) and (4)]: 3745. d. Free Distribution by Mail (Samples, complimentary, and other free): (1) Outside-County as Stated on Form 3541: 0; (2) In-County as Stated on Form 3541: 0; (3) Other Classes Mailed Through the USPS: 0. e. Free Distribution Outside the Mail (Carriers or other means): 1377. f. Total Free Distribution (Sum of 15d and 15e): 1377. g. Total Distribution (Sum of 15c and 15f): 5122. h. Copies Not Distributed: 289. i. Total (Sum of 15g, 15h): 5411. Percent Paid and/or Requested Circulation (15c divided by 15g times 100): 73%.

- No. Copies of Single Issue Published Nearest to Filing Date: a. Total Number Copies (Net Press Run): 5000. b. Paid and/or Requested Circulation: (1) Paid/Requested Outside-County Mail Subscriptions Stated on Form 3541 (include advertiser's proof and exchange copies): 1852; (2) Paid In-County Subscriptions (include advertiser's proof and exchange copies): 79; (3) Sales Through Dealers and Carriers, Street Vendors, Counter Sales, and Other Non-USPS Paid Distribution: 144; (4) Other Classes Mailed Through the USPS: 1305. c. Total Paid and/or Requested Circulation [Sum of 15b (1), (2), (3) and (4)]: 3380. d. Free Distribution by Mail (Samples, complimentary, and other free): (1) Outside-County as Stated on Form 3541: 0; (2) In-County as Stated on Form 3541: 0; (3) Other Classes Mailed Through the USPS: 0. e. Free Distribution Outside the Mail (Carriers or other means): 979. f. Total Free Distribution (Sum of 15d and 15e): 979. g. Total Distribution (Sum of 15c and 15f): 4359. h. Copies Not Distributed: 641. i. Total (Sum of 15g, 15h): 5000. Percent Paid and/or Requested Circulation (15c divided by 15g times 100): 76%.

16. Publication of Statement of Ownership. Publication required. Will be printed in the November 3, 2005, issue of this publication.

17. Signature and Title of Editor, Publisher, Business Manager or Owner: Deirdre Griswold, Editor, October 6, 2005

I certify that all information furnished on this form is true and complete. I understand that anyone who furnishes false or misleading information on this form or who omits material or information requested on the form may be subject to criminal sanctions (including fines and imprisonment) and/or civil sanctions (including civil penalties.)

## Congress of Brazil's Communist Party

# In the Lula gov't, but critical

By John Catalinotto  
Brasilia, Brazil

In an atmosphere throughout Latin America of growing resistance to Washington's attempt to impose economic and military dominance on the continent, the Communist Party of Brazil (PCdoB) held its 11th National Congress Oct. 20-23 in Brasilia.

From the continued heroic resistance of socialist Cuba to the profound Bolivarian revolution in Venezuela, from mass upsurges that reversed governments in Bolivia and Ecuador to the elections of governments in Argentina and Uruguay that have thrown up obstacles to International Monetary Fund and U.S. demands, people south of the U.S. border have refused to submit to U.S. imperialist pressures.

In Brazil this resistance led to the 2002 election of Luis Ignacio "Lula" da Silva as president. A former steel worker and leader of the Workers Party (PT), he won almost 61 percent of the vote. A central point of political discussion at the PCdoB Congress was the complicated relationship between this party and the Lula government, which it supports.

The PCdoB has 250,000 members. Some 70,000 take active part in party discussions and organization; they are called "militants."

At the congress, 1,097 delegates elected by the members discussed the party's political program for the coming period and proposed changes in its organizational structure. The new party structure defines more precisely the different rights and responsibilities of the ordinary members and the militants.

World imperialism claims that communism is dead. Yet the PCdoB has more than doubled its membership in the last four years. It is 3.5 times bigger than it was at the 9th Party Congress in 1997.

The delegates came from all 27 Brazilian states. They reflected all the various peoples of Brazil, including Indigenous, Afro Brazilian, Arab and East Asian. The many young comrades present at this leadership meeting indicated that the party in general must be quite young.

Some 80 people making up delegations

from 45 countries were also present. Most represented communist parties and revolutionary and progressive organizations.

Among them were representatives of the ruling parties of Cuba, China, Vietnam, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and Angola. The U.S. delegation included Workers World Party and the Communist Party USA.

### Enthusiasm for the struggle

Enthusiastic cheers punctuated nearly every speech from the rank-and-file delegates and party officials, speeches always delivered with great feeling for the class struggle in Brazil. Some of the most enthusiastic comrades had traveled long and far from the Amazon region.

It took one group from Acre as much as five days by boat and bus to get to the point where they could fly to the country's capital. These comrades emphasized the need to struggle on environmental questions, so much so that the congress held a special discussion on the issue.

The goals of the congress were to win support for the PCdoB's general political positions from this representative body, to carry out changes in how the party is organized and to elect a new Central Committee. All these questions were discussed among thousands of the party's rank and file in the months leading up to the congress.

Brazil is about the size of the lower 48 states of the United States, with a population of 185 million people. It has a relatively developed capitalist economy, but one whose foreign debt to the imperialist banks is the greatest in the world.

Brazil borders on 10 other South American countries; it has enormous military, economic and diplomatic weight.

A right-wing military dictatorship ran the country from 1964 to 1985. During that time the PCdoB, described as "Maoist" in that period, was outlawed, and organized a guerrilla war in one of the Amazon states.

This congress commemorated the life of the PCdoB's historic leader, Joao Amazonas, who led that guerrilla struggle and who died after the 10th Congress.

It is only possible here to summarize the

PCdoB's general analysis of the political situation. This analysis was presented by Secretary General Renato Rebelo and other party leaders at the conference, and at a special meeting with the foreign delegations in the National Parliament building.

### In government & social movements

The PCdoB, reviewing world developments since the 1989-91 counter-revolution in the USSR and Eastern Europe, says that despite the positive examples of Cuba's defense of its independence, the developments in Bolivarian Venezuela and the success of the Iraqi resistance, the world balance of power is still unfavorable for socialist revolution; it is a period to "gather strength."

Under these conditions, the PCdoB believes that the best choice for Brazil today is to continue to support the Lula government. The PCdoB believes that Lula's foreign policy is progressive and that the alternative to Lula would be a rightist, pro-U.S., neoliberal regime that could isolate Venezuela and Cuba and leave Brazil wide open for imperialist penetration. The PCdoB hasn't yet openly challenged Brazil's participation in the ongoing occupation of Haiti.

This choice is further complicated because—although Lula received 61 percent of the vote in the second round of the 2002 election—the center and right-wing parties that oppose any progressive steps control both the upper and lower houses of Parliament and 24 of the 27 state governments in Brazil. And the big financial institutions can limit changes and sabotage the economy.

Lula has attended every PCdoB congress since 1989. This time, as president of Brazil, Lula was the main speaker at the opening session. He thanked the PCdoB for its loyal support, to the enthusiastic applause of the delegates. He spoke under the PCdoB banner with its hammer and sickle and the slogans, "A renewed party, a socialist future, a sovereign Brazil."

Despite this support, Gustavo Petto, the PCdoB leader in charge of workers, peasants and other social movements, criticized the Lula government for its short-

comings. The PCdoB says it will be in the government and, at the same time, through the social movements and labor unions, will pressure the government to take more progressive positions regarding resistance to imperialism and defending workers' and peasants' rights.

### PCdoB leader heads Parliament

Throughout the summer the right-wing parties, which have a reputation of ingrained corruption, and the media carried out a vicious, hypocritical attack on Lula and his party, the PT, for indiscretions in campaign funding. The crisis threatened to bring down the Lula government. Support from the PCdoB was essential in saving the government.

A PCdoB representative in Parliament, Aldo Rebelo, was then elected president of that body, something the party celebrated at its congress.

In its written program and in the congress discussion, the PCdoB expressed an acute awareness of the dangers that participation in a capitalist government pose to a communist party. It has taken steps in its party rules that it says will strengthen democratic centralism and reduce this threat.

Twelve members of the PCdoB have been elected to the National Parliament's lower house of 513 members. Six of the 12 are women. But many delegates at the congress spoke of the need to have more women in the leading bodies of the party. Afro-Brazilian comrades also spoke of the need to give higher priority to fighting racism in Brazilian society.

By all appearances, these important points were undergoing full discussion in the PCdoB.

While the PCdoB faces many challenges in implementing its policies in the coming period, the results will depend not only on what happens in Brazil. Any advances in the struggle worldwide will affect Brazilian society. Not least important will be any increase in the workers' struggle and the anti-imperialist movement in the United States, which could be of great assistance to advancing the struggle for Brazil's sovereignty and thus aiding the struggle for socialism. □

## NYC meeting

# 'Last phase' of Milosevic trial near

By John Catalinotto  
New York

To prepare for what defense activists called "the final phase" of NATO's star-chamber trial of the former Yugoslav president, the U.S. section of the International Committee for the Defense of Slobodan Milosevic held a strategy meeting here on Oct. 16 with representatives of the ICDSM from Germany and Serbia.

The main topics of the meeting included: (1) the latest developments in the trial; (2) a project of the U.S. chapter of the ICDSM to publish by the end of this year a newly translated English version of Milosevic's August 2004 opening defense speech at the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia (ICTY) in The Hague, Netherlands, where he faces war-crimes charges. The ICTY was specially created by the UN at the urging of then-U.S. Ambassador Madeleine Albright.

Cathrin Schuetz, an assistant to the legal team in The Hague and member of the German committee, reported on the course of the ICTY proceedings. Schuetz

attends regularly, either in the courtroom or working behind the scenes.

Schuetz said that while it was clear the "trial" was in its final phase, no hard dates have been set. Later investigation showed that about two-thirds of Milosevic's 150 days to present defense witnesses have been used, which indicates the trial should end sometime in the spring of 2006.

"The discussion of the 'Kosovo war' is almost over," Schuetz added. There were no allegations that Milosevic had committed any crimes until May 1999, when the U.S. and other NATO powers used the ICTY to bring additional pressure against the Yugoslav leader as they were in the midst of a 78-day bombing campaign against Serbia that killed hundreds and destroyed much of the country's infrastructure.

Schuetz reported on testimony given by Radical Party leader Vojislav Seselj, who she said made some of the more important political points in recent months: "One of the main charges against the president was that he was part of a 'criminal conspiracy' to work toward a 'Greater Serbia,'" that is, to

expand the boundaries of what had been the Yugoslav Serbian Republic. "Seselj was adamant that his party and only his party, the Radical Party, supported this program. He insisted that Milosevic was opposed to this policy of a Greater Serbia."

### Conditions in Serbia

Vladimir Krsljanin, a former adviser to Milosevic who works with the Serb committee Sloboda, reported by phone from Belgrade about the harsh conditions of life for many people in Serbia five years after the U.S.-backed election/coup that overthrew Milosevic and allowed a virtual foreign takeover of the country.

"All the major industry has either been shut down completely or taken over by foreign capital, with the work force cut in half or less. Close to half the people are bordering on despair," said Krsljanin.

"There may be few outward demonstrations of the building resentment," he continued, "but that doesn't mean the people are content. It can end with a change in the political process at the next vote, which

will be next spring, or in an explosion."

International Action Center co-coordinator Sara Flounders, who chaired the meeting, turned the discussion to the new book now nearing completion. She thanked Radmila Milentijevic for the "tremendous job she did re-translating the text from the Serbian original" and filmmaker Milo Yeliseyevich, who edited the English translation.

The meeting paid tribute to Harold Pinter, playwright and author and recent winner of the Nobel Prize in Literature, who was a strong opponent of the NATO-sponsored war that led to the dismemberment of Yugoslavia.

Among those present, besides those mentioned above, were Prof. Barry Litchy, Heather Cottin, journalist George Szamueley and Serb-American composer Milos Raickovich. Political journalist Greg Elich and author Leonora Foerstel joined the discussion by phone.

*John Catalinotto is co-editor with Flounders of the IAC's 2002 book on the war against Yugoslavia, "Hidden Agenda," available at leftbooks.com.*

## El Movimiento de Más Millones

# Mitin en Washington enfatiza la unidad y el poder de l@s negr@s

Por Monica Moorehead  
Washington, D.C.

El Movimiento de Más Millones (MMM) tuvo un importante mitin el día 15 de octubre en las inmediaciones del Monumento Nacional en la capital, Washington DC, que atrajo una muchedumbre, según los organizadores, de un millón de personas abrumadoramente Africano-americanas. La demanda principal de los organizadores y de las masas asistentes fue “¡Poder Negro!”

Ni una bandera de los Estados Unidos se podía ver predominando en el mar de gente, pero los colores de la Liberación Negra de los Estados Unidos—rojo, negro, y verde—se notaban por todas partes.

Este mitin fue anunciado por primera vez hace un año en conmemoración del 10º aniversario de la Marcha de Un Millón de Hombres el 16 de octubre de 1995 ocurrida en el mismo sitio. Ese evento atrajo a un millón de hombres mayormente de la raza negra y fue iniciada por la Nación del Islam (NDI).

El evento de este año, también iniciado por la NDI, fue más inclusivo en términos de incluir a las mujeres, a las comunidades lésbicas, gays, bisexuales y transexuales además de a l@s latin@s, indígenas y a otras nacionalidades, quienes estaban representadas tanto en la multitud como en los oradores. La multitud que se extendía desde las gradas del Capitolio hasta el monumento a Washington, incluía gente de todas las edades, a trabajador@s organizad@s y no organizad@s, y a sus familias.

Los discursos cubrieron una amplia gama de tópicos, desde el sistema de prisión y las demandas de los prisioneros políticos—especialmente Mumia Abu-Jamal, Abdullah Al-Amin (anteriormente conocido como H. Rap Brown) y Leonard Peltier—hasta la brutalidad policiaca, reparaciones, la negación del derecho al voto, la opresión de las comunidades LGBT, el derecho de l@s inmigrantes, poder político y económico, educación y salud, el papel del arte y la cultura en la lucha por la justicia social y otros tópicos.

Mientras que el mitin de 1995 abogaba

por la vindicación, especialmente entre los hombres de raza negra, el tema de este mitin fue muy diferente en su mensaje político debido a dos principales razones: el huracán Katrina y la guerra en Irak. Estos dos puntos fueron los temas comunes que se escucharon en muchos de los discursos y presentaciones culturales en todo el día, especialmente la indignación sobre la manera en que el gobierno respondió al desastre del huracán. Muchos hablaron fuertemente contra el gobierno de los Estados Unidos y contra Bush.

### Farrakhan ofrece programa de unidad

La presentación principal de este mitin estuvo a cargo del convocador nacional de la Marcha y líder de la Nación del Islam, el Honorable Ministro Louis Farrakhan. La muchedumbre esperaba ansiosamente lo que él, más que cualquier otro orador, iba a decir. Y mucho dijo.

Farrakhan comenzó su discurso de 80 minutos con la esperanza de que la gente de raza negra, junto con l@s latin@s, indígenas y pobres, se unan para forjar una fuerte lucha. El declaró, “Yo no puedo calcular cuantos de ustedes están aquí hoy... si hay un millón... menos de un millón o más, esto no es lo más importante... crear un movimiento con nuestra gente es importante.” El expresó su aprecio a la cantidad sin “precedente” de líderes de raza negra de diferentes antecedentes políticos y religiosos que se unieron para hablar en “una sola voz”.

Enfatizó que la incapacidad del gobierno de los EEUU de responder a las necesidades de la gente negra y los pobres fue expuesta por su incapacidad de responder al huracán Katrina. Recomendó que el Departamento de Seguridad de la Patria (Department of Homeland Security), junto a su agencia de manejo de emergencias, FEMA, deben ser el blanco de una demanda general de parte de l@s sobrevivientes de Katrina, quienes deben ser recompensad@s por todo que perdieron como resultado de “negligencia criminal” por parte del gobierno. La demanda, dijo, debe ser basada en los

hechos, no en los chismes, en términos de lo que hizo el gobierno y lo que no hizo para rescatar la gente de color de los techos de Nueva Orleans. También hizo un llamado a una investigación de lo que realmente pasó con los diques.

El líder de la Nación del Islam habló en forma conmovedora sobre los 2.500 niñ@s, principalmente niñ@s de color que se encuentran todavía perdid@s desde la tormenta catastrófica de Katrina y la angustia que todavía experimentan sus familias.

### ‘Organicemos calle por calle’

Farrakhan urgió a todo el mundo volver a sus casas y organizar—calle por calle y casa por casa—para forjar un movimiento que pueda estar listo antes de que ocurra otro desastre. Advirtió, “Organizar es algo serio y hay gente que no quiere vernos organizados. Los pobres están sosteniendo a los ricos, quienes odian a cualquier persona que pueda estimular la conciencia de los pobres. ¿Están seguros que quieren Uds. tal movimiento? Entonces, prepárense a enfrentar una oposición severa”.

Entonces hizo una propuesta para establecer varios ministerios. Subrayando que la gente africana americana constituye un porcentaje importante de la población, dijo que los fondos podrían venir de una proporción de los impuestos igual a la de la población negra. Mucho de estos fondos son utilizados para el presupuesto militar.

Un ministerio de Salud y Servicios Humanos debe realmente cuidar la salud del pueblo. Farrakhan elogió al gobierno cubano por haber ofrecido enviar 1.500 médicos a la región de la Costa del Golfo para cuidar a los sobrevivientes de Katrina. La oferta, hasta el día de hoy, ha sido ignorada por la administración de Bush. Farrakhan también agradeció al gobierno venezolano por haber ofrecido apoyo a los sobrevivientes de Katrina—una oferta también rechazada por la Casa Blanca.

### Cita la oferta de becas de Cuba

También elogió al Presidente Fidel Castro de Cuba por ofrecer 500 becas para estudiantes de la clase trabajadora de los EEUU para que vayan a Cuba a estudiar medicina, con la estipulación de que, al completar los estudios médicos, vuelvan a los EEUU para proporcionar cuidado médico a aquellos que no pueden pagar.

En respuesta al sufrimiento de los campesinos negros en los EEUU que han sido desalojados de sus fincas por el racismo y las subvenciones para las grandes empresas agrícolas, Farrakhan promovió el establecimiento de un Ministerio de Agricultura. También declaró que el pueblo indígena, cuyas tierras han sido robadas sistemáticamente en forma genocida por el gobierno de los EEUU en interés de la expansión al oeste, podría alquilar tierras de sus reservas a los campesinos negros para mutuo beneficio.

Un Ministerio de Educación sería necesario para ayudar a unir a todos los educadores negros porque, según Farrakhan, “el sistema occidental ha terminado su trayectoria” y ya no sirve para

educar a los niñ@s.

Farrakhan dijo que un Ministerio de Defensa es esencial porque “nuestr@s jóvenes están luchando en guerras equivocadas — o unos contra otros en este país o en una guerra injusta en Irak y Afganistán.” Él dijo que deben ser traídos a casa para defender a sus comunidades. “No necesitas estar en Irak y Afganistán,” dijo. “Necesitas estar en nuestros barrios, impidiendo que la policía nos mate a balazos.”

Farrakhan vinculó la necesidad de un Ministerio de las Artes y la Cultura a la influencia del líder de la revolución china, Mao Zedong, sobre las masas. Farrakhan dijo que las ideas de Mao estaban bien reflejadas en la cultura china porque Mao tuvo un gran interés en las formas creativas en que las ideas políticas podían ser ampliamente expresadas.

Farrakhan dijo que en África y el Caribe hacen falta fábricas y que el formar un Ministerio de Comercio podría ayudar en este empeño. También enfatizó que alianzas de intercambio comercial deben ser formadas entre África, el Caribe, Centro y Sudamérica para ayudar a fortalecer estas economías. La lucha por las reparaciones, él dijo, va más allá del gobierno estadounidense disculpándose por el comercio de esclavos y la esclavitud. Las reparaciones significan también cancelar toda la deuda de los países en camino de desarrollo y proveer las medidas para construir la infraestructura.

Farrakhan prosiguió al recordar a tod@s que una de las razones que l@s inmigrantes de Latinoamérica están forzad@s a venir aquí para buscar trabajo es porque los Estados Unidos le robó tierra a México que ahora son entre otros, los estados Arizona, California, y Texas.

Entre los muchos oradores estaban Clarence Thomas y Chris Silvera del Movimiento de la Marcha del Millón Trabajador@s; Dr. Dorothy Height del Concilio Nacional de Mujeres Negras; líderes indígenas Russell Means y Vernon Bellecourt; la senadora Sheila Jackson; el cantante haitiano Wyclef Jean; los pastores Al Sharpton y Jesse Jackson; Viola Plummer del Movimiento del 12 de diciembre; Damu Smith, de las Voces Negras por la Paz; y el cómico y activista social Dick Gregory. Se puede ver todo el mitin en 222.millionmanmarch.org.

En su mensaje video grabado, el presidente de la Asamblea Nacional de Cuba, Ricardo Alarcón, expresó la solidaridad del pueblo cubano con l@s sobrevivientes de Katrina y con tod@s l@s pobres en los Estados Unidos. También habló sobre el caso de los Cinco Cubanos que estaban encarcelados por luchar contra el terrorismo mientras que Estados Unidos ayuda y aloja a verdaderos terroristas como Luis Posada Carriles.

El Primer Ministro de Jamaica, P. J. Patterson, habló vía video satelital para expresar su solidaridad con l@s pobres y oprimid@s de los Estados Unidos. Su país dio asilo al Presidente Jean-Bertrand Aristide cuando fue secuestrado en Haití por el gobierno estadounidense en febrero 2004. Aristide está ahora en Sud África. □

Circulo Bolivariano Alberto Lovera, el Padre Luis Barrios, Ramsey Clark, Noam Chomsky, Peter Coyote, Marcia Campos, Danny Glover, el Obispo Thomas Gumbleton, August Nimtz, James Petras, el Congresista José Serrano, el Reverendo Lucius Walker y Howard Zinn les invitan a:

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