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IN FRANCE

Racism, poverty fuel rebellion

By Fred Goldstein

Nov. 9—The reactionary capitalist rulers of France have decreed a state of emergency in an attempt to suppress the wholly justified and righteous rebellion of African immigrants against decades of racism, poverty, unemployment and national oppression—imposed upon them under the hypocritical slogan of the “social republic” of “liberty, fraternity and equality.”

The rebellion, which has spread to 300 cities, is led by youth and is an expression of the anger and frustration of the millions of immigrants and their children who come from former colonies of France, mostly in North and sub-Saharan Africa.

This rebellion is basically against internal colonialism—as evidenced by official youth unemployment at close to 40 percent, run-down housing built in the 1950s and 1960s, a continual campaign of police harassment and brutality, and exclusion and racist discrimination in housing and employment.

France has 750 areas classified as Sensitive Urban Zones (ZUS) where unemployment hovers at 20 percent—twice the national average—and incomes are no more than 60 percent of the national average, according to government statistics. Official unemployment there in the age group 15 to 25 is 36 percent and reaches higher if only young Muslim men are counted.

The epicenter of the rebellion was in Saint-Denis, Department 93, 10 miles outside Paris. Paris rents have been going through the roof. Last year more than 100,000 people competed for 12,000 available substandard housing units in Paris. “Among the hardest hit without housing are immigrants.... The three back-to-back Paris fires over the spring and summer, which killed many children, occurred in such rundown buildings.” (ABC News)

The law under which the state of emergency was decreed is particularly hated because it was first imposed in 1955 as part of the bloody colonial war by the French imperialists to hold on to Algeria. It permits governors and mayors “to forbid the movement of people and vehicles,” to ban meetings, to “search homes at any time of night or day,” to control “press and publications of all kinds,” and to impose a two-month jail sentence for violation of the curfew, among other things. Over 1,500 people have already been detained and hundreds more arrests are expected.

Several years after imposing this law in Algeria, the government extended it to France itself, to suppress support for the Algerian liberation movement. It created such a climate of repression that, on Oct. 17, 1961, a demonstration in Paris in support of the Algerian war of liberation was attacked by police. Over

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New York embraces Bolivarian revolution



WW PHOTO: DEIRDRE GRISWOLD

Manhattan's 1,500-seat Town Hall was packed on Nov. 8 for “An Evening of Solidarity with Bolivarian Venezuela.” Those attending were from Central, South and North America as well as the Caribbean. A large delegation from Venezuela electrified the audience with speeches explaining the revolutionary process that is bringing accessible health care, literacy programs, decent housing and land reform to meet the needs of millions of Venezuela's poor. Many speakers hailed President

Hugo Chávez's statements that the revolution must advance to socialism. Eleguá, an Afro-Venezuelan women's drummer group, pictured above, brought the audience to its feet during the rally's finale. The event was initiated by the Alberto Lovera Bolivarian Circle and the International Action Center. Go to the PeoplesVideo.tv website for video and audio of the rally. The next issue of WW will have more extensive coverage.

—Monica Moorehead

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Black activist: 'I believe in what I did'

By Larry Hales
Denver

"Win, lose or draw, I believe in what I did, and I reject any plea they give me. They said that if I pled guilty to second degree, I wouldn't receive jail time, but I'm going to fight," Shareef Aleem told this reporter on Oct. 24 before going into court, where he faced a trumped-up charge of second-degree assault on a campus cop of the University of Colorado.

What Shareef Aleem did was stand up during a Board of Regents meeting on Feb. 27 and say, "Do the students get the right to speak? Is this a democracy or not? If not, let's stop calling it that."

The Board of Regents meeting had been advertised as being public, but students were silenced and kept from voicing opinions in support of a university professor who was being criticized after he put the blame for the 9/11 attacks squarely on the shoulders of the U.S. government.

When Aleem stood up in the meeting, he was approached by a campus cop. The cop had earlier forced a student to leave who had begun to ask the same questions. However, Aleem, one of the few Black people in the crowd, was grabbed, had his camera shut off and eventually was pulled down on top of the cop. He was then bound and stunned with a Taser. Before it was over, nearly a dozen campus cops were on top of Aleem, and cops in full riot gear waited outside.

Aleem's trial has been postponed until Feb. 27, 2006.

Adams County has shown its willingness to proceed with this fraudulent trial even though there are a videotape and ample witnesses to attest to the sham nature of the charge.

After the professor's remarks, conservative forces had pounced on him, attacking progressive and radical voices on campuses around the country and defending the ruling class brutality and plunder in the Middle East that has enraged Middle Eastern people and Muslims as far away as Indonesia.

Recently, another community activist challenged the professor and his followers for not supporting Aleem in his time of need, even though Aleem had the courage to support the embattled professor. Up to that point, only a small number of Denver activists had gone to court with Aleem. Now his support from the community in Denver, including those who supported the professor, is broader than before, and people are beginning to rally around this important anti-racist activist.

An attack on Aleem is an attack on everyone, especially on the right of oppressed people to self-determination. Aleem has worked tirelessly in the Black community, most notably against police brutality, and was instrumental in winning a suspension of a police officer who killed a 15-year-old mentally disabled Black youth. That suspension was overturned after the momentum was usurped by weaker leaders, who dismissed the outrage in the Black community and moved to work with the very cops who brutalize people of color. □

Death penalty protest in Texas capital

By Gloria Rubac
Austin, Texas

Nearly 500 protesters, many in town for a conference of the National Coalition to Abolish the Death Penalty, marched here against executions on Oct. 29. In November, the number of people executed since the U.S. reinstated the death penalty in 1976 is scheduled to top 1,000. Some 35 percent of these official killings have been in Texas.

Rick Halperin, professor at Southern Methodist University and a member of the Texas Coalition to Abolish the Death Penalty, told the crowd at a pre-march rally, "You are in the hellhole of human rights."

The march was led by Journey of Hope, an organization of murder victims' families who oppose the death penalty. They had just completed a two-week tour of the state, speaking before 130 audiences at churches, universities and community organizations. Their contingent included exonerated death row prisoners, families of executed prisoners and families of people on death row. In the group was New Orleans evacuee and community activist Eloise Williams, whose son was murdered in Texas just a month before Hurricane Katrina forced Williams from her home.



WW PHOTO: AUSTIN-RALLY
Texas is 'the hellhole of human rights.'

The protesters chanted, "They say death row, we say hell no!" and "What do we want? Abolition! When do we want it? Now."

Speakers highlighted the cases of Tony Ford and Rodney Reed. Ford has been protesting the inhuman conditions of isolation and sensory deprivation on Texas death row. The protest is being spearheaded by a group known as Death Row Inner-communalist Vanguard Engagement. See www.drivemovement.org.

Juan Robert Melendez told of spending 17 years, eight months and one day in a Florida jail. He was released after a tape-recorded confession by the true killer was found. Some 121 people proved to be innocent have been released from death rows in the U.S. since 1993.

As the rally ended, the crowd surrounded the Governor's Mansion with yellow crime scene tape. Scott Cobb of Texas Moratorium Network explained that "the biggest crime in Texas is committed by the government."

Death penalty abolitionists are planning protests around the country to mark the 1,000th execution. □



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WW CALENDAR

NEW YORK

Fri., Nov. 11

Workers World Party Meeting: Why France is Burning. Hear Larry Holmes, a leader of Workers World Party, and LeiLani Dowell, a founder of the F.I.S.T. youth group, give a Marxist perspective on the massive rebellion against racism engulfing France. Also, Rebeca Toledo, a writer for Workers World, will report on the

hot reception that a crisis-besieged Bush received at the Summit of the Americas. 7 p.m. (Dinner at 6:30) At 55 W. 17 St., 5th Fl., Manhattan. For info (212) 627-2994.

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A failing war and an administration in crisis

Cheney, McCain and the debate over torture

By Fred Goldstein

A dispute over outlawing government-endorsed torture has opened up as a new front in the developing struggle within the ruling class establishment against the Bush administration. It is a struggle to “soften up,” isolate and undermine the power of Vice President Dick Cheney, who is regarded by many as the secret and nefarious unofficial prime minister. This is part of a broader struggle to break up the Bush-Cheney-Rumsfeld axis as Washington and the Pentagon sink deeper into the Iraq quagmire.

The battle is being waged in two areas: over the drafting of new Pentagon guidelines on torture, and over Senate legislation outlawing torture. In both spheres, Cheney is leading the opposition to legal and administrative restrictions on the “right” to torture.

Cheney is also—unofficially—a key target in the CIA-leak grand jury investigation. The grand jury, convened by federal prosecutor Patrick Fitzgerald, has already issued a five-count felony indictment against Cheney’s chief of staff and key aide, I. Lewis Libby.

The struggle against new Pentagon guidelines that would mandate a reduction in the brutality against detainees has been smoldering behind the scenes for two months. But the debate has been going on for three years, since Bush decided that the Geneva Conventions did not apply to the so-called “fight against terrorism,” which includes just about anyone the Pentagon or the CIA can get their hands on in the Muslim world.

With world-wide condemnations of Pentagon and CIA torture, the military is moving to change its image. But Cheney signaled that he was not going to back up an inch on the torture question. The day after Libby resigned, Cheney appointed David Addington to replace him as chief of staff. Addington, among other things,

co-authored the original torture memo that came out of the Justice Department authorizing torture as a prerogative of presidential war powers.

It was Addington who recently called Rumsfeld’s chief aide on detainee policy, Matthew Waxman, into his office and cross-examined him about the new Pentagon guidelines. Waxman “left bruised and bloody,” said a Defense Department official. “He tried to champion Article 3 [of the Geneva Conventions], and Addington just ate him for lunch.” (New York Times, Nov. 2)

The Times continued that “Addington objected to phrases taken from Article 3—which proscribes ‘cruel treatment and torture,’ and ‘outrages upon personal dignity, in particular murder of all kinds, mutilation, humiliating and degrading treatment’—as problematically vague.”

One of the Addington camp’s major defenses is that Bush “specifically rejected the Article 3 standard in 2002, setting out a different one” that said detainees should “be treated humanely and to the extent appropriate and consistent with military necessity.”

But the attempt to rewrite the rules “received strong support from lawyers for the armed services, the military vice chiefs and some civilian defense officials,” said the Times. “Their concern was that we were losing our standing with allies as well as the moral high ground with the rest of the world.”

Militarist introduces anti-torture amendment

The legislative struggle was precipitated when Bush rival and militarist Sen. John McCain introduced an amendment outlawing “cruel, inhuman or degrading” treatment of any detainee in U.S. custody. The amendment was attached to the \$445 billion military spending bill. The language of the McCain amendment is taken directly from the UN Convention



Against Torture.

Just as in the struggle over the Defense Department guidelines, Cheney is the chief opponent. Much of the decisive initiative for the McCain amendment comes from the military itself.

Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice wants to change the rules “to get us out of the detainee mess.” (Washington Post, Nov. 7) Rice’s aides and her counterparts in the Pentagon are trying to change the rules and the image. Cheney’s group is a “shrinking island,” according an anonymous State Department official.

Cheney twice held meetings with legislators to try to have the McCain amendment defeated. When it was passed in the Senate, he got CIA head Peter Goss to meet with McCain and argue for exempting the CIA from the amendment. The CIA is reported to have illegal secret prisons around the world—in Afghanistan, Pakistan, Guantanamo and Eastern Europe—where it tortures and “disappears” prisoners. Some are known to have died under torture.

Cheney lost that battle. His staff is now “trying to have meetings cancelled ... to at least slow things down or gum up the works, or trying to conduct meetings

on the subject without other key Cabinet members,” an intelligence official confided to the Washington Post. Rice has told Cheney she wants to be at all meetings.

Cheney recently went to a weekly luncheon of Republican senators and made “an impassioned plea” to reject the McCain amendment. McCain rebutted him, according to an aide, telling his col-

leagues that the image of the United States using torture “is killing us around the world.”

So there you have it. The militarists in the Pentagon, well represented by fellow militarist McCain, fear that torture is besmirching Washington’s image and ruining U.S. imperialism’s efforts to conquer Iraq and proceed with its plans in the

rest of the world.

The strategists of U.S. imperialism are not opposed to torture because it is dehumanizing, degrading and cruel. No. But proclaiming it as official policy is “ruining their image” as they vainly attempt to colonize Iraq and pacify Afghanistan.

The CIA trained the torturers of the Savak under the Shah of Iran. The FBI and the Pentagon trained torturers for Latin America at the School of the Americas. Washington backed the death squads in El Salvador and now in Colombia. They supported the Argentinian, Uruguayan, Paraguayan and Brazilian generals and dictator Pinochet of Chile, who “disappeared” tens of thousands.

The torturers are now coming out against torture. It is a victory to see them on the defensive, having to pull back and disavow their brutal tactics. But no one should give one ounce of credit to any of the war criminals for this. The Iraq resistance and its refusal to submit is what has brought it about. □

The torturers are coming out against torture. No one should give one ounce of credit to the war criminals for this.

Bush’s Rx for flu: profits before people

By Hillel Cohen

President George W. Bush has announced plans to guard the public against bird flu. A close look at his \$7.1 billion proposal reveals that the number-one priority is to protect drug company profits.

Very little of the money will go to local communities. The plan clearly ignores the specific needs of working families and communities of color. In the event of a worldwide epidemic (pandemic) outbreak of avian influenza, the Bush plan has the potential of recreating the hardships that occurred in the aftermath of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, but on an even greater scale.

There is great concern that an epidemic of the flu virus known as H5N1, now raging among wild birds and poultry, may jump to humans. The core of Bush’s plan is to pay drug companies to manufacture vaccine and antiviral medication in much larger amounts than are now available.

Vaccine would be used to prevent infections with flu, and antivirals would limit the severity of illness once someone caught the virus.

A big problem with manufacturing vac-

cine is that it must match the specific form of the virus to be effective. H5N1 vaccine, now in development, may not be as useful against the virus if it shifts to humans. Also, if a worldwide outbreak of flu happens, there will be little time to do extensive safety and effectiveness testing.

A key provision in Bush’s plan is to create blanket liability protection for the drug companies—which means they could not be sued if their vaccine products caused harm. The big pharmaceuticals have been pushing for this for years, and are using fear of a flu pandemic to get it passed. It is similar to how Bush used the Katrina disaster as an excuse to try to suspend the Davis-Bacon Act, which guarantees prevailing wages for construction work by government contractors.

The Bush plan also chooses to ignore the monopoly on patent rights on the antiviral medications, such as Tamiflu, that some believe will be most effective against avian flu. According to international law, governments can suspend patent rights and force companies to allow manufacture of generic versions in case of a public health emergency. However, the U.S. government, across administrations,

has fought hard against other countries that have tried to introduce such emergency measures, for example with regard to HIV/AIDS medications.

Other gaps in the plan are as wide and deep as the holes in the broken levees that were meant to protect New Orleans.

The administration hinted broadly that flu-stricken communities might be put under quarantine or that workers with symptoms might be forced to stay home. Schools and childcare centers might be closed because children easily pass the flu among themselves. But such “plans” ignore the realities of life of millions of working and poor people who live check-to-check. Many workers don’t get paid sick leave, or if they do, it’s just for a few days.

Where will they get money for food, rent and utilities? If children must stay home, what will working parents do for childcare? If people are quarantined in their homes or communities, how will they get food, medications and other necessities?

During the hurricanes, the government told people to evacuate but had no plans to help those without cars or travel money and no plans to provide food and water to

those who were stranded. Racism and poverty made the difference between who got out and who suffered or died.

The government could demand that all bosses pay workers who have to stay home, either because they are ill, have to take care of children or some other flu-related emergency.

The government could arrange for local supermarkets to distribute free or subsidized supplies for those who need them.

Such emergency measures are common sense but challenge the capitalist credo that profits and property rights are more important than people’s lives. So instead of developing plans to address the hardships that widespread illness, quarantine and isolation will undoubtedly create, Bush has proposed instead to place troops in the neighborhoods to enforce order.

This thinly disguised version of martial law will undoubtedly be concentrated in communities of color. The occupation of New Orleans with mercenaries and soldiers may be only a hint of what the Bush regime is planning for the country in the event of a pandemic flu outbreak.

Next: Is a flu pandemic likely?

Workers face many hazards in New Orleans

By Dana Gilmartin
New Orleans

A labor shortage is evident all around New Orleans. Burger King is offering a \$6,000 signing bonus; Popeye's is offering \$9 an hour. Restaurants have to close early due to lack of staff. Some use paper cups and plastic plates because they can't find anyone to operate the dishwasher. In hotels, rooms are cleaned every other day instead of daily (horrors!).

Not aware of their racism and classism, some people say, "Why don't New Orleanians come back and fill these jobs? Why aren't they helping with the clean-up and rebuilding?" Why not indeed? Let's look at some of the reasons.

Major sections of working class and poor communities were badly damaged by Hurricane Katrina and parts are utterly destroyed. Power has not yet been restored to the ninth Ward. Driving through the ward at night shows how few people are there. One or two houses per block have a light on, probably battery-operated.

Schools are still closed, so why would families with children return? The floodwaters damaged the ground floors of buildings, which in many cases held corner grocery stores, restaurants and pharmacies. You can drive for miles without finding access to basic supplies.

Public transportation has barely started up again. Even thrift stores had their furniture inventories destroyed, so how are families supposed to inexpensively refurbish their homes?

Block after block, the curbs are piled high with dry wall and other materials from houses that have been gutted, a visual reminder of how widespread the damage was.

Speak to people who have gone back to their homes to find what is salvageable. One woman grimly holds up two Christmas ornaments, the sum total of her undamaged possessions.

Some folks whose apartments were above the first floor and did not sustain major losses are able to work now. If they work for a company that has a contract with FEMA, they can eat breakfast and dinner free of charge at the FEMA support tent, can pick up bag lunches and bottled water (finally the pallets of water appear!) and drop off laundry, all free of charge.

Some workers whose homes and cars were destroyed are being put up in hotels by their employers. On the other hand, some workers report being housed in apartments where the plumbing doesn't work and the rats are as big as cats. Others are staying in motels where major structural damage has not yet been repaired. In many cases, the families of these workers are still in Atlanta, Baton Rouge or Houston.

Cleanup is the major activity underway in downtown New Orleans and in the hard-hit areas. The basements of hotels, office buildings and hospitals flooded to levels that damaged pipe insulation and boiler insulation containing asbestos. This means that the wreckage—rotten food, drop ceilings, drywall

These Honduran workers removed asbestos from severely contaminated hospital.

PHOTO: DANA GILMARTIN

and all the contents of the basements—is contaminated with asbestos, not to mention the lead in old paint.

Who is doing this cleanup? African-American and non-English-speaking workers: Brazilians, Hondurans and others. Many are not even familiar with the words for asbestos and lead in their primary language, which shows that the contractors didn't train them on the health effects of these substances, as is required under "right to know" laws.

Electrical power may still be energized, even though the floors are wet.

These workers are not in unions and are vulnerable to unsafe and unhealthy conditions. In the hurry to make a buck, the contractors are bypassing recognized safe practices for minimizing worker exposure to hazardous substances and reducing the spread of contamination.

In residential areas, many roof repair jobs are underway. The workers are not tied off for safety; other precautions to prevent falls are not being taken. Ironically, one site where roofers were

seen without fall protection was the roof of a union hall.

Other workers in "cherry pickers" can be seen perilously close to live power lines. Their training in terms of safety has been scant and they often have not been given the protective gear they need. Many of these workers are Latin@.

Meanwhile, at the landfills and the debris collection areas, the workers are exposed to high levels of dust. Tens of millions of pounds of putrefying chickens and shrimp add intense and nauseating odors.

Faced with the super-exploitation of workers under these conditions, an opportunity is presented for unions, community groups and worker safety and health alliances to network and increase awareness, disseminate educational material and make site visits. The combined power of union membership and community pressure can stop the killing, maiming and sickening of our multi-national workforce. □

A challenge to labor after Katrina

Strengthening Davis-Bacon for all workers

By Milt Neidenberg

In August and September, Hurricanes Katrina and Rita exposed President George W. Bush's racist, criminal neglect of the Black population of New Orleans and the Gulf Coast. It will be forever in his legacy.

On Sept. 7, Bush declared a national emergency and suspended the Davis-Bacon Act (DBA) of 1931. The act sets a wage floor on federal construction contracts and provides that workers on-site be paid no less than "locally prevailing wages." This blow against organized labor covered Alabama, Florida, Louisiana and Mississippi. This

choice is no accident—they are all anti-union, "right-to-work" states.

Bush's suspension of DBA, had it succeeded, would have strengthened his anti-union, right-wing base, expanded the low-paid workforce and shrunk wages in the Delta region. The suspension was calculated to cut redevelopment costs in New Orleans and the Delta region so as to guarantee the profits of Corporate USA, notably Halliburton/KBR—of which Vice President Dick Cheney is a former CEO—and a host of other anti-union companies supported by the Bush administration that have received contracts without competitive bidding.

On Oct. 26, however, Bush reinstated DBA. This backpedaling revealed weakness and vacillation. Why? Because Katrina is another quagmire, like Iraq and Afghanistan. The president was now shifting his base to "moderate House Republicans who argued that [white—MN] Gulf Coast residents were being left out of the recovery and that the region was becoming a magnet for illegal immigrants." (Washington Post, Oct. 27)

The Post article called the decision "a rare victory for organized labor" and "a defeat for traditional Bush allies, including the construction industry and conservatives in Congress."

This victory for organized labor has sharpened the fangs of the right wing, which is mobilizing to repeal DBA and restore the suspensions. In the wake of the hurricanes, congressional representatives from the House Republican Study Group have introduced legislation to repeal DBA on the fraudulent grounds that prevailing wages are bureaucratically controlled by unions.

The right wing's allies include social conservatives like foes of reproductive rights, supporters of the Supreme Court nomination of Judge Samuel Alito Jr., and powerful lobbyists like the Chamber of Commerce, the National Association of

Continued on following page

Black artists sponsor Katrina forum



Special to Workers World
New York

To commemorate Black Solidarity Day, a "Black Aid" forum and fund raiser was held here on Nov. 1 with a major emphasis on Hurricane Katrina and continuing support for the survivors of this disaster.

The forum participants, from left to right, were: Bob Law, "Night Talk" radio host and New York State chair of the Millions More Movement; Nana Soul, Black Waxe artist and activist; New York City Councilperson Charles Barron; Dr. Carlos Russell, a founder of Black Solidarity Day; Monica Moorehead, International Action Center organizer; and Milton Allimadi, editor-in-chief of The Black Star News. At podium is Black Waxe filmmaker Usavior. All spoke on the plight

of Black people, especially in the aftermath of Katrina, and the need for broader unity to fight for self-determination.

Usavior, the program's moderator, previewed a documentary he is producing on the gathering of material aid in Brooklyn in September for Katrina survivors on the Gulf Coast. Latisha Devine, also with Black Waxe, read a poem.

Black Solidarity Day, which falls every November on the Monday before the elections, was founded in 1969 by Black political activists to encourage people not to go to school or work as a protest against racist oppression in the U.S. The meeting was sponsored by Black Waxe Recordings and Filmworks and the Black Star News. Larry Holmes, a leader of Workers World Party, officially welcomed everyone to the party's office, where the meeting was held. □

Unions reject insulting Delphi offer

By Jerry Goldberg
Detroit

On Oct. 21 Delphi Automotive Systems made its first offer to its unionized auto-workers since the corporation filed for bankruptcy on Oct. 8. This contract offer contained even deeper wage and benefits cuts than the company's earlier proposal, which was roundly rejected by the unions and prompted the bankruptcy filing.

Delphi has 33,000 unionized workers in its U.S. facilities, over 24,000 represented by the United Auto Workers (UAW) and 8,500 represented by the International Union of Electrical Workers.

Delphi's new proposal called for base wages of \$9.50 an hour for existing production workers, \$10.50 an hour for high production workers, and \$19 per hour for skilled trades. This is a drastic cut from the \$26 an hour the average Delphi worker currently makes.

Cost of living and profit sharing would be dropped. Monthly premiums for health care and prescription drugs would be imposed: \$85 for singles, \$170 for couples, \$160 for single employees with children and \$240 for couples with children. Currently, autoworkers pay no premiums for their health care benefits.

In addition, deductibles and co-pays up to \$2,500 for individuals and \$5,000 per family would be imposed on health care

coverage. Dental and vision coverage would be discontinued. Company-paid holidays would be trimmed from 16 to 10 per year, and the Christmas and Independence week holidays would be eliminated. The pension plan would be frozen on Jan. 1, 2006, and possibly eliminated.

Anti-worker bankruptcy court

In making this outrageous "offer" to the union membership, Delphi management was obviously buoyed by the actions of the New York bankruptcy court, which has jurisdiction over the Delphi bankruptcy. In the month since the bankruptcy was filed, the court has already demonstrated its bias in favor of the corporation and against the workers.

For example, one of the first actions of Deirdre Martini, the trustee named by the court to oversee the bankruptcy proceedings, along with U.S. District Judge Robert Drain, was to name the "unsecured creditors" committee. The role of the Creditors' Committee is a significant one in a Chapter 11 bankruptcy. It reviews and gathers information about the debtor's activities and financial condition and participates in the formulation and negotiation of the plan of reorganization. Normally, the Creditors' Committee consists of the largest unsecured creditors.

Incredibly, despite the fact that the UAW represents the largest group of individuals who will be affected by Delphi's bankruptcy, and despite the fact that the UAW specifically requested to be included on the Creditor's Committee, the union was excluded.

The bankruptcy court's corporate bias was further demonstrated on Nov. 4, when the bankruptcy judge approved Delphi's proposal to offer millions in sweetened severance packages to its top 21 executives, including 18 months of salary and 18 months of bonuses.

Massive job losses & tax deficits

A confidential Delphi memo code-named Northstar identified plans for the

corporation to shut five U.S. plants: in Flint, Mich.; Kokomo, Ind.; Milwaukee, Wis.; Vandalia, Ohio; and Tucson, Ariz. The Flint plant alone employs 3,400 workers.

A study by the Anderson Economic Group of East Lansing, Mich., estimated a reduction in Delphi employment of over 12,500 workers, with the closing of at least 10 U.S. plants. This study estimated that Delphi's proposed "reorganization" would cost the federal government \$4.8 billion in lost income taxes, tax revenue and pension liability. Under the best-case scenario, it would cost the state of Michigan, already suffering from the highest unemployment in the country, \$390 million in lost tax revenues.

Auto workers want to fight back

On Nov. 8, the six major industrial unions that represent Delphi's hourly workers formed a coalition in a solidified effort to take on the corporation. In announcing this coalition, UAW spokesperson Paul Krell stated: "We are outraged by Delphi's attempt to use the bankruptcy process to dictate the radical destruction of the living standards of America's industrial workers."

Krell announced that UAW president Ron Gettelfinger has endorsed a job action called "work to rule," which means that Delphi workers perform no duties beyond the workplace rules. "Work to rule" essentially amounts to a slowdown strike. Work to rule would also mean no overtime.

In addition, numerous UAW locals have already expressed their readiness to strike Delphi in December if it persists with its outrageous demands. A rank-and-file worker from UAW 598 in Flint, Mich., has published an on-line petition opposing Delphi's union busting, available at www.thepetitionsite.com. In Dayton, Ohio, a community march to defend the workers' jobs has already taken place, with another scheduled for Nov. 25.

Town hall meetings are being organized for rank-and-file UAW members and community activists to come together and

strategize on how to fight the Delphi bankruptcy. They are being organized by rank-and-file groups like New Directions, Members for Change and FutureoftheUnion.com., and are being publicized on websites and blogs as the workers avail themselves of the new technology to communicate and organize.

Asserting right to their jobs

The key is for the unions to develop a program and strategy to fight back. The Job Is a Right Campaign, which helped lead the struggle against General Motors plant closings from 1986 to 1988, popularized the demand for a moratorium on plant closings. It has issued a flyer calling for a three-part strategy to fight back.

The flyer raises the demand that the UAW be named trustee to administer Delphi through bankruptcy proceedings and urges calling a mass demonstration outside the bankruptcy court in New York to press this demand.

It calls for rank-and-file Delphi workers to prepare for a strike if Delphi attempts to impose its wage and benefit cuts, and to prepare to occupy the plants to assert the property right of the workers to their jobs if Delphi begins to shut plants and dispose of its assets.

The flyer also points to Article 50 of the UAW constitution, which authorizes a referendum vote for a general strike of the entire UAW membership when the "existence of the international union is involved together with the economic and social standing of our membership."

The flyer states, "Just beginning this process of a vote on a general strike in every UAW local would send a message that the fight against this bankruptcy will not be limited to so-called 'legal' channels that inevitably result in disaster for the workers. The organized power of the rank and file can defeat the Delphi bankruptcy and turn around the corporate drive to lower wages and benefits for the entire working class."

The writer is a UAW retiree and leader of the Job Is a Right Campaign.

Davis-Bacon

Continued from preceding page

Manufacturers and the construction industry. This alliance has won the backing of a section of Black entrepreneurs who claim they can't submit low bids if they have to pay DBA prevailing wages.

On the books are rules that supposedly guarantee jobs for "minorities" and women through affirmative action "set-asides," but they are not enforced. The Black-owned companies need subsidies to enable them to win bids on federally financed projects while paying prevailing wages.

Ruling-class strategy is to exploit divisions between organized workers and oppressed nationalities, as happened when the DBA was first introduced, back in 1927. A contractor had employed African-American workers from Alabama to build a Veterans Bureau hospital in Long Island, N.Y., the district of Rep. Robert L. Bacon, a Democrat. The other sponsor was Sen. James Davis, a Pennsylvania Republican and former secretary of labor under three Republican presidents.

Their pet issue was protecting America's "racial homogeneity," a code word for racism. The American Federation of Labor was then all white. Samuel Gompers, founder of the AFL and the architect of business unionism, had died a few years earlier and was replaced by William Green, who followed in his footsteps. Craft unions and relatively high-paid, skilled white members dominated the labor scene.

DBA passed in 1931—the depths of the Great Depression and the end of Republican President Herbert Hoover's administration. Millions of workers, skilled and unskilled—white, Black and other nationally oppressed—were unemployed. DBA put a floor on what a company could pay workers on public works construction projects. The law helped keep wages from plunging to rock bottom.

1930s labor upsurge

Amendments to DBA in 1935 forced companies that had violated the law to pay

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NYU grad student workers vote to strike

By Shelley Ettinger
New York

Graduate employees at New York University have voted to authorize a strike. The walkout is set to begin Nov. 9.

The NYU administration can save the fall semester and avert a strike by agreeing to negotiate with the graduate workers' union, UAW Local 2110. This is unlikely to happen. NYU President John Sexton appears intent on doing whatever it takes to crush the union.

But it is even less likely that Sexton will succeed in his union-busting quest.

In a week-long strike-authorization vote in late October, graduate workers voted by an overwhelming 85 percent to authorize the walkout. They are strong. They are united.

And so it's class war at NYU.

On one side are Sexton and his team of administrators and deans, operating on behalf of the all-millionaire board of trustees. On the other: 1,100 graduate, teaching and research assistants—backed by the vast majority of faculty, undergraduate students, and all the other campus unions, representing clerical, technical, maintenance, service and other workers.

Strike organizers report that hundreds

of faculty members have moved their classes off campus and pledged not to do the graduate employees' work during a strike. Students and teachers have signed petitions demanding that NYU negotiate with Local 2110, also called the Graduate Student Organizing Committee (GSOC).

Many undergraduate students' parents are speaking up, too. They're demanding that NYU use a portion of the exorbitant tuition dollars they pay not for union busting, but to fund a fair deal for the graduate students who do most of the undergraduate teaching.

National significance

The struggle at NYU is being watched closely by the national labor movement. A GSOC strike and its results would have repercussions for graduate student organizing at every private university in the country.

The university was ordered to recognize GSOC/Local 2110 in 2000, when the National Labor Relations Board ruled that the NYU graduate students are workers with full rights to collective bargaining. It took an ongoing mobilization to drag the administration to the bargaining table. After that it took a long, hard negotiation to win an agreement.

A contract was finally settled and signed in 2002. It established, for the first time, a range of rights for graduate employees. And it provided much-improved health benefits and pay.

Meanwhile, however, NYU continued to press for a reversal of the pro-GSOC ruling made in 2000. In July 2004, Sexton and company got what they wanted. The Labor Board, now packed with a reactionary majority, issued a new decision finding that graduate employees are not workers and have no right to union representation.

The administration moved quickly. Sexton announced he would refuse to negotiate for a second GSOC contract.

The contract expired this Aug. 31. On that day, protesters gathered in front of Bobst Library, site of the NYU administration offices. Several dozen people, including AFL-CIO President John Sweeney, were arrested for sitting down in front of the doors.

Now the showdown arrives. GSOC has called on all supporters to join its members in a massive show of strength to kick off the strike with a giant picket line at Bobst Library at 8 a.m. on Nov. 9.

The writer is a member of AFT Local 3882, the NYU clerical workers' union.

Mumia Abu-Jamal from death row

Other mothers, other movements

From an Oct. 26 audio commentary:

The death of civil rights icon Mrs. Rosa Parks, at the age of 92, has become a national event with media outlets running retrospectives from the Montgomery bus boycott, which sparked the rise of the late Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and the birth of the modern civil rights movement.



This, in this moment of familial and social loss, is yet a good thing for it teaches and reminds the young of how things were in an America that they did not live in. Mrs. Parks rightly deserved the accolades and honors heaped upon her for the great and noble role she played in a mass movement that touched the lives of millions.

Yet, unless one reads the work of Black and radical historians, we would not know that Mrs. Parks wasn't the first Black woman who refused to give her seat to a white man or was arrested for refusing to do so.

In December 1955, an organizer of the Women's Political Counsel, Jo Ann Robinson, acted within hours of Mrs. Parks arrest by working the phone tree and then writing a leaflet that went out throughout the city which read, "Another Negro woman has been arrested and thrown in jail, because she refused to get up out of her seat on the bus for a white person to sit down. It is the second time, since the Claudette Colvin case, that a Negro woman has been arrested for the same thing. This has to be stopped. Negroes have rights too for if Negroes did not ride the buses, they could not operate."

"Three fourths of the riders are Negroes, yet we are arrested or have to stand over empty seats. If we do not do something to stop these arrests, they will continue. The next time it may be you, or your daughter, or mother. This woman's case will come up on Monday. We are therefore asking every Negro to stay off the buses Monday in protest of the arrest and trial. Don't ride the bus to work, to town, to school, or anywhere on Monday. You can afford to stay out of school for one day if you have no other way to go except by bus. You can also afford to stay out of town for one day. If you work, take a cab, or walk. But please, children and grown ups, don't ride the bus at all on Monday. Please stay off all buses Monday." ("The Montgomery Bus Boycott and the Women Who Started It, The Memoir of Jo Ann Gibson Robinson," 1987)

Without Jo Ann Robinson's activism, who would know of Rosa Parks? What if she, or her Women's Political Counsel, did nothing? What if she hadn't activated the phone tree, or written and then distributed this leaflet, and what if Black folks in Montgomery, by the hundreds, thousands and more, didn't respond to those leaflets?

People build movements, one by one, in tens, hundreds, thousands and eventually millions, and what if Claudette Colvin, this poor woman, lost not only her seat and her dignity but was later tossed in a mental institution. Few remember this woman's name, but her contribution that would set the stage for Parks was immense, yet none of us can deny the power of Montgomery and how it electrified the nation.

On Thursday, Dec. 1, 2005, a number of organizations, unions and activists are calling for a Rosa Parks' 50th anniversary Nationwide Strike, to shut the war down. On that day, they're calling for no school, no shopping, no work, to not only mark Rosa Parks' refusal to give up her seat, but a nationwide strike against poverty, racism and war. Organizers include the Million Worker March Movement, the Troops Out Now Coalition, Black Workers For Justice and a wide, diverse group of organizations and leaders.

When asked about the bus boycott, Parks said, "The only thing that bothered me was that we waited so long to make this protest." It's been 50 years since her heroic stand in Montgomery, against the racist system of segregation. Today, in the brutal aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, it is past time for protests against poverty, racism and scourge of war. People joining together make movements.

From Death Row, this is Mumia Abu-Jamal. □

Broad support for Boston Day of Absence

By Bryan G. Pfeifer
Boston

Representatives from a broad cross-section of labor and community organizations have agreed to hold a series of militant actions in Boston on Dec. 1, the 50th anniversary of the day Rosa Parks was arrested for refusing to give up her bus seat to a white man in Montgomery, Ala. These Boston actions will be part of the Dec. 1 Nationwide Day of Absence against Poverty, Racism and War.

The participants in a Nov. 5 planning meeting unanimously agreed to Boston City Councilor Chuck Turner's proposals to name Dec. 1 "Rosa Parks Human Rights Day" and to submit a home-rule petition to have this day declared an annual Rosa Parks holiday in the city.

Possible Dec. 1 actions discussed include a rally at Boston City Hall followed by a march through the financial district and various working class and oppressed neighborhoods, ending with a teach-in at Roxbury Community College. Plans will be formalized and final leaflets produced at the next meeting on Nov. 12.

Councilor Turner, Rachael Nasca of the Women's Fightback Network, and Frantz Mendes, vice-president of Steelworkers Local 8751, Boston's school bus drivers union, co-chaired the meeting. It was held at the Painters and Allied Trades (IUPAT) District 35 union hall, also the site of Local 8751's office.

Tony Hernandez, IUPAT staff organizer and coordinator of Labor for Felix Arroyo, Boston's only Puerto Rican City Councilor, opened the meeting by "welcoming this organizing in our home."

Ron Bell of Dunk the Vote pledged his organization's support for Dec. 1 actions. Bell was a principal organizer of "Retracing the Struggle," a march on Oct. 30 that retraced the route walked by Dr. Martin Luther King in 1965 to protest segregation in Boston public

schools. The reenactment march was also to gather support for the Voting Rights Act, part of which is set to expire in 2007.

Gibran Rivera, a progressive District 6 candidate for Boston's City Council, endorsed Dec. 1 and thanked the participants for supporting him. Rivera's campaign is the first time in recent memory that a Latin@ candidate has seriously vied for this council seat, historically held by conservatives.

Larry Holmes, national coordinator of the Troops Out Now Coalition, traveled from New York City to the meeting and provided information on the resounding support Dec. 1 has received across the country. To date, over 1,000 individuals and organizations have endorsed and/or created Dec. 1 organizing committees, press conferences have been held in New York City and elsewhere, and an upcoming Dec. 1 support resolution, similar to one passed by the Boston City Council on Oct. 26, will soon be brought before the New York City Council for a vote. Holmes also emphasized the vital contributions of African-American women in the 381-day Montgomery bus boycott.

Tony Van Der Meer, Africana studies professor at the University of Massachusetts-Boston, gave a brief historical overview of the resistance of persons of African descent from the onset of slavery to the present day. He also told participants how Rosa Parks as well as others in the developing civil rights movement were sparked to action by the racist murder of Emmett Till.

Hurricane survivor tells of racism

When Carl Sisson, a Local 8751 steward, introduced his brother, Daryl Sisson, a New Orleans Hurricane Katrina survivor, the meeting went silent. People listened intently to descriptions of the federal government's racist aban-

donment of mostly African Americans in the Delta region in the wake of Hurricane Katrina.

The brothers painfully conveyed how their loved ones are now dispersed across the country and how they are unable to reconnect with them due to FEMA's criminal negligence and wholesale abandonment of hundreds of thousands of working class and oppressed survivors. "Our heritage has been stolen," said Carl Sisson. Those in attendance pledged their support for the Sissons, including supporting the right of return for survivors.

Rev. Franklin Hobbs of Healing Our Land reminded participants that Dec. 1 is World AIDS Day. The meeting pledged to make this a top priority at the Dec. 1 actions.

Four of the Somerville 5 spoke about their police brutality case, as did Carol Anderson, mother of two of these youths.

Members of the International Action Center from India informed participants of a day-long general strike there in October, joined by at least 40 million workers, that shut down vital sectors of the economy.

Other participants in the Nov. 5 meeting included members of the Archdale-Roslindale Coalition, Boston Troops Out Now coalition, Bromley Heath Maintenance Workers, Community Church of Boston, Disabled People's Liberation Front, International Action Center, New England Human Rights Organization for Haiti, Rev. Filipe Teixeira of the Young Cape Verdean Club and well-known anti-police brutality activist, Stonewall Warriors, United American Indians of New England, Veterans for Peace, Women's Fightback Network, graduate students from University of Maryland-College Park, progressive Indian activists as well as union members from AFSCME, the Communication Workers and Service Employees. □

Youth plan Dec. 1 protest

Youth and students in New York City are being encouraged to join a day of absence on Dec. 1, the 50th anniversary of Rosa Parks' arrest for refusing to relinquish her seat to a white man on a segregated bus in Montgomery, Ala.

This day of absence means no work, no school and no shopping in order to protest war, racism and poverty throughout the United States.

Fight Imperialism-Stand Together (FIST) is organizing a youth march and rally that will end up joining the Wall Street demonstration later in the day.

FIST will gather on the corner of 19th Street and

8th Avenue in Manhattan before marching to 14th Street at Union Square. At 11:30 a.m. speakers and entertainers will kick off the rally. There will also be a fund-raising donation box for Katrina survivors.

Following the rally, a second march will leave from Union Square at 3:20 p.m. heading for the major 4 p.m. rally at Wall Street. FIST is calling on everyone to work together to get military recruiters out of the schools and bring the troops home from Iraq. For more information on this FIST action, e-mail poweractivist@yahoo.com or call the Troops Out Now Coalition at (212) 633-6646. □



Strengthening Davis-Bacon for all

Continued from page 5

the prevailing wage when bidding for public works programs. The amendments came at the height of a labor upsurge and the beginning of the Congress of Industrial Organization's (CIO) organizing drives, which included bringing Black and immigrant workers into a powerful union-conscious movement that changed the relationship of class forces. This upsurge was an historic moment in working-class history.

Independent class-wide struggle, general strikes and seizure of plants led to progressive legislation and pre-

vented laws such as DBA from being overturned. The DBA was strengthened in 1964 to include fringe benefits in the calculation of on-site prevailing wages.

However, the DBA has been a political football, kicked around to suit the ruling class. Like all capitalist laws, progressive or reactionary, it reflects the vicissitudes of the times, the changing relationship of class forces and, most important, the struggle for the right of self-determination for the oppressed nationalities.

By the 1970s, the AFL-CIO was on the defensive. President Richard Nixon suspended DBA in February 1971. He

blamed the AFL-CIO, and in particular the construction trades, for growing inflation and initiated a wage freeze. But, weakened by the Vietnam War quagmire, he reversed himself after only 28 days and reinstated the act to win organized labor's support for the widening war.

In September 1992, President George H.W. Bush indefinitely suspended DBA in the aftermath of Hurricane Andrew, which devastated southern Florida. His intent was to reinforce divisions within the multinational labor movement and relieve the costs of contractors bidding on public

Millions More Movement rally

Taking the message to the people

Workers World Party and the International Action Center were both present at the Millions More Movement rally on Oct. 15 in Washington, D.C. One of their missions was to hand out flyers about the Dec. 1 Day of Absence, which will mark the 50th anniversary of the day our sister in the struggle, Rosa Parks, refused to give up her seat to a white man.

People not only accepted and welcomed this flyer and expressed solidarity with this call, but many families asked for more copies so that they could take them back to their children's schools. Some educators said they would discuss this in their classrooms. Childcare providers began to explain the chain of events in Montgomery to their little ones who were just beginning to read. Overall the response was incredible. We gave out tens of thousands of these flyers. I am sure that people will remember us as they deal with the sorrow of the passing of Rosa Parks.

In addition to handing out newspapers and Dec. 1 flyers, the main mission was to educate and organize. We were camped out on the sidelines of the rally

with a banner that read "Smash Capitalism & National Oppression." This is a beautiful, colorful banner that has Malcolm X and Harriet Tubman on one side and Sojourner Truth and Fred Hampton on the other, along with the red, black and green Black Liberation flag. As we all know, the MMM rally drew hundreds of thousands of people.

Letter Hundreds stopped to take pictures under that banner. At times there was a line of people waiting to take a picture with friends and family under our banner.

We began to wonder if people were just interested in the colorful banner or if they were also in agreement with what the banner read. This brings me to this one incident that confirmed that people were reading what this banner said. There was a group of about 13 youth of African descent. They all huddled under the banner for a group photo. One youth stood back and read the banner and said, "I am for smashing national oppression, but I ain't against capitalism." Carl Muhammad heard this young man make this statement. One of the youth tried to persuade his friend, "Come on man, just



Millions More Movement rally, Oct 15.

WW PHOTO: GLORIA VERDIEU

take the picture." His friend responded again, "No man, I am not against capitalism." At that point Carl said to the young brother, "What you don't understand is that capitalism created national oppression."

Carl began a class right there. The youth gathered around as Carl explained, "Capitalism is the root of all of the problems that the poor, workers, and people of color in this country face daily. Look at the clothes you wear, the jewelry that you have on, the food that you eat and the house you live in. We, as workers, produced all of these things yet we don't own the means of producing any of it. That in and of itself is a form of oppression." This discussion went on for at least a half an

hour and it was all positive, all good. We began to hear from the same young man responses like, "Man, I didn't know that," and "I need to check that out."

This is the kind of organization and education that needs to be taking place nationwide. We all agree that our youth are being denied the education that will involve them in the struggle for true peace and justice in this country. This youth took a stand based on the information that he had, and Carl gave him some truth and started the process of turning him around. Carl set an example of how we need to take our message to the streets.

Gloria Verdieu
San Diego

Baltimore bill calls for Day of Absence

The Baltimore City Council has voted to hold hearings on a bill that would celebrate the anniversary of Rosa Parks' courageous stand against segregation with a Day of Absence on Dec. 1. The public will have an opportunity to testify at the expedited hearing on Nov. 16, 11:30 a.m., at City Hall.

Baltimore has thus joined New York, Boston, Detroit, Oakland and other cities where resolutions have been introduced supporting the Day of Absence Against Poverty, Racism and War in honor of Parks, who died recently. The Alabama woman 50 years ago refused to give up her seat on a bus to a white man, sparking the Montgomery bus boycott and the beginning of the civil rights movement.

The bill encourages "all public and private businesses and educational institutions located in Baltimore City on December 1, 2005, to either close or allow their workers or attendees time off to attend Rosa Parks Commemoration events taking place during the normal business hours without sanctions."

Local groups, including the Baltimore NAACP and other community, union, student, anti-war and religious groups, will hold a rally at City Hall at 12 noon on Dec. 1, followed by a march through downtown Baltimore to highlight cuts in education, health care, utility hikes and shutoffs, labor rights and police and jail abuses.

—Sharon Black

Continued from preceding page

works projects by cutting wages.

When Bill Clinton became president, he reinstated DBA in March 1993 as a reward for AFL-CIO support. In 1994, DBA was again amended to cover the construction, renovation or repair of buildings used by Head Start programs.

Now that the Bush administration has reinstated DBA, it's time to strengthen this law to serve the interests of both organized labor and the oppressed nationalities and prevent the bosses from sowing divisions—which DBA was conceived to do nearly 80 years ago.

Hurricane Katrina has laid bare the crisis of a Black population exploited by class, racism and poverty. DBA needs language that puts this catastrophe front and center. Bush has promised a \$60 billion first installment on a \$200 billion appropriation to repair, rebuild and restructure dozens of cities like New Orleans around the Gulf Coast.

Bush and the corporate parasites are

planning to shape the reconstruction of the Gulf Coast to suit their need for profits. "With Congress dangling as much as \$200 billion in hurricane-related aid, lobbyists for oil companies, airlines, manufacturers and others are clamoring to get their share." ("Lobbies line up for relief riches," Washington Post, Sept. 28)

To advance the workers' struggle, there must be a united front that challenges the corporations' racist plans. Strengthening DBA would be a step in wiping out the lingering division between the organized labor movement and the oppressed nationalities. Ending this division is part of the challenge to labor.

The Million Worker March Movement (MWMM) has provided a perspective that takes on this challenge. Led by a core of Black leaders, the MWMM has called on the AFL-CIO, the Change to Win federation of unions and the anti-imperialist, anti-war forces to join them in this historic mission. Katrina will be an acid test for these potential allies. □



A National Day of Absence December 1

The 50th 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 or call 212 633-6646. You can endorse online, or email your endorsement to 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 Daugherty, 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 & Jazzy Musician & Composer; Harlem Tenants Union; East Bay Homeless Union, Oakland; Code Pink, Bremerton, WA; Artist & Activist United for Peace; Louisiana Peace Action Committee; Richmond Action Center; Virginia Anti-War Network; Orlan 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. USAWA, 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; Anise 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; Fanni 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., Anise for Social Justice, Springfield; Jerome Bilalud, 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, New York, NY; Metrovoice Youth Entrepreneurs Program, Inc., Washington, DC; October 2nd 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; IndiyragAction, Concord, CA; IWLU 465, Bortfield, IL; Politician' With The Sisters, Boston, MA; Atlantic Institute of Applied Psychophysiology, St Simons Island, GA; Wolf Enterprises Human Rights Advocacy, Whitefish, MT; Judy Greenspan, Bld Mmbr. CA Prison Focus; San Francisco, CA; Larry Hales, Denver IAC, Denver; Michael Letwin, Fmr. Pres. UAW Lo. 2325; Co-convenor, NYC; All Peoples Congress, Balti., MD; Aztlan Media Collective, East LA CA; Buffalo/WNY Int'l Action Center, Christians Against Murder & Exploitation, Lacey, WA; Citizens Initiative Omega, Manzell, Germany; Deist Gamme, 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; Multicultural Organism, Kent, OH; NPLA-New Patriot Liberation Assoc., Whitestone, NY; Old Hippies Sharing Higher Intellect & Thought, Norfolk, AR; Peoples Video Network, Planetary Crisis Action Group (reform), 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., Newnan, 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 Gamme, San Diego, CA; Fatemeh Abdollahzadeh, 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 Almoukdad, 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 Atkisson, St Louis, MO; Azmi & Salwa Audeh, Retired, Boulder, CO; Russ Austin, Denver; Lynn Azar, Bonny Doon, CA; Barbara Back,

Summit of the Americas

Bush humiliated as movement rebuffs FTAA

By David Hoskins

U.S. President George W. Bush received a chilly reception in the seaside city of Mar del Plata, Argentina, on Nov. 4-5. The chill came from his fellow presidents at an historic two-day summit meeting of leaders from 34 states in the Western Hemisphere, with socialist Cuba excluded.

In the streets of the city and the soccer stadium, however, the reception was hotter. Tens of thousands of Argentines and other Latin Americans trashed Bush and the so-called Free Trade Agreement of the Americas (FTAA) while cheering Venezuelan President Hugo Chávez and the memory of the legendary revolutionary Che Guevara, himself an Argentinean.

The Fourth Summit of the Americas convened on Nov. 4 under the ambitious title of "Creating Jobs to Fight Poverty and Strengthen Democratic Governance."

The U.S. ruling class, still smarting from its failure to win meaningful international and domestic support for its colonial adventure in Iraq and its inability to defeat the Iraqi resistance, had hoped to use the summit to advance its goal of strengthening and extending neo-colonial relations throughout Latin America.

For Bush, whose administration represents the interests of U.S. transnational capital, the meeting provided an opportunity to seek hemispheric consensus for the FTAA. This trade agreement models itself on relations, like those in the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), that have proved disastrous for the economies of underdeveloped and developing countries.

As early as March of this year the U.S. government publicly revealed that it would not hesitate to use FTAA as a vehicle to undermine the national sovereignty of countries that resist imperialist maneuvers in the hemisphere.

During a speech at the Harvard Club, U.S. Ambassador to Argentina Lino Gutierrez praised Argentina for working

to send "troops to Haiti and trying to help assure the survival of a democratic system in Venezuela and Bolivia." Gutierrez further speculated that Argentina's assistance in supporting the FTAA would reaffirm the two countries' shared "belief in the free market system as a vehicle to ... upholding democracy."

The "democracy" that Gutierrez speaks of includes U.S.-sponsored kidnappings and coups, as in Haiti, Chile and Guatemala, meant to ensure that only governments friendly to the objectives of imperialism control the countries in Latin America and the Caribbean.

Legacy of "free" trade proves ominous

NAFTA was implemented in 1994 when Democrat President Bill Clinton was in office. It aimed at eliminating all trade barriers between Canada, the United States and Mexico by 2009. NAFTA has shown it is detrimental to workers in all three countries who are struggling to maintain basic labor rights, social programs and public services against the attacks of unfettered capital.

A recent study conducted by the Economic Policy Institute demonstrates that over 1 million manufacturing jobs in the United States and Canada have been lost as a result of NAFTA. According to the EPI report, the results for Mexico's workforce have been equally devastating: manufacturing workers are now earning 21 percent less, salaried workers earn 25 percent less and the purchasing power of the Mexican minimum wage is now worth only half of its 1994 value.

Millions of Mexican workers and their families live in abject poverty in the slums surrounding the maquiladora industries along the U.S. border, which have grown sharply following the implementation of NAFTA.

The failures of NAFTA spurred a decade of resistance to "free trade" on the part of the workers and oppressed, who bear the brunt of the declining living standards and

environmental contamination that are the result of unregulated corporate domination. This resistance ranged from the armed rebellion that broke out in the southern Mexican state of Chiapas just after the signing of NAFTA, through the anti-globalization upsurge in Seattle in 1999 and on from there.

Now Bush has discovered on the streets of Mar del Plata that the legacy of militant resistance is alive and well.

Bush versus Che

A two-pronged people's movement battled the FTAA in the streets and behind the barricades, as well as at the summit meetings. One Latin American president fought to ensure that the summit remained true to its announced theme of creating jobs, fighting poverty and encouraging democratic governance: Venezuelan President Hugo Chávez, who proved a forceful opponent to FTAA at the summit.

President Chávez lobbied against FTAA behind closed doors and publicly supported the demonstrators during his address to 50,000 FTAA opponents during a counter-summit at the city's main soccer stadium. Chávez' public comments revealed the level of resistance Bush and other U.S. diplomats faced. "Every one of us has brought a shovel, because Mar del Plata is going to be the tomb of FTAA," Chávez said.

If the events in Argentina were in fact a battle between Bush's concept of freedom and that of the great, murdered revolutionary, Che Guevara, as the Christian Science Monitor suggested, the Bush concept was dealt a near knock-out blow. Tens of thousands of protesters marched in the streets, rallied under banners with like-



nesses of Che, and burned effigies of Bush. Guevara was assassinated in 1967 at the direction of the CIA while leading a guerrilla campaign in Bolivia.

At the summit's conclusion, Bush left without an FTAA deal, without a final communiqué and even without the clear support of host-country Argentina.

Protests follow Bush to Brazil

Bush's reception in Argentina left the U.S. ruling class high and dry. His estrangement from Mexican President Vicente Fox, a former ally, was obvious from Fox's comments dismissing their lack of a face-to-face meeting. Fox has been hoping for an agreement that would allow Mexican workers to come legally to the U.S., but to no avail. Mexicans without papers continue to die by the hundreds crossing the U.S. border.

When Bush traveled to Brazil Nov. 6, the protest against FTAA followed him to the capital of Brasilia and through a half-dozen other major Brazilian cities. Protesters painted monuments in the capital city with graffiti denouncing Bush's planned visit with slogans that read, "Get out, killer Bush" and "Yankees go home."

Even in Panama, Bush's last stop, there were demonstrators in the streets and Bush effigies burning. He returned home defeated and without his deal. The other hemispheric leaders had to heed the rallying cry in the streets as the people turned down the FTAA. □

Racism, poverty fuel rebellion in France

Continued from page 1

300 people were killed; their bodies were thrown into the Seine and some were hanged.

From external to internal colonialism

Just as the original law was meant to maintain colonialism in Algeria, so the present decree is meant to maintain internal colonialism.

The French ruling class has proclaimed that in the "social republic" everyone is equal and that the government pursues a policy of "integration." But in interview after interview with people of all ages, reporters for the capitalist networks and print media get the same story. "We are told we are French, but we are not French." "We have the papers that say 'French' but we are not the real French."

If your name sounds African or Middle Eastern, your application for a job or for decent housing goes to the bottom of the pile or gets tossed altogether. Unemployment among African college graduates is close to 50 percent. "Janitor

is our profession" is a common view.

In keeping with the political fiction of "equality," the French government does not keep statistics on discrimination. Affirmative action in France is forbidden; it clashes with the assertions of equality. The reactionary application of this concept was demonstrated when head scarves for female students were forbidden on the false ground of the secular separation of church and state.

But just as Katrina exposed the naked racism and national oppression that exists in the United States, the great rebellion in France has exploded all political fictions of equality and social justice. President Jacques Chirac, Prime Minister Dominique de Villepin and Interior Minister Nicolas Sarkozy are now jockeying with each other in the crisis.

Sarkozy is hated by the oppressed and all progressives throughout France for his openly hard-line, "law and order" policy and his racist insults. The government has no one it can talk to with any influence among the youth. And the entire regime is now moving towards increased repression.

At the same time, de Villepin has resorted to the carrot along with the stick, talking about 20,000 state jobs, money for neighborhoods, and tax breaks for businesses and development.

It took a rebellion in 300 cities, that as of Nov. 9 has lasted almost two weeks and has virtually overwhelmed the police, to get the ruling class to even talk about reforms. This rebellion is earthshaking and the ruling class will soon find out that Band-aids will not fix the problem.

Bosses wanted immigrants after WWII

The crisis has its origins in the inexorable developing crisis of world capitalism. French imperialism has dealt with this crisis by launching a vicious, racist campaign of divide and conquer directed against the entire French working class. The key element in their strategy has been a slanderous campaign against immigrants. The rebellion is the fruit of this strategy.

After World War II French capitalism was in ruins from the Nazi occupation and the Allied invasion. The population and

the working class had declined. The ruling class decided that to get back on its feet quickly it needed an influx of immigrants—wage slaves who could be exploited at the least cost to the bosses in order to strengthen French capitalism in the world struggle for markets.

The result was an opening up of immigration, especially from North Africa—Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia. This policy continued throughout the period of imperialist expansion up to the 1970s. French imperialism had been driven out of Vietnam, then out of Algeria, and suffered from economic contraction more severely than its rivals. But the organized working class was powerful. It rebelled in 1968 and forced drastic changes in the government and some progressive concessions.

As the 1970s developed, the ruling class reversed its attitude toward immigration. It began to impose restrictions and in the 1980s even threatened to deport hundreds of thousands of legal immigrants by revoking their status retroactively. This measure was defeated, but just raising it was a

FRANCE

Rebellion exposes deep crisis

By G. Dunkel

A wave of youth rebellions against police harassment and brutality in the mostly immigrant suburbs of major French cities has created a political and social crisis in France that can be felt throughout Western Europe.

The rebellions put on the front burner the relations between imperialist governments and the mostly working-class population who have immigrated from former colonies. These struggles cry out against racism, xenophobia, high unemployment and a lack of future for the youth, exacerbated in this case by the rightist government in power in Paris.

Photos from France show burning cars, schools, buses; not shown by the U.S. media are scenes of banks, police stations and other state institutions that have been targets of young people's anger.

The struggle burst into the open on Oct. 27 after two youths, one of Mauritanian origin, the other Tunisian, were electrocuted when they tried to hide from police in an electric substation.

At first the protests were concentrated in poor, working-class suburbs northeast of Paris, where most residents are French-born children of North African immigrants. By Nov. 6, however, they had spread widely—to Lille in the north, Rennes in the west, Dijon in the east and Marseille in the south.

The intensity of the attacks is new and still growing, with 1,300 cars, trucks and buses being burned as of Saturday night, Nov. 5-6, and 1,406 more on Nov. 6-7. The Nov. 3 *Le Monde* pointed out, however, that 28,000 cars and trucks have been burned since Jan. 1. Police claim they have had 37 injuries throughout France.

Youths interviewed on French television also pointed to factors sustaining the protests. Two days after the rebellions started, some racist tossed a teargas grenade into a mosque filled with people who had come to pray at the end of the day's Ramadan fast.

The youths also blamed Interior Minister Nicolas Sarkozy, who on an inspection tour of one of the suburbs said

publicly that the protesters were "scum" who had to be "pressure-hosed from their communities" before they spread their "gangrene."

One Muslim man, although he brought his family to a "peace" march sponsored by Sarkozy's party, told the French newspaper *Libération*, "Pressure hoses, isn't that how they clean shit off dogs?"

The youth blame Sarkozy for the police harassment that weighs on them. Police in France can legally demand that people show their identification cards and hold people at the precinct for four hours to verify their ID and check for warrants. This ID check is almost always directed against youths of North African and African origin, who say that it shows the police and the French state do not respect their rights.

The government campaign against head scarves worn by Muslim women in public places and the roundup and massive deportations of West African immigrants this year also left a deep residue of bitterness among these youths and their parents.

Most North African communities in France, where much housing is public, contain a substantial number of immigrants who are established citizens and a much smaller number born in France. Whether from North or sub-Saharan Africa, they are generally Muslim. Islam has as many practicing members as Catholicism in France.

High unemployment

At an official rate of 10 percent, unemployment is high in France, and much higher still among youths in these immigrant working-class suburbs. The right-wing government has cut funds for social services, education—which is financed on a national level—public transportation, and grants to community centers and special programs for the youth.

As the youths pointed out over and over in their interviews, no matter how well educated they are or how high their school marks, if they have a Muslim name the only job they can get is to be a porter at the airport.

While services and public expenses devoted to the needs of poor and working people have been cut, taxes on the rich and on dividends have been slashed. Pensions and wages are under attack.

For example, the public transportation workers in Marseille, a city where the working class is thoroughly multinational, were out on strike for 33 days. Rather than settling, the national government passed a law making the strike illegal and forcing the workers back. This is a big step to the right for France.

On Nov. 6 President Jacques Chirac finally spoke out after a meeting of his domestic Security Council. With Prime Minister Dominique de Villepin at his side, Chirac said that the "absolute priority of his government was to reestablish law and order." Solving the problems of

the suburbs can wait, he said.

De Villepin announced a few minutes later that he was going to make some proposals for equal opportunity but, more importantly, he wanted people arrested and tried immediately. Already 160 of those arrested during the last 10 days have been tried and 20 have been imprisoned.

Most left and workers' parties have criticized the rightist government, and especially Sarkozy, for provoking the rebellions. They have demanded more funds for social services and more respect for people's rights in the affected communities.

According to the Nov. 5 daily *L'Humanité*, the French Communist Party (PCF) held a demonstration in front of the Hotel Matignon Nov. 4 to blame the government for not responding to the people's need for justice and respect.

As of Nov. 8, however, there have been no actions reported by unions or other mass organizations in open solidarity with the youths from the immigrant communities. □



French soldiers murder Ivoirian prisoner

The brutality of French imperialism in the Algerian war for independence, when it killed 1 million Algerians from 1954 to 1962 in a vain attempt to maintain its colony, is part of the historical background of the current struggle in France.

But Algeria wasn't France's only colony in Africa. The Ivory Coast, although without the oil and natural gas riches of Algeria, was one of France's most profitable possessions. More French lived there after its formal independence than before.

In 2002, a rebellion broke out and France rushed in troops to prop up its clients. The fighting was sharp. Finally, an Ivoirian plane bombed the French barracks, causing eight deaths.

A stalemate was arrived at. The French troops and their clients have been holding the south, while the rebels hold the north.

In May, an Ivoirian named Firmin Mahe was wounded and captured after

allegedly being in a firefight with French soldiers. While he was being transported to prison in a French armored car, soldiers put a plastic bag over his head and he suffocated to death.

On Nov. 3 the French minister of defense formally reprimanded Gen. Henri Poncet, commander of the French forces, and his assistant, Gen. Renaud de Malaussene, for covering up the murder, and removed them from their commands. This is the heaviest punishment they can receive.

A judicial inquiry has also been opened in a gesture to public opinion in France and in the Ivory Coast.

The viciousness with which the French ruling class defends its interests abroad is also reflected in how it treats the people who immigrate from those areas.

—G. Dunkel

divisive measure.

The crisis of immigrants was aggravated by the scientific-technological revolution and the capitalist de-industrialization that hit the suburbs and left little rust belts and shuttered factories around all the cities.

In the 1990s, the fascist French National Front, led by Jean-Marie Le Pen, picked up on the campaign started by the mainstream ruling class and took it even further. Le Pen made progress on his racist anti-immigrant campaign and in 2002 actually got into a run-off for the presidency with Jacques Chirac.

The working class leadership in France has been weak on this question and down-right reactionary at times. Right now they need to stop retreating. They must not confine themselves to mere protests against reactionary measures of repression. They need to demand that all the cops be withdrawn, that the emergency decrees be revoked. They need to come out for the justified rebellion.

The rebellious youth must be embraced as part of the working class. They may be unemployed, underemployed and/or

unorganized, but right now they are potentially the greatest allies of the organized workers. They have overwhelmed a part of the state. They are mobilized and if they were to be joined by a solidarity strike against racism, poverty and oppression, the entire working class could push the ruling class offensive back.

It would be a mirror, but on a grander scale, of when the French workers in 1968 followed the students with a general strike and shook the ground under French capitalism. It is the lack of understanding of the national question, of the colonial question, of the importance of coming out against national oppression, that now stands in the way of a united struggle against capitalist exploitation itself. This must be overcome.

The French working class has a glorious history of class struggle and uprisings, going back to the revolution of 1848, the Paris Commune of 1871, the mutinies after World War I, and the general strikes of 1934 and 1968. This is the moment for the leaders to grasp their historic role and their responsibility to turn the situation around and fight back. □



The beginning of history— AGAIN

Remember the end of history? Once the USSR fell in 1990, there wasn't supposed to be anything but capitalism forever after.

This month marks 88 years since the Bolshevik Revolution in Russia, and exactly 100 years since the first Russian Revolution in 1905, which brought a new political formation into the world: workers' soviets, or councils. For the first time, workers had a political instrument to vie for power with the propertied classes. In 1917, when the tsar fell and two more revolutions came in quick succession, the peasants and the soldiers set up their own councils, too, so that by October there was already in place an alternative to the corrupt government of the bosses and landlords.

At the prodding of Lenin and the Bolsheviks, the Soviets then took the power. It was the beginning of a revolution that lasted for more than 70 years. They took the country out of World War I, renouncing the tsar's plans to annex territory, and turned over the factories, banks and lands to the working people.

But world capitalism wasn't dead yet. Even as socialist revolutions were spreading in Asia and eventually Eastern Europe, promising greater equality, capitalism was penetrating country after country, coopting feudal lords and latifundistas. The imperialist countries, which had all fattened off of colonialism, had the technology to greatly increase the productive output of the working masses. The early socialist countries, all poor to begin with, were still trying to catch up. But where the imperialists made inroads, the wealth they generated went almost entirely to themselves, secondly to their local allies, and only the smallest of crumbs to the people.

For many hundreds of millions around the world, daily life became more wretched even as modern transportation, communications, energy and machines grew up all around them, sucking out their natural resources and moving the wealth abroad. The U.S., grown into an imperialist economic and military superpower, was able to grind down what was left of the workers' states in the Soviet Union and its close allies.

The gap between rich and poor grew to unbelievable proportions. Not just between social classes, but between exploiting and exploited countries. A handful of billionaires arose whose net assets equal those of half the nations on earth. Inside the U.S. itself, as workers' wages remained stagnant, executive salaries doubled, tripled, and finally grew to 20 and 30 times what they were just a few decades ago.

So now here we are, 15 years after the end of history. And, to the alarm of the rich, capitalism is not a pretty word at all.

As surprised reporters following Bush to Argentina just heard, socialism is the word that is resonating throughout Latin America. And why not? The workers and farmers of the many countries "south of the border" know all about capitalism. And it has only brought them grief.

Ever since the Cuban Revolution, Washington has come up with one high-sounding plan after another: Alliance for Progress, NAFTA, CAFTA, FTAA. But for every dollar the U.S. has put into Latin America, the imperialists have taken out five.

Meanwhile, socialist Cuba has helped its neighbors with doctors and medicines and teachers, even when it was struggling to survive the cruel U.S. economic blockade. And it asked for nothing in return.

And now comes Venezuela. President Hugo Chávez says his country aims to build "socialism of the 21st century," and is working with other countries of the region on development plans free of the exploitation and control that go with every scheme generated by the transnational corporations that run Washington.

Yes, for a lot of people, history seemed over for a while there. It was a pretty awful period but, as history goes, it didn't last that long. History is back, and with it the hope of all humanity for change, for a life of dignity, justice and sovereignty, a life without billionaires and without beggars, a life where everyone has the right to a job, a home, an education, health care, and time to relax and enjoy what we have produced. We call it socialism. And so do more and more people every day. □

When Mattachine got red-baited

By Leslie Feinberg

Because of space considerations after Hurricane Katrina, WW in September began running the "Lavender & Red" series in full only on-line, with the print edition containing just the first paragraph. Because of requests from our readers, however, we are resuming the full series here, beginning with the first missed article.

The communist leaders of the Mattachine organization were red-baited soon after they publicly defended Dale Jennings, one of the founding members of the group, against anti-gay police entrapment charges.

Arab-American attorney George Shibley, who defended Jennings, became the target of McCarthyite red-baiting.

Harry Hay, a founding member of Mattachine, was "outed" in a Los Angeles daily paper in February 1953 as having been a former Marxist teacher. Mattachine itself was characterized by a February Los Angeles Times article as organizing dangerously subversive activities.

In response, the Mattachine Foundation—as the above-ground voice of the organization—hastily published an "Official Statement of Policy on Political Questions and Related Matters." The document disavowed any relationship with any other organization—which of course at the height of the McCarthyite witch hunt meant the Communist Party USA—and from any political, religious, or cultural ideology or "ism."

No matter how wise or tactically sound this public statement may have seemed to the Mattachine leadership at that time, it's hard to imagine that such a political retreat could have provided any respite from the anti-communist Cold War witch hunt.

The defensiveness of the stance was made even clearer by the unanimous agreement by the core leadership—the Fifth Order—that since Hay had been publicly singled out, he had to remove himself from public association with the Mattachine Society and Foundation. It's not clear from accounts of the group decision how Hay himself felt about it. But he agreed to pass on all speaking engagements to other Mattachine founders and thereafter only wrote under his nom de guerre, Eann MacDonald. ("The Trouble with Harry Hay")

'A movement in motion'

With the Foundation as its public face, Mattachine sent questionnaires to all the candidates in the local Los Angeles elections.

Candidates running for the Board of Education received letters charging the public school system with "a high percentage of responsibility for the social tragedy" faced by homosexuals. The questionnaire polled each candidate about where they stood on "non-partisan" counseling about homosexuality in high schools.

Electoral hopefuls in the race for mayor, city council and board of supervisors got letters detailing the "growing body of evidence" that Los Angeles police were carrying out "explicitly unlawful" actions against homosexuals. Candidates were canvassed about their view on these police activities.

Few candidates replied. But the Mattachine founders were on a roll. With new numbers swelling their ranks, they attempted to take this nascent movement to unprecedented heights. Konrad Stevens remembered, "[W]e were meeting very often. We just lived Mattachine. We didn't do anything else. We never went anywhere just for pleasure. When we went, it was organizing."

Chuck Rowland wrote to Harry Hay that they had all "set a movement in motion."

Twisting the knife of red-baiting

The Mattachine leaders were not just vulnerable because they were anonymous. They were also a core of dedicated revolutionaries, most with communist backgrounds. But because they were underground they could not speak out about their political beliefs and try to win over others in the organization to their

world view. While speaking out may not have seemed to them to be an option—because they feared McCarthyism presaged a fascist takeover of the federal government—it left these revolutionaries voiceless to defend themselves against red-baiting.

Sen. Joseph McCarthy had taken over the chair of the Government Operations Committee as well as its permanent subcommittee on investigations in January 1953. A month later, while the Mattachine leaders were holding their urgent meeting to discuss reorganization, McCarthy's probe to find communists in the State Department was accompanied by scare headlines.

The House Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC), which had terrorized Hollywood with six years of investigations, was back in Los Angeles in March and April, holding public hearings focusing on the Communist Party USA, of which Harry Hay had been a member for 18 years.

It was in this political context of repression and whipped-up fear that a syndicated columnist at the Los Angeles Daily Mirror, Paul Coates, wrote an article on March 12 describing the Mattachine Foundation to readers as "a strange new pressure group."

At first glance, Coates' article appeared to be a real media breakthrough. He explained what the Mattachine name meant.

"It is not inconceivable," he argued, that homosexuals, "scorned" by the community at large, "might band together for their own protection. Eventually they might swing tremendous political power." He added that homosexuals, "one of the largest minorities in the country," could exercise a voting bloc of 150,000 to 200,000 in the local area alone.

Pointing to the Foundation's demand for protective laws against police harassment, Coates wrote that this "scorned part of the community" could turn out to be "a group of responsible citizens seriously concerned with a tragic social problem."

However, he dropped the other shoe: there were some matters that should be alarming to the organization's membership and the public at large.

Claiming that he had tried to track down the foundation's treasurer, Romayne Cox, to no avail, he ran a provocative subhead in his article: "Where is Romayne?"

"If I belonged to that club, I'd worry," he wrote with mock concern.

Coates claimed to have checked and found no record of the foundation's incorporation. In fact, Mattachine attorney Fred Snider had filed the papers already, but there had been a bureaucratic delay.

Coates twisted the knife of red-baiting. He reported that Fred Snider had been called before HUAC and that he had been an "unfriendly witness."

Baiting the leadership, Coates concluded that, "A well-trained subversive could move in and forge that power into a dangerous political weapon."

"To damn this organization, before its aims and directions are more clearly established, would be vicious

and irresponsible.

"Maybe the people who founded it are sincere. It will be interesting to see."

To the Mattachine leaders, the article seemed like good publicity during a period of such political reaction.

"We all thought it was pretty good," Hay recalled in a later interview, "and so we ran off 20,000 copies to send out to our mailing list and to be distributed city- and statewide. Wow! Whammo! We'd forgotten what the detail about Fred Snider's being unfriendly to the House Un-American Activities Committee would do to the middle-class Gays in Mattachine. We had been getting in this status-quo crowd; the discussion groups had been growing by leaps and bounds.

"When Paul Coates' article appeared, all the status-quo types in the discussion groups were up in arms; they had to get control of that damn Mattachine Foundation," he recalled with sarcasm, "which was tarnishing their image, giving them a bad name. This is when the real dissension began between the founders and the middle-class crowd."

Next: Left wing loses battle for Mattachine.



PART 47

The entire Lavender & Red series, which explores the history of the socialist movement and the struggle for sexual & gender liberation, can be read online at www.workers.org.

As 'fragging' case worries Pentagon

U.S. offensive kills many civilians in Iraq

By John Catalinotto

The Pentagon mounted its biggest offensive in a year against Iraqi resistance forces on Nov. 5. According to a statement from the Marines, some 2,500 U.S. troops and 1,000 local Iraqis took part in "Operation Steel Curtain," rolling through the streets of Qusayba on the Syrian border.

A Reuters article Nov. 5 calls this offensive "the biggest operation in the mainly Sunni desert province of Anbar since weeks of fighting forced insurgents from the city of Falluja, close to Baghdad, in November last year."

A collaborationist Iraqi politician, Defense Minister Saadoun Dulaimi, aroused anger when he encouraged the U.S. slaughter: "Without hesitation I say we will go and bring down their houses on the heads of their inhabitants." The media in Arab countries carried stories of entire families wiped out in the onslaught, in which the U.S. conducted nine aerial bombings.

The Marines claim the target is "al-Qaeda," that is, a "terrorist network" and that the U.S. forces use only precision bombing and artillery fire. According to reports from the Iraqi resistance, U.S. war propaganda exaggerates the role of what they call "al-Qaeda in Iraq." The Pentagon also claims its troops are carrying out "surgical" strikes when, in reality, the U.S. Air Force is bombing people's homes, killing dozens of civilians and terrorizing thousands.

"Local people said there were dozens of civilian casualties in Qusayba and nearby Qaim," Reuters reported. "They added that much of Qusayba's 30,000 people had already fled the town. 'The Americans destroyed Qaim. Our houses are destroyed, our children are getting killed. What are we supposed to do now?' one unidentified resident told a local reporter." (Reuters, Nov. 5)

In early October U.S. forces carried out a similar attack on the town of Haditha, but not as large as "Operation Steel Curtain." The following report, published by the BRussells Tribunal, passed on this description of Haditha from local Iraqis:

"Water, electricity, phones, roads were all cut off. The city was besieged before the bombing began on Oct. 5 and went on for 18 days. Many houses were demolished; many families left to the refugee camps, many people were arrested, including the Moslem Scholars Association secretary in Haditha and his son.

"The general hospital was occupied for 10 days; the hospital director and one of the doctors were brutally beaten and locked up for a week inside the hospital. Many schools and offices were still occupied. All houses were raided, some twice a day. All weapons were confiscated including the personal. There is no government, no offices, no schools, no work, no markets ... nothing."

One can only assume that, at present, an even greater assault on the civilian population is going on under the name of "Operation Steel Curtain" and that the

U.S. military in Iraq aims to terrorize the population, not win its allegiance.

Fragging: what goes around, comes around

It is no surprise then, that the Pentagon's brutal policies are coming back to haunt them.

In a hearing in Kuwait on Nov. 1 and 2, Staff Sgt. Alberto B. Martinez was charged with the murder of West Point graduate Capt. Philip Esposito and 1st Lt. Louis E. Allen at Forward Operating Base Danger, near Tikrit, Iraq, on June 7. Martinez may face the death penalty.

The deaths were first reported as the result of fire from Iraqi resistance forces. According to expert witnesses, however, the fatal wounds were more consistent with injuries from a Claymore anti-personnel mine and fragmentation grenades.

Soldiers killing their officers with fragmentation grenades became a regular event during the war in Vietnam. Between 1969 and 1971 alone, the Army reported 600 separate "fragging" incidents, which caused 82 deaths and 651 injuries.

It was not only personal grievances against selected officers that motivated the Vietnam-era fragging, but the overall anti-war political climate and the unwillingness of African-American troops to tolerate racism. Officers who were considered too aggressive in moving troops into battle or who had treated enlisted soldiers in a racist way were especially at risk.

Though a witness testified that Martinez said he hated Esposito, no

explicit political or personal reason was given to explain Martinez's alleged motive.

Attorneys for the accused argued that at the time of the deaths, the U.S. was not officially at war—President George W. Bush had announced over a year earlier that the war with Iraq was over. Their motion that Martinez be tried in a civilian court was denied.

The first fragging of the U.S. aggression against Iraq took place just before the March 20, 2003, invasion. Last April, Sergeant Hasan Akbar of the Army's 101st Airborne Division was convicted of the murder of two officers and attempted murder in the wounding of 14 other soldiers. Akbar was sentenced to death.

Akbar, a Muslim, had told investigators he staged the attack because he was upset that U.S. troops would kill his fellow Muslims.

While no political motive has yet been made public for the latest alleged fragging, some reports indicate the Pentagon is worried that this may not remain an isolated incident.

The population of the U.S. has become aware that the Bush administration lied to justify the U.S. invasion of Iraq. Soldiers know, too, that over 2,000 of their buddies have died serving a lie. They also know how the U.S. is slaughtering the Iraqi people and how much these people hate the occupation. Whether this knowledge results in organized refusals to fight or individual acts against authority, the Pentagon generals know the chain of command is in trouble. □

Part 2: Divide to conquer

Imperialists plot 'regime change' in Iran

By Ardeshir Ommani

The 1979 Revolution in Iran overthrew the dictatorial regime of Mohammad Reza Shah, who had been Washington's obedient puppet. Since then, intimidation, threats and actual aggression by the imperialist powers of the U.S. and Western Europe against Iran have been taking shape on numerous fronts.

The U.S. and the dominant powers of Europe, even after 26 years, have not come to grips with the new reality of today's independent Iran. They are still dreaming of turning the wheels of history back and re-establishing their political, military and economic domination over the oil-rich country. But, to their regret, today's Iran is not the Iran of 1953, when a pack of U.S.-British intelligence officers could carry out a palace coup and overturn the entire state apparatus by influencing the top ranks of the Iranian military.

Therefore, a new, more sophisticated and comprehensive strategy, worthy of the

era of globalization, has to be devised—a strategy that consists of using the entire arsenal of corporate propaganda tools at the disposal of world imperialism, as well as the "honorable" offices of the United Nations General Secretary, if possible its Security Council, the International Atomic Energy Agency—the UN's nuclear watchdog, and the NGOs of the day—so-called "human rights" and even women's organizations. Behind all this are the cruel economic sanctions against the entire population of Iran and threats to use tactical nuclear devices.

Divide and conquer

The period immediately following World War II saw the rise of nationalist fervor, a new labor movement and new socialist organizations in Iran.

The British government, trying to strengthen the tentacles of the British Petroleum Co. around Iran's oil industry and its mighty labor force, armed a minority of the Iranian Arab population living in

the Persian/Arab Gulf region to attack striking workers, whose demands did not go beyond the right to organize and the right to safe housing, with clean, running water and electricity. These armed Arabs who attacked the oil refinery workers were themselves poor and destitute. They were used by the British and Arab feudal sheiks in the pay of the British intelligence service.

When the imperialist powers cannot control a government and cannot subvert it from within, they resort to creating discord between different nationalities and setting centrifugal tendencies in motion, tearing the national and unifying fabric of the society apart. The first stage in the division of the country is to challenge the commonality of interests of different nationalities in a geographical entity that has lasted for centuries.

What is so insidious about encouraging the nationalities to be at each other's throats is that such schemes are presented with an aura of pseudo-progressivism—of emancipation from national oppression. In Iraq this scheme, formulated by the most decadent breed of British and Yankee imperialism, is nothing short of a plan for privatization and expropriation of Iran's national wealth: its natural resources, especially oil and natural gas, its financial institutions and public health insurance enterprise, the manufacturing and public service sectors, and finally the urban and rural public-landed properties.

The final stage of this plan is to open wide the doors of Iran's labor and commodity markets to the giant transnational corporations, led by Wall Street.

The latest anti-Iran propaganda show was performed by Michael Ledeen, a res-

ident scholar of the American Enterprise Institute (AEI), a co-founder of the Coalition for Democracy in Iran, and a former consultant in the Department of State, Department of Defense and the White House.

Ledeen, an arch-reactionary at the service of the most rabid and blood-thirsty faction of world imperialism and Zionism, is a strong advocate of regime change, not only in Iran but also in Syria, Egypt and even Washington's ally, Saudi Arabia.

On Oct. 26, on behalf of the AEI, he participated in a conference named "The Unknown Iran, Another Case for Federalism." Ledeen, an inept and wishful thinker, prematurely assumes that federalism has already taken root in Iraq, and it is now Iran's turn to be dragged into factional fighting, a civil war and division.

The agenda of the conference was to promote and exploit the differences between various nationalities, races, and religious and ethnic groupings across Iran. Ledeen is a staunch supporter of launching U.S. military intervention and the occupation of Iran. In this conference he courted a few isolated individuals who self-righteously had appointed themselves spokespeople for different nationalities there. Among the four members of the panel, the spectrum of ideas ranged from self-rule to outright separatism for various nationalities.

A fleeting glance at the U.S.-NATO war on Yugoslavia, Afghanistan and now Iraq leads one to believe that balkanization of many independent countries, especially the petroleum-rich states of the Middle East, is at the heart of the U.S. strategy for world domination. □

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Aumentan las amenazas estadounidenses contra la Revolución Bolivariana

Por Teresa Gutiérrez

Mientras el proceso revolucionario en Venezuela continúa inspirando a millones por el mundo, la amenaza de intervención se asoma como nube oscura sobre esta gran nación sudamericana rica en petróleo.

El imperialismo estadounidense está sobreextendido con guerras en Irak y Afganistán que no puede manejar más una creciente crisis política en la Casa Blanca. Es precisamente en épocas como ésta que el imperialismo estadounidense puede ser más peligroso porque aquellos en el poder pueden estar tentados a esperar que la intervención en el extranjero pueda distraer la atención de la gente a estas crisis.

Primero en la lista de metas de Washington es la incipiente Revolución Bolivariana de Venezuela.

Mientras la administración del Presidente Hugo Chávez tiene grandes avances sociales, económicos y políticos, el peligro de intervención estadounidense amenaza parar todo este progreso.

Durante las últimas semanas, las amenazas de Washington se han intensificado.

William Arkin reportó en la edición de Internet del Washington Post el 2 de noviembre que “El Pentágono ha empezado planes de contingencia para un potencial conflicto militar con Venezuela como parte de una amplia evaluación

post-Irak de las amenazas estratégicas contra los Estados Unidos. La planificación la ha precipitado directivas generales y específicas promulgadas por el Secretario de Defensa Donald Rumsfeld y sus asistentes de política civil.”

Venezuela ha estado redirigiendo sus recursos para acabar con el analfabetismo, construir casas y escuelas y proveer alimentos subvencionados para los pobres, e implementando la reforma agraria. Para la pandilla de Bush, todo eso es una “amenaza estratégica”.

En julio, cientos de soldados estadounidenses fueron asignados a Paraguay para ejercicios militares que durarán hasta el 2006. Hay evidencia de que instalarán otra base militar permanente estadounidense, una que será capaz de acomodar aviones bombarderos. Aparentemente Washington espera que la presencia de estas tropas pueda alterar los vientos de cambio que están soplando por el continente.

También en julio, el Congreso autorizó al gobierno a iniciar emisiones de radio y televisión a Venezuela para contrarrestar a Telesur, entidad radiodifusora de televisión independiente del imperialismo que fue fundada por Venezuela, Argentina, Uruguay y Cuba, y apoyada por Brasil. Telesur transmitirá programas en Venezuela y por toda América Latina y el Caribe.

El 19 de agosto, el Secretario de Defensa Donald Rumsfeld acusó a Chávez de tener un “comportamiento desestabilizador y anti-social” que amenaza la seguridad de la región. La Secretaria de Estado Condoleezza Rice ha repetido este punto de vista en más de una ocasión.

El 30 de octubre, el Washington Post publicó un editorial declarando que “la comunidad de derechos humanos está bajo asedio” en Venezuela. El editorial también dijo que la libertad de prensa y los periodistas también estaban siendo amenazados. Esta especie de editorial intenta disminuir la popularidad de la revolución venezolana dentro de los Estados Unidos y preparar así para una intervención.

Hay aumento de evidencia que Washington está utilizando de nuevo ciertas fuerzas religiosas para sabotear la revolución Venezolana al igual que lo hizo en Nicaragua durante los años 80. A fines de octubre, el gobierno de Venezuela anunció que había tenido que pedir que saliera del país a una misión evangélica, las Nuevas Tribus. La iglesia de los Mormones, basada en los Estados Unidos, también retiró a todos sus misionarios de Venezuela, mencionando motivos de seguridad.

El Presidente Chávez dijo que los misionarios estaban asociados a la CIA y estaban buscando información estratégica que amenazaba la seguridad nacional de

Venezuela.

Venezolanos derechistas anti-Chavistas, muchos de los cuáles están fuera del país, están organizando una campaña hostil y maliciosa contra la Venezuela Bolivariana y su liderazgo. En varios sitios en la Internet y en comunicados de prensa, ellos llaman abiertamente a la “violencia” en Venezuela.

Hay que tomar en serio estas amenazas. El uso a través de cuatro décadas de cubanos derechistas por el imperialismo estadounidense para sabotear a Cuba es un perfecto ejemplo de lo peligroso que pueden ser estos elementos.

El creciente proceso Bolivariano en Venezuela ha ganado los corazones de las masas por todas las partes del mundo. Desde África hasta Asia, de Europa a Estados Unidos y por toda la América, los pueblos están está vitoreando a Hugo Chávez y a la revolución en Venezuela.

Esta solidaridad será decisiva mientras el imperialismo extiende sus tentáculos para hacer todo lo posible de parar la Revolución Bolivariana. Cuba, sin embargo, ha enseñado que cuando están unidos y fuertes, los movimientos revolucionarios pueden detener al imperialismo. Venezuela puede hacer lo mismo pero la solidaridad mundial, incluyendo aquí mismo en el centro imperialista, proveerá una ayuda importante. Venezuela será victoriosa. □



Por Stephanie Hedgecoke

Partidarios del prisionero político indígena, Leonard Peltier, se reunieron en Nueva York el 23 de octubre para escuchar los recientes sucesos relacionados a su caso. El orador principal de la actividad fue Bob Robideau, vocero internacional de Peltier y militante del Movimiento Indígena Americano, (AIM por las siglas en inglés). El Movimiento Jericó patrocinó la reunión, la que se llevó a cabo en las oficinas del Centro de Acción Internacional.

Peltier ha estado encarcelado casi 30 años por un crimen que no cometió. En violación a sus propias leyes, el gobierno de los EEUU ha rehusado consistentemente liberarlo bajo palabra. Las autoridades carcelarias niegan considerar soltarlo bajo palabra hasta que haya cumplido el doble del período normal para su supuesto crimen. Peltier es reconocido mundialmente como un prisionero político.

Dos agentes del FBI y un hombre indígena murieron durante un tiroteo iniciado por los agentes en la Reservación Pine Ridge en 1975, en una pequeña aldea mientras los residentes dormían en sus casas.

L@s asistentes a la reunión del 23 de octubre vieron la película del 1991, “West 57th Street” sobre el caso de Peltier. La película relata el ataque del FBI y el tiroteo en la Reserva de Pine Ridge.

Nunca ha existido evidencia alguna de que Peltier disparó los balazos fatales. Para obtener su extradición desde Canadá, EEUU ocultó cientos de miles de documentos que hubieran indicado su inocencia, incluyendo los informes de balística. Los fiscales federales admitieron públicamente que no sabían quien disparó las balas que mataron a los agentes del FBI.

Robideau, también uno de los acusados, habló con detalle sobre la operación COINTELPRO, el papel jugado por el FBI, y las actividades actuales de esa agencia policial federal. “En 1993,” dijo, “después que fueron agotadas todas vías de apelación, comenzó un esfuerzo internacional para pedir clemencia. En 1994, el FBI elaboró un memorando con la inten-

ción de contrarrestar esta campaña. La operación clandestina para destruir los grupos progresistas de los años 70 continúa.

“El FBI organizó líneas de piquete, publicó anuncios, y atacó el pedido de clemencia a Clinton. Fue porque organizadores partidarios de Peltier habían ganado influencia.... Nosotros, como activistas, en las comunidades, habíamos hecho el trabajo para ganar su libertad.

Robideau siguió: “Nosotros, como activistas tenemos las herramientas, el poder para hacer la diferencia y liberar a nuestros presos políticos.

“Hoy día, el FBI se ha vuelto una fuerza policial internacional. Y siguen activamente trabajando para asegurarse que Leonard Peltier pase el resto de su vida en la prisión.”

Refiriéndose al reciente juicio de Arlo Looking Cloud y las acusaciones contra John Graham en la muerte de la activista Anna Mae Aquash de AIM, Robideau dijo, “El FBI está detrás de todo esto. Y ahora el FBI está usando el caso de Anna Mae para establecer un record permanente en contra de Leonard Peltier que se va a usar en contra de él y la posibilidad de obtener libertad bajo palabra o clemencia.”

La abogada progresista Lynne Stewart, que espera su sentencia en diciembre en otro caso fabricado, también estaba presente y habló brevemente sobre el clima político actual. “El FBI no se cansa. Están investigando casos de 30 años atrás,” en casos sin limitación de tiempo.

Peltier, ahora en Lewisburg

Leonard Peltier había sido transferido de la Penitenciaría Federal Leavenworth, a la prisión de seguridad máxima en Terra Haute, Indiana, donde había estado incomunicado por un tiempo indefinido.

Activistas alrededor del país se movilizaron protestando tales condiciones y finalmente fue sacado del “hoyo”.

La vocera del Movimiento Jericó, Paulette D’Auteuil declaró que Peltier está ahora en la USP Lewisburg en Pennsylvania, y puede nuevo participar en sus prácticas espirituales indígenas. También está pintando nuevamente.

El Comité de Defensa de Leonard Peltier pide que por lo pronto, hasta que el grupo tenga una oficina más cerca de Lewisburg, se pueden enviar donaciones a: Peltier Legal Fund, C/O Barry Bachrach, Esq., Bowditch & Dewey LLC, 311 Main Street, Worcester, MA 01615. □