

## MUNDO OBRERO

Racismo y pobreza en Francia 12

## CREATIONISM

Science under attack 4

## RECRUITERS OUT!

Anti-military movement spreads 5



## HONOR ROSA PARKS NO WORK, NO SCHOOL 6-7

As we go to press, the City Councils of Oakland, Calif., and Cleveland have passed resolutions in support of activities to honor Rosa Parks on Dec. 1.

## JORDAN ATTACKS

U.S. exploits bombings 9

## PUERTO RICO

Labor on the march 11

## HAITI

Empty bellies, empty elections 11

# Senate double-talk

## Votes to up war budget but asks Bush to 'explain' Iraq

By Fred Goldstein

With opposition to the Iraq war spreading, U.S. casualties rising and President George W. Bush's poll numbers plummeting, Senate Republicans have acted to distance themselves from the open-ended "stay the course" policy of the White House and the Pentagon in time for the 2006 election campaign.

Attached to the \$491 billion military appropriations bill that just passed 90 to 0 in the Senate were two amendments supposedly directed against the White House. The first said that 2006 "should be a period of significant transition to full Iraqi sovereignty, with Iraqi security forces taking the lead for the security of a free and sovereign Iraq, thereby creating the conditions for the phased redeployment of United States forces from Iraq."

The amendment, which passed 79 to 19, was introduced by John Warner, a Republican from Virginia. It called for the administration to give quarterly reports to Congress outlining the progress of the war and directed it "to explain to Congress and the American people its strategy for the successful completion of the mission in Iraq."

It directed its puppets to unite against the resistance, demanding that "the administration should tell the leaders of all groups and political parties in Iraq that they need to make the compromises necessary to achieve the broad-based and sustainable political settlement that is essential for defeating

Continued on page 10



A green oasis in the city—now endangered.

PHOTOS: FERNANDO FLORES

## L.A. farmers fight to keep land 2



## SUBSCRIBE TO WORKERS WORLD

Trial subscription: \$2 for 8 weeks  
One year subscription: \$25

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

CITY/STATE/ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

EMAIL \_\_\_\_\_ PHONE \_\_\_\_\_

WORKERS WORLD NEWSPAPER  
55 W. 17 St. NY, NY 10011 212-627-2994  
[www.workers.org](http://www.workers.org)



## Rallies support VENEZUELA'S revolutionary process 3

LOS ANGELES: This overflow crowd at Immanuel Presbyterian Church came out Nov. 10 to hear Venezuelan representatives and speakers from various social justice and anti-war organizations. They applauded President Hugo Chávez's efforts to redirect Venezuela's oil wealth to benefit the people and not the oligarchy or U.S. corporations.

WW PHOTO: JULIA LA RIVA

# 'Here we are and we won't leave!'

# City farmers fight to feed community

By Jefferson Azevedo  
Los Angeles

The farmers of South Central Los Angeles are in a battle to keep alive a dream that became reality. One of the few, and the biggest, community farms in the city of Los Angeles is about to—if the will of the courts and the developers prevail—give way to a warehouse. The farm, in one of the most oppressed and neglected areas of California, is an oasis and an example of what the people can do when they are united.

The land in dispute is an area of 14 acres just a few miles from the heart of downtown. It was expropriated by the city and given to the South Central community after the 1992 uprising that followed the non-guilty verdict of a wealthy jury that freed four police officers who almost killed Rodney King, as recorded on videotape. The city government, knowing that the reaction of the people was not just because of the verdict but also because of the conditions lived in and the oppression they had been suffering for a long time, gave the land to the people to operate as a community farm while the world still had its spotlight on Los Angeles.

The farmers transformed the vast wasteland located on the corner of Alameda and 41st streets into one of the most beautiful places in the city. They grow tomatoes, corn, sugar cane, cactus and foods from Meso-America which are unavailable elsewhere in Los Angeles.

Now, 13 years later, after the spotlight of the world was turned in other directions, the city government sold back the land to the old owner in a shady deal. The South Central community was not even given a chance to match

the price set by the city government. It is important to note that the buyer had donated money to the campaigns of some of the local politicians.

Rufina Juárez, one of the organizers of the South Central farmers, spoke at a recent evening of solidarity here with Bolivarian Venezuela, an event sponsored by the International Action Center and other progressive organizations. She uncovered the lies that were spread by some of the corporate media and urged solidarity with the farmers' struggle. The people present were touched by her words and gave her a standing ovation. A delegation from Venezuela recently visited the farm and found similarities to their own struggle for self-determination.

In my visits to this wonderful piece of land, I, like everyone else who had the joy to visit it, was amazed by the fact that the city is trying to shut down such a great example of community work.

But, when you stop to think, many reasons come out. The farm is an answer to the racist lie that poor people are poor because they are lazy and not intelligent. It is also a playground where the children of the working-class family can play, free of the pollution and dangers of many public parks. It's a place where arts, music, games and celebrations happen in a way that brings the working-class people closer to each other, a place where more than 350 families are fed at no cost to the city, and a place where people from all over the Americas can keep their traditions alive and pass them on to their children.

And most of all: a place where the proletariat may realize, like the farmers of South Central did, that the land belongs to them, for they were there before the developers and therefore they will not leave. □



Banner welcomes Venezuelan guests to farm.

PHOTO: FERNANDO FLORES



This week ...

★ In the U.S.

Senate double-talk . . . . . 1  
 City farmers fight to feed community . . . . . 2  
 Town Hall rally heard in Washington and Caracas. . . . 3  
 Teachers and parents defend evolution . . . . . 4  
 On the picket line . . . . . 4  
 NYU strike starts with mass march. . . . . 4  
 Resistance to military recruiters grows . . . . . 4  
 Gov. 'Terminator' takes hits from voters . . . . . 5  
 Community wants Navy out of high school . . . . . 5  
 Dec. 1 Day of Absence. . . . . 6  
 Student urges: 'Everybody join us on Dec. 1'. . . . . 6  
 'Democracy' in Georgia . . . . . 6  
 Organizing against police abuse, racist injustice . . . . 7  
 New Orleans labor camp . . . . . 7  
 March hits lethal stun guns . . . . . 7  
 Pandemic flu: A real danger? . . . . . 8

★ Around the world

German regime plans more cutbacks for workers. . . . 8  
 U.S. moves to exploit bombings in Jordan . . . . . 9  
 U.S. used napalm in Falluja . . . . . 9  
 Pentagon shields Marines in rape case . . . . . 9  
 Unions mobilize in Puerto Rico . . . . . 11  
 Haiti: Empty bellies and empty elections . . . . . 11

★ Editorials

It takes an uprising. . . . . 10

★ Noticias En Español

Racismo y pobreza alimentan rebelión . . . . . 12

WW CALENDAR

NEW YORK

Thu., Dec. 1

Rosa Parks Anniversary National Strike Against Poverty, Racism, and War. How do we remember Rosa Parks? By making The 50th anniversary of Rosa Parks' arrest, Dec. 1, a nationwide day of absence and protest against poverty, racism & war. March on Wall Street in NYC to demand: Bring the troops home now; Cut

the war budget; not healthcare, housing and education; Justice for Hurricane Katrina survivors; Military recruiters out of our schools; Jobs, a living wage, the right to organize. For info www.rosaparksday.org.

Workers World

55 West 17 Street  
 New York, N.Y. 10011  
 Phone: (212) 627-2994  
 Fax: (212) 675-7869  
 E-mail: editor@workers.org  
 Web: www.workers.org  
 Vol. 47, No. 46 • Nov. 24, 2005  
 Closing date: Nov. 16, 2005

Editor: Deirdre Griswold  
 Technical Editor: Lal Roohk  
 Managing Editors: John Catalinotto, LeiLani Dowell, Leslie Feinberg, Monica Moorehead, Gary Wilson  
 West Coast Editor: John Parker  
 Contributing Editors: Greg Butterfield, Fred Goldstein, Teresa Gutierrez, Berta Joubert-Ceci, Milt Neidenberg  
 Technical Staff: Shelley Ettinger, Maggie Vascassenno  
 Mundo Obrero: Carl Glenn, Teresa Gutierrez, Berta Joubert-Ceci, Donna Lazarus, Carlos Vargas,  
 Internet: Janet Mayes

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

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

Periodicals postage paid at New York, N.Y.

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



JOIN US. Workers World Party (WWP) fights on all issues that face the working class and oppressed peoples—Black and white, Latino, Asian, Arab and Native peoples, women and men, young and old, lesbian, gay, bi, straight, trans, disabled, working, unemployed and students.

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

National Office  
 55 W. 17 St.,  
 New York, NY 10011  
 (212) 627-2994;  
 Fax (212) 675-7869  
 wwp@workers.org

Atlanta  
 P.O. Box 424,  
 Atlanta, GA 30301  
 (404) 627-0815  
 atlanta@workers.org

Baltimore  
 426 E. 31 St.,  
 Baltimore, MD 21218  
 (410) 235-7040  
 baltimore@workers.org

Boston  
 284 Armory St., Boston,  
 MA 02130  
 (617) 983-3835  
 Fax (617) 983-3836  
 boston@workers.org

Buffalo, N.Y.  
 P.O. Box 1204  
 Buffalo, NY 14213  
 (716) 566-1115  
 buffalo@workers.org

Chicago  
 27 N. Wacker Dr. #138  
 Chicago, IL 60606  
 (773) 381-5839  
 Fax (773) 761-9330  
 chicago@workers.org

Cleveland  
 P.O. Box 5963  
 Cleveland, OH 44101  
 phone (216) 531-4004  
 cleveland@workers.org

Denver  
 denver@workers.org

Detroit  
 5920 Second Ave.,  
 Detroit, MI 48202  
 (313) 831-0750  
 detroit@workers.org

Houston  
 P.O. Box 130322,  
 Houston, TX 77219  
 (713) 861-5965  
 houston@workers.org

Los Angeles  
 5274 West Pico Blvd.,  
 Suite 203  
 Los Angeles, CA 90019  
 (323) 936-1416  
 la@workers.org

Philadelphia  
 P.O. Box 9202,  
 Philadelphia, PA 19139  
 (610) 453-0490  
 phila@workers.org

Richmond, Va.  
 P.O. Box 14602,  
 Richmond, VA 23221  
 richmond@workers.org

Rochester, N.Y.  
 (585) 436-6458  
 rochester@workers.org

San Diego, Calif.  
 3930 Oregon St.,  
 Suite 230  
 San Diego, CA 92104  
 (619) 692-4496

San Francisco  
 2940 16th St., #207  
 San Francisco,  
 CA 94103  
 (415) 561-9752  
 sf@workers.org

State College, Pa.  
 100 Grandview Rd.,  
 State College,  
 PA 16801  
 (814) 237-8695

Washington, D.C.  
 P.O. Box 57300,  
 Washington, DC 20037,  
 dc@workers.org

**SOLIDARITY WITH BOLIVARIAN REVOLUTION**

# Town Hall rally heard in Washington and Caracas



Teresa Gutierrez



Curtis Mohammad



Larry Holmes



Marguerite Laurent



Lynne Stewart



Berta Joubert Ceci



Chris Silvera



Rev. Lucius Walker



Gloria La Riva

Special to Workers World  
New York

In the biggest event for Venezuela held in the U.S. to date, solidarity activists packed historic Town Hall in mid-town Manhattan on Nov. 8. The rally was initiated by the International Action Center (IAC) and the Alberto Lovera Bolivarian Circle. Many Cuba and Latin America solidarity groups organized for it, as well as other activists.

The event brought together an impressive array of leaders and organizations. A sizable delegation, including cultural performers, came from Venezuela and from Venezuelan missions in the United States.

“Events like this show the people of Venezuela that they are not alone,” said the Venezuelan consul for Chicago, Martín Sánchez. “President [Hugo] Chávez said in Argentina that without the people of the U.S., we would not be able to build that better world that we all want.”

Teresa Gutierrez, co-director of the IAC and coordinator of the rally along with William Camacaro of the Bolivarian Circles, said afterwards that “The Town Hall event was a resounding success. We accomplished our goal, which was to organize a major event for Venezuela that would be heard in Washington and in Caracas.

“The advances of the Bolivarian Revolution led by President Hugo Chávez are clear. In late October, the government announced it had eliminated illiteracy. Health care is being brought to Venezuelans who had never received it before. The main thing we can do for Venezuela is to organize here against the danger of U.S. intervention. And on Nov. 8, we showed there is a vibrant movement for Venezuela.”

Many messages of solidarity from a wide range of groups and individuals were printed in an attractive journal distributed to the attendees.

Fermín Toro Jiménez, Venezuela’s Ambassador to the United Nations, told the crowd that the Bolivarian revolutionary process is happening within the context of “the crisis of the environment, of the biosphere, of hunger and mortal viruses and of nuclear weaponry. And these crises that produce wars of depredation and aggression are awakening uprisings in many countries. ... We are in rebellion against injustice, against hunger, against exclusion and racism and it seems that this time we are being accompanied by the peoples of the first world.”

Jorge Guerrero Veloz of Venezuela’s Presidential Committee against Racism explained that “As in any process of change, a leader is necessary, and ours is President Hugo Chávez, who embodies the voices of the most excluded sector and represents hope for the majority of the Venezuelan people.”

The Venezuelan Consul for New York spoke of the Missions, or social programs, that are being launched in Venezuela. “They are geared to emphasize the rights that people have to education, health care, housing and work,” explained Leonor Osorio. “In the last two years, more than 1.4 million people have received literacy instruction thanks to the method brought by the people of Cuba.” She also thanked Cuba for helping Venezuela develop preventative medicine.

Venezuelans Miguel Hernández and Gonzalo Gómez also spoke. Gómez, from the National Association of Alternative Media, said the rally was “also an act of solidarity with the oppressed in the U.S. and the Latin Americans and Afro descendants here who are victims of

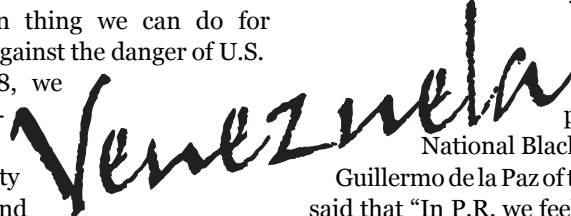
discrimination.”

Eleguá, a group of Afro-Venezuelan women, thrilled the audience with their songs, dance and drums. The New York cultural collective Welfare Poets also added energy and inspiration to this event. An audiotaped message from Mumia Abu-Jamal was played.

**Broadcast throughout Venezuela**

William Camacaro says that the event was broadcast throughout Venezuela in the days following the Town Hall rally. “It was a welcome development in Venezuela. The next step is that the Bolivarian Circles have called for a national organizing conference in New York City in February where Venezuelans in the U.S. invite everyone to come to help build a national movement in the U.S.”

The speakers also included Ramsey Clark, former U.S. attorney general and founder of the IAC; Leonard Weinglass, attorney for the Cuban Five and a long-time people’s lawyer; Rev. Lucius Walker of Pastors for Peace; Rev. Luis Barrio of John Jay College and San Romero Church; Larry Holmes of Troops Out Now Coalition; Nellie Bailey of Harlem Tenants Council; Ben Dupuy of Haiti’s National People’s Party; civil rights attorney Lynne Stewart; Marguerite Laurent of Fanmi Lavalas; noted actor Vinie Burrows, who also represents the Women’s International Democratic Federation; Gloria La Riva of ANSWER and the Committee to Free the Cuban Five; New Orleans community organizer Curtis Mohammad;



Wellington Echevarria of Cuba Solidarity New York; and Chris Silvera, president of the Teamsters National Black Caucus.

Guillermo de la Paz of the Socialist Front of Puerto Rico said that “In P.R. we feel that the Bolivarian Revolution is also ours.” Speaking about the recent assassination of Filiberto Ojeda Ríos by FBI agents, he added, “In Naguabo we buried Filiberto and his seed will sprout so that every Boricua [Puerto Rican] will be a Machetero” — a fighter for Puerto Rico’s self-determination.

Gerardo Cajamarca, a Colombian unionist in exile in the U.S. because of death squads in his country, said, “In Colombia we have continued to struggle for Bolivarian rights and the Latin America integration ideals of President Chávez.”

Berta Joubert Ceci was international outreach coordinator for the event. She says that “Just as important as the people who spoke are the numerous messages of solidarity with the Bolivarian Revolution that we received. People wrote thanking the organizers for the initiative, from the United States and from Venezuela, including the famous Venezuelan cultural groups Lloviznando Cantos and Madera. Messages were also received from Ecuador, Spain, Portugal, France, Mexico and Canada, among others.

“The youth representative in Cuba’s National Assembly sent a warm message during the early phase of the organizing efforts. Both Nora Castañeda, president of the Women’s Development Bank in Venezuela, and board members of the Venezuelan National Union of Workers—who were scheduled to speak but due to visa problems could not attend—sent messages.”

Reporters from several major U.S. media attended the rally, but the editors did not run their stories. On the day after the rally, a reporter from the Miami Herald called the organizers. His questions showed that the U.S. establishment had indeed taken note of the event. □



Leonor Osorio



Martín Sánchez



Fermín Toro Jiménez



Jorge Guerrero Velóz



Ben Dupuy



Gerardo Cajamarca



Guillermo de la Paz



Padre Luis Barrios



Ramsey Clark

Eleguá cultural group. Left, William Camacaro

PHOTOS: DEIRDRE GRISWOLD,

# Teachers & parents defend evolution

By Brenda Sandburg

Reporters from around the world swarmed into a small courtroom in Dayton, Tenn., in July 1925 to watch an historic trial that debated Darwin's theory of evolution. High school teacher John Scopes was accused of violating a state law that prohibited teaching evolution in public schools.

After the jury found Scopes guilty—the verdict was later overturned by the State Supreme Court on a technicality—the feverish, reactionary opposition to evolution died down. Tennessee finally repealed the law that had sparked the so-called Scopes "Monkey Trial" in 1967. Twenty years later the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that a state law requiring the teaching of "creation science" was unconstitutional.

But now, 80 years after the Scopes trial, the right wing is once again leading an all-out campaign against evolution. They won a victory Nov. 8 when the Kansas Board of Education voted 6-4 that the state's science curriculum must teach students that there are doubts about evolution.

This year more than a dozen state legislatures have introduced anti-evolution bills, according to the National Center for Science Education. One bill introduced by the Michigan legislature would revise science standards to have students question the theory of global warming as well.

While anti-evolution proponents once espoused "creationism"—belief in the account of creation in the Bible—this movement now advocates "intelligent design," which holds that human beings and other life forms did not evolve through genetic modifications over time in a process of natural selection but were designed by a supernatural creator.

Phillip E. Johnson, author of the 1991 book "Darwin on Trial," is one of the leading proponents of intelligent design. He is

also credited with writing Sen. Rick Santorum's amendment to the 2002 "No Child Left Behind" Act, which would have required school curriculums to describe evolution as controversial. The amendment was stripped from the final bill.

## 'Separate church and state!'

People around the country are fighting back against the movement to throw out this basic finding of science—as established as the existence of gravity or the roundness of the Earth.

Teachers and scientists have been at the forefront of the struggle. The National Academy of Sciences and the National Science Teachers Association told the Kansas department of education that it could not use educational materials from these two bodies in textbooks that also belittle evolution.

The Wall Street Journal reported Nov. 14 that more than 120 faculty members at Iowa State University signed a petition this year condemning "all attempts to represent intelligent design as a scientific effort." Universities around the country have been offering courses promoting intelligent design.

Communities are also battling the anti-evolution movement. In Dover, Penn., eight families sued the city's school board over its policy requiring teachers to discuss intelligent design in biology classes and point out "gaps" in the theory of evolution. At a trial this month, the families argued that the policy violates the U.S. Constitution's separation of church and state. A ruling is expected in January.

The people of Dover issued their own verdict on Election Day: they voted out eight board members up for reelection who backed intelligent design.

Darwin's "The Origin of Species," published in 1859, was a revolutionary book

at the time. It had a great impact on Karl Marx, who saw a parallel between Darwin's theories of successive forms of life and his own analysis of successive forms of social relations.

## Darwinism and Marxism

Friedrich Engels drew the connection between the two in his graveside eulogy to Marx. "Just as Darwin discovered the law of development of organic nature," Engels said, "so Marx discovered the law of development of human history ... . Marx also discovered the special law of motion governing the present-day capitalist mode of production and the bourgeois society that this mode of production has created."

It makes sense that people who are against Marx and the idea that social relationships could change would also be against the idea that all life has evolved

from lower to higher forms.

But while segments of the ruling class may support ideas like intelligent design for their own means, it is dangerous for them to do so. The United States has been falling behind other countries in education, and the gap will only widen if children are not taught basic science.

In a Nov. 2 editorial in the Philadelphia Inquirer, University of Maryland professor Steven Salzberg concluded that the next generation of scientists needs to understand evolution in order to combat diseases like avian flu. "Scientists in my lab and others can tell you that developing a vaccine for the flu absolutely requires that we understand its evolution," Salzberg writes. "We can also tell you that the flu doesn't 'care' if we believe in evolution. It will keep evolving anyway, and it will kill us if we ignore it." □

## ON THE PICKET LINE

by Sue Davis

### Philly transit pact

It took only seven days on strike for the transit workers in Philadelphia to reach a contract agreement. According to the new pact, transit workers will pay 1 percent of their salaries toward health care rather than kicking in the 5 percent that management originally demanded. The workers will also get 3 percent raises each year of the four-year contract.

What is unusual about this settlement is that the managers of the Southeastern Pennsylvania Transit Authority also agreed to contribute a percentage of their wages toward the same health plan. That was a central demand of Transit Workers Local 234 and United Transportation Workers Local 1594.

The settlement still has to be voted on by the two unions' 5,300 members.

### Mechanics' strike slows NWA

The 4,300 members of the Aircraft Mechanics Fraternal Association (AFMA), who have been on strike since Aug. 20, are holding strong. Their strike continues to impact Northwest Airlines (NWA) despite the company's claims to the contrary.

The November report ranking the on-time performance of airlines showed Northwest coming in last—20th out of 20. That never happened before the strike. NWA is the only airline using scab labor to maintain its planes.

In addition, continuing reports of safety violations and unsafe practices

have been attributed to inexperienced, poorly trained scabs.

For daily updates on the strike go to [www.amfa.org](http://www.amfa.org).

### Stop killer Coke

Activists plan to picket the national headquarters of Coca-Cola in Atlanta on Nov. 18 before proceeding to the annual protest at the School of the Americas on Nov. 20. This action is part of the international campaign to hold Coke accountable for anti-labor violence in Colombia.

The campaign against Coke now includes India, Turkey, Indonesia and Guatemala, where charges that Coke officials instigated incidents of murder, torture, pollution and union-busting have been reported.

The rally is the culmination of the North American speaking tour of William Mendoza, vice president of the Colombian food industry union SINALTRAINAL. United Students Against Sweatshops helped organize the tour, which included stops in Tallahassee, Seattle, Los Angeles, Chicago and Toronto.

To find out more about the campaign, go to [www.studentsagainstsweatshops.org](http://www.studentsagainstsweatshops.org).

Thanks to Rosemary Neidenberg for assistance in preparing this column.

## MASSACHUSETTS

# Resistance

By Bryan G. Pfeifer  
Boston

Students and their families in Massachusetts are increasingly resisting the Pentagon's plans to use them as cannon fodder for U.S. imperialism.

"A whole bunch of troops are dying," said Gwen Clairborne, a senior at Madison Park Technical Vocational High School in Roxbury, Mass., a predominantly Black community in Boston. Clairborne, who has "opted out," was interviewed in a Nov. 13 Sunday edition Boston Globe front-page article headlined "Students rebuffing military recruiters: More high schoolers in state opt out of lists."

Lidija Ristic, a senior at Cambridge Rindge and Latin, is a Serbian refugee and opponent of the U.S. war on Iraq. She says students in urban areas are specific targets of recruiters. "I think it's horrible that they

# NYU strike starts with mass march

By Shelley Ettinger  
New York

Some 1,200 graduate employees at New York University walked out on strike Nov. 9.

Strikers set up picket lines outside NYU's Bobst Library, site of administrative offices, at 8 a.m.

The lines grew throughout the morning. By midday a thousand people or more were marching as supporters from Yale, Rutgers and other universities arrived.

Picketers burst out of police barricades for an impromptu march around Washington Square Park. Several undergraduate students leaned out of an upper window in the Kimmel Center for Student Life and unfurled a banner declaring solidarity with GSOC—the Graduate Student Organizing Committee, UAW Local 2110. NYU security guards hustled the GSOC supporters away.

Over the next days, GSOC strikers and supporters picketed outside key NYU classroom and administrative buildings. On Nov. 14, an early-afternoon strike march snaked around the Greenwich Village campus.

It was a strong start to what most expect to be a tough struggle.

NYU is the biggest private university in the country. Three years ago, when it was forced to sign a contract with GSOC, NYU graduate employees became the first at a

private university to win full union rights. Now NYU is acting on behalf of all the private universities—especially the big-money schools like Yale, Columbia, and others—in its all-out union-busting war against graduate workers.

In summer 2004, the National Labor Relations Board reversed an earlier decision and ruled that teaching assistants, research assistants and other graduate students who are paid for their labor are somehow not workers and therefore are not entitled to collective-bargaining rights. NYU seized on the ruling. When GSOC's first contract expired on Aug. 31, the university withdrew recognition and refused to enter negotiations for a new contract.

NYU's public-relations office is churning out spin insisting that the strike is having no effect. That is clearly not true. The campus is much emptier than usual. Hundreds of teachers have moved their classes off campus as the union requested. Undergraduates, faculty members and other university employees wear pro-GSOC armbands to show support.

On the second day of the strike, faculty members discovered that top NYU management had infiltrated their classes' internal e-mail discussion lists. Many professors who had taken a neutral stance now crossed over to the strikers' side, outraged at what they consider a breach of academic freedom. □

## A GUIDE TO RESISTANCE



Order online at [leftbooks.com](http://leftbooks.com)

## California ballot results

# Gov. 'Terminator' takes hits from voters

By J. Marquardt  
San Francisco

The voters in the state of California have handed Gov. Arnold "Terminator" Schwarzenegger defeat after defeat of ballot measures he had pushed, necessitating a "Special Election" here on Nov. 8.

One measure would have greatly hurt public school teachers' tenure requirements. Another would have severely cut organized public employees' ability to politically fight in their own interests and that of all workers. One proposition would have authorized more slices, and legalized continued cuts, in state public school funding—in addition to school budget cuts already imposed since the former actor became governor. And another measure would have imposed political redistricting to strengthen conservative districts in the governor's favor.

All four of these pet projects of Gov. Schwarzenegger were defeated. So were additional objectionable measures placed on the ballot by the governor's political allies.

One of the defeated propositions was a clear attempt to chip away at freedom of choice for women's reproductive rights. It would have made it much harder for women under 17 years old to choose to terminate a pregnancy.

A so-called prescription drug "discount" measure was also defeated. It had been backed by the profit-seeking pharmaceutical and medical industries. Unfortunately the expensive media campaign this industry could afford contributed to enough confusion that voters also defeated a genuinely progressive prescription drug discount/rebates program that is truly needed. Now the people in most need of state assistance to acquire medicine will soon go without. If they had enough money or were already insured, they wouldn't be in need of state help to begin with.

Here in San Francisco, a progressive proposition opposing military recruiting on public high school and college campuses was approved by the voters. Although symbolic, it sends a message to local, state and national politicians about most voters' disapproval of the U.S. war against Iraq and the exploitation of youth to carry out the deadly ambitions of the Pentagon. This stand has made our city the target of right-wing media talk show

pundits, like Fox television's Bill O'Reilly, wishing ill on us and advocating a denial of assistance to the city in the event of an emergency.

Local voters also approved a measure to keep firehouses open that have been slated for closure due to budget cuts.

Finally, just two days after these massive defeats, the governor called off

another one of his pet projects: an increase in the patient-nurse workload ratio, currently legally limited to a maximum of five patients per nurse. For months nurses have demonstrated at the governor's speaking engagements up and down the state, adding up to at least 100 times, according to the New York Times.

Also, firefighters and teachers have

joined medical care workers to fight the governor's attempts to cut back pension and education funding. These workers and their unions have shown how labor solidarity can make a difference, giving renewed strength to workers all around the state who are currently engaged in struggles to defend themselves and the public they serve. □

## Community wants Navy out of high school

By Lou Paulsen  
Chicago

In a closed ceremony accessible only to accredited media and invited guests, Pentagon brass and local Democratic politicians on Nov. 7 celebrated the military occupation of the south wing of Senn High School in this city's diverse Edgewater neighborhood.

The "Rickover Naval Academy" has taken a third of the school's space, now off-limits to regular students and teachers. Senn High School has lost classrooms, two labs, a gym and 20 teaching positions. Class sizes are the largest ever. But while Senn teachers struggle to provide textbooks and manage with a single computer for 1,500 students, money flows freely into the academy.

In December 2004, the Chicago School Board voted to create the academy despite massive public opposition and a protest walkout of 700 students.

Democratic politicians in Illinois—from war hawks like Mayor Richard Daley and Alderperson Mary Ann Smith to supposed "doves" like Sen. Dick Durbin and Congressperson Jan Schakowsky—have closed ranks behind the Naval Academy, declaring, "We need a strong military."

Struggling to find enough soldiers for its wars, the military has massively targeted the multi-national Chicago public schools for indoctrination and recruitment. "I believe in military academies all over this city," Mayor Daley has declared. Three other military academies have been created, and 10,000 public school students from the sixth grade up drill in uniform in "Junior ROTC" and "Cadet" pro-



WW PHOTO: LOU PAULSEN

Anti-recruitment rally reads names of war dead—U.S. and Iraqis.

grams. Some 18 percent of them later join the military.

### Resistance continues

But teachers, students and community continue to resist. Organized as the Coalition to Save Senn ([www.savesenn.org](http://www.savesenn.org)), they got media attention when they picketed the dedication ceremony.

On Nov. 11, Veterans' Day, they held another rally where veterans and parents of war dead told the real story about military recruiting.

"They come in their fancy 'Army of One' suits and play basketball with the kids and tell them, 'Nice shot, kid, you'll be a great soldier one day,'" said Cody Camacho of Iraq Veterans Against the War. "They don't tell you about the depleted uranium, how it's in all the armor and shells and it gets in the air like a dust, and there are 11,000 vets of the first Gulf War who died of it, and we used more of it in the first month of 2003 than in the whole first Gulf War."

"They don't tell you how you get faced with certain choices in combat and after-

ward you can't give back the nightmares."

Juan Torres, a hotel worker from Argentina, remembered his son, Juan Manuel Torres, a reservist killed in Afghanistan under mysterious circumstances. (See [www.uncoverthetruth.org](http://www.uncoverthetruth.org) for more.)

He recalled, "The recruiting guy told me, 'Nothing happens to the reserves.' The military, they are liars. If they had good intentions they would talk to the family, not go behind the back of the family."

Students and organizers told about how they have struggled to distribute anti-military material at Senn, Sullivan High School and elsewhere. They also read the names of the Illinoisans who have died in the Iraq War and the names of some of the thousands of Iraqi civilians killed.

Representatives of the Gay Liberation Network, Vietnam Veterans against the War and other organizations also spoke.

The struggles at Senn and elsewhere have spurred the creation of the Chicago-land Coalition Opposed to the Militarization of Youth. ([www.ccomy.org](http://www.ccomy.org)) □

## to military recruiters grows

come here and try to recruit people," said Ristic.

A growing statewide counter-recruitment movement has resulted in more than 5,000 high school students or their parents in five of the state's largest school districts refusing to have their names and personal information released to military recruiters. Over the past year, approximately 18 percent of public high school students in Boston, Cambridge, Lowell, Fall River and Worcester have "opted out." All of these cities are beset with economic, political and social crises, largely the result of the decimation of highly unionized manufacturing industries.

The 2002 "No Child Left Behind" Act dictates that the Pentagon automatically receives student information, including names, addresses, telephone numbers and e-mails, unless parents or a student 18 or older submit an opt-out form.

Due to pressure from students, parents and anti-war organizations, approximately one-third of the 75 public high schools in northeastern Massachusetts have not yet given local military recruiters the fall semester lists with eligible student recruits. School administrators under pressure are now sending home notices about the opt-out provision, running ads on public television stations and including opt-out forms in school handbooks.

No doubt these victories are a direct result of actions by parents such as Martina Cruz, who has three children, two still in the public school system. Cruz is also a leader of Latinos United for Justice, a member of Merrimack Valley People for Peace and a board member of the Women's Institute for Leadership Development. Cruz was elected to the Lawrence School Committee Nov. 8, largely on an anti-war and counter-recruitment plat-

form endorsed by the Merrimack Valley Central Labor Council, AFL-CIO. Lawrence is where the historic women-led "Bread and Roses" textile mill strike took place in 1912.

After her election, Cruz said, "I will use my position to further educate and advocate against the use of our children as cannon fodder for the policies of the ultraright and U.S. imperialist domination of the world. We need to recruit children for well-paying peacetime jobs and college, not war."

Felicity Crush of the San Francisco-based Leave My Child Alone project says visitors to the project's website have downloaded 37,000 copies of a form to opt out. "There's momentum you can see," said Crush. "As soon as people become aware of it, they start to take action." ([www.leavemychildalone.org](http://www.leavemychildalone.org))

Anti-war organizations have also made students and parents aware of the opt-out provisions through postcard mailing campaigns, teach-ins and protests such as the upcoming Dec. 1 "Rosa Parks National Day of Absence Against Poverty, Racism and War" actions. ([www.troopsoutnow.org](http://www.troopsoutnow.org))

The National Priorities Project based in Northampton, Mass., has expanded its online database to include military recruitment statistics broken down by high school, zip code, county and state. Data is also available by race, ethnicity and gender. ([www.nationalpriorities.org](http://www.nationalpriorities.org))

Greg Speeter, NPP executive director, says that "this data makes clear that low- and middle-income kids are paying the highest price. It's young people with limited opportunities that are putting their lives on the line." □

By Monica Moorehead

The December 1st National Day of Absence mobilization against war, poverty and racism continues to galvanize support in the progressive movement. It will mark the 50th anniversary of the arrest of Rosa Parks, who on Dec. 1, 1955, refused to give up her seat to a white man on a segregated bus in Montgomery, Ala.

Parks' heroic action, along with the determination of 40,000 Black people in the city to defeat segregationist restrictions on the buses, helped to launch the modern-day civil rights movement throughout the U.S. South during the 1950s and 1960s.

Parks died this Oct. 24, at the age of 92, before she was able to witness this significant milestone in the on-going struggle for the basic democratic rights of Black and other people of color, who are still being treated overall as second-class citizens.

Along with citing the 50th anniversary of the Montgomery bus boycott, the National Day of Absence initiative is an attempt to unite various movements that have been fragmented over a number of decades, particularly the civil rights and the anti-war movements. The initiative calls for no work, no school, no shopping—in other words, no business as usual—to bring more heightened awareness about the connection between the heinous war and racist occupation of Iraq and the deepening cutbacks, wage cuts and steady decline of living standards for workers and the poor at home.

The Hurricane Katrina crisis has helped to shine a special spotlight on the racism and poverty that exist inside the U.S. and

# DEC. 1 Day of Absence A clarion call for unity

the criminal neglect of the government. The main demands to be raised on Dec. 1 are: bring the troops home now; cut the war budget, not health care, housing and education; justice for the Hurricane Katrina survivors, including their right to return; military recruiters out of the schools, and jobs at a living wage and the right to organize in unions.

Over 1,000 organizations and individuals have endorsed nationally coordinated actions around the country. These actions will be taking place in Boston, Washington, D.C., Bremerton in Washington state, Crawford, Tex., Raleigh, Atlanta, Detroit, Chicago, Los Angeles, Oakland, Buffalo and other cities.

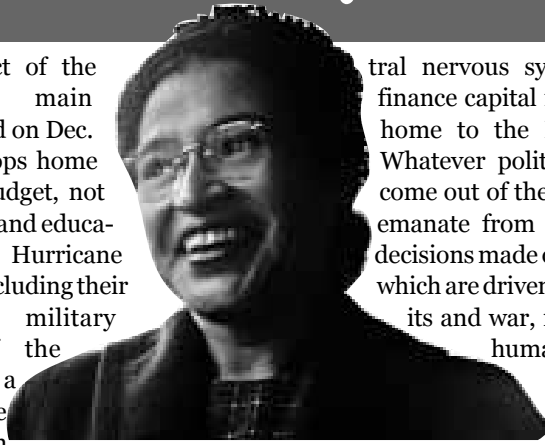
## NY City Council to hold hearing

In New York City, a Dec. 1 march and rally on Wall Street are being planned. March and sound permits have been secured by the organizers. Wall Street is being politically targeted because the cen-

tral nervous system of U.S. finance capital is Wall Street, home to the Fortune 500. Whatever political decisions come out of the White House emanate from the economic decisions made on Wall Street, which are driven to make profits and war, not to provide human needs.

A youth and student walk-out is being organized by the youth group, Fight Imperialism-Stand Together (FIST) on Dec. 1. These young activists plan to march to Wall Street following their rally at Union Square in Manhattan.

Charles Barron plus 11 other City Council members announced at an Oct. 27 news conference that they are introducing a resolution to honor Rosa Parks on Dec. 1. The resolution reads in part, "Be it further resolved that the Council encourages all businesses in the city, both public and private to either close on Dec. 1st, or allow the many workers and students in the city who will want to attend Rosa Parks Commemoration events taking place dur-



ing normal business hours, to take the day off, or leave work and school early with impunity."

A public hearing on this resolution will take place on Nov. 18 from 11 a.m. until 3 p.m. at the City Hall Chambers, followed by a vote by the entire City Council. Speakers will include civil rights veterans, trade unionists, students, anti-war and community activists. The wording of this resolution is similar to one passed unanimously by the Boston City Council on Oct. 26.

The Detroit City Council passed a Day of Absence resolution during a Nov. 11-13 National Conference to Feed the Cities, Starve the Pentagon, held in that majority Black city.

A people's victory was won in Baltimore after activists mounted a campaign for the City Council to hold a public hearing on Nov. 16 and allow testimony to be presented as to why a Day of Absence resolution should be passed there. That pending bill reads in part, "For the purpose of proclaiming 2005 as Rosa Parks Year in Baltimore City and joining the more than 1,000 national and local organizations sponsoring the Rosa Parks nationwide 'Day of Absence' in encouraging all public and private businesses and educational institutions located in Baltimore City on Dec. 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."

Go to [www.troopsoutnow.org](http://www.troopsoutnow.org) for more information on Dec. 1 actions in your area or to organize a local action. □

## Student urges:

# 'Everybody join us on Dec. 1'

Dec. 1 marks the 50th anniversary of Rosa Parks' heroic effort against segregation, sparking the civil rights movement. Although she was not the first to refuse to give up her seat to a white man, her case was the loudest.

Dec. 1 is now being called a Day of Absence, abstaining from school, work and shopping. If we do not fund our government for this day, we could shut this war down.

There will be events nationwide and a citywide strike here in New York on Wall Street. If we stand together on Dec. 1, our case will be heard as loud as Rosa Parks'

case years ago. Various organizations have been sending out a call for the nation to make Dec. 1 National Rosa Parks Day. Boston has already signed the resolution. This is especially important with the recent occurrence of Parks' death.

Though the strike on Wall Street might be the loudest, it is not the only event in New York City honoring the Day of Absence. In fact, the whole day will be filled with events.

These events will begin at 9:30 a.m. and last through the afternoon. I'm organizing the morning events, which will eventually meet up with the afternoon events.

My events will include two marches and a rally. Great participants will be performing or just coming for solidarity in honoring this day. The rally itself will be held as if it were a benefit. There will be speakers on the significance of the day and entertainers either honoring this day or bringing rhythm. At the stage, dedicated to the victims of Hurricane Katrina, there will be a donation box for clothing, canned goods, toothbrushes, money, etc.

The day will start at 9:30 a.m. with a gathering at the corner of 19th Street and 8th Avenue. At 10:30 we will march to 14th Street, Union Square, where there will be



a rally at 11:30 with various speakers and entertainers. At 3:20 p.m. we will march to Wall Street and Broadway, where we will meet up with the citywide rally that starts at 4 p.m.

We as a people need to show our faces on Dec. 1, in solidarity to make our voices heard. As a student and a citizen of this nation, I am obligated to stand out on the streets and say, "I do not approve of this racist war," "I do not approve of these criminals in power," and "I will stand in solidarity on Dec. 1." The reason I am obligated to be on the streets then is because my generation is the one paying for this war.

My peers are the ones dying in this war and my peers are going to be paying off this war's debt for generations to come. President Bush has borrowed more money from other nations, to fund this war, than all of our past presidents combined.

The word is out. On Dec. 1, we will say no to this government and to this war. We will say no to FEMA, but we will unite in solidarity on the grounds of Union Square and on the streets of Wall Street.

People are calling the morning events the students' struggle. This is where the students will gather. But I say this is everybody's struggle—students, teachers, whoever you are. Join us for an all-day event on Dec. 1.

-Mia Cruz  
New York  
[poweractivist@yahoo.com](mailto:poweractivist@yahoo.com)

## 'Democracy' IN GEORGIA

Your readers might be interested in still another example of how voter suppression and denial of voting rights occur.

Brunswick, Ga., is a small port city on the Atlantic Ocean of about 17,000 people, some 70 percent African-American, who are mostly poor. Just across the marsh are St. Simon's Island and Sea Island, where the G-8 summit was held in the summer of 2004. Both islands are home to some of the wealthiest people in the U.S., particularly Sea Island, which is a privately owned resort.

Elaine Brown, former chair of the Black Panther Party, moved to Brunswick in the fall of 2004 after participating in the protest activities earlier that year at the summit. There has never been a Black mayor in Brunswick. Although the port creates enormous wealth, conditions for the majority of the residents are appalling—low wages, deteriorating housing, few social services, polluted water and air, etc.

Brown decided to run for mayor and

conducted a grass-roots, door-to-door campaign, explaining her campaign platform of channeling the resources of the city into raising the standard of living for the majority. She especially opposed a multi-billion-dollar "improvement" plan, backed by Sea Island Corp. and other monied interests, to tear down the entire Black community in the downtown area and build expensive condominiums, apartments and houses. Over 400 volunteers canvassed the neighborhoods. Brown spoke at more than 70 churches. Discussions were held in bars, neighborhood centers, and on porches about what the community needed.

Just weeks before the Nov. 8 election, two people came forward to challenge her residency in Brunswick: a white businessman, friend of the current mayor, and a poor African-American woman. Neither of them had ever met Elaine Brown and said they didn't know each other, yet both were represented before the Election

letter  
to the  
editor

Commission by the same high-priced lawyer.

The Glynn County Board of Elections decided that Brown had not lived in Brunswick for a full year, even though she had registered to vote on Nov. 4, 2004, at her Brunswick address.

Brown's name was removed from the ballot. The board ordered that any write-in votes would not be counted.

A week later an appeals judge sustained the disqualification without comment.

Then on Nov. 7, one day before the election, a federal judge ruled that write-in votes for Brown would be counted.

The next day, the election was held in Brunswick, Ga. There was a low voter turnout. Brian Thomas, the Sea Island candidate and proponent of the "redevelopment plan," won.

This is what "democracy" looks like in south Georgia.

-Dianne Mathiowetz  
Atlanta

## New Orleans labor camp

# Race, class divide extends to cleanup

By Dana Gilmartin  
New Orleans

Contractors who have brought in hundreds of workers to clean up flood-ravaged buildings in New Orleans are profiting handsomely by keeping wages and expenses low.

One such contractor is called BMS Cat, short for BMS Catastrophe. Large groups of workers in navy blue T-shirts or sweat-shirts with "BMS CAT" on the front can be seen in downtown New Orleans.

BMS Cat got its employees from three labor providers that function as temporary agencies: Construct Corp., Command Center and—no kidding—Pot of Gold. BMS Cat and companies like it are "storm chasers," making profit off other people's tragedies.

When the cleanup began in October, many hotels and motels were not up and running. Available rooms were at a premium. These companies made an arrangement with Alvin Callendar Field, a naval air station with many acres to spare across the river from downtown New Orleans. On an old runway, hundreds of pup tents were erected on wooden pallets in closely spaced rows. The supervisors and managers got campers and trailers. The workers were almost entirely Black and Latin@, the managers mostly white.

At its peak this encampment held 420 people. Serving as intermediary on the base is Kellogg, Brown and Root (KBR),

the well-known military supplier and subsidiary of Halliburton—which used to be headed by Dick Cheney, now Bush's vice president.

The shower facility consisted of a makeshift building with plywood walls and Astroturf on the floor. The walls could not be properly disinfected and the carpet harbored visible mold. There were only 10 shower heads for men and another five for women, with knobs that only turned on and off, rather than allowing the temperature to be adjusted. Used water flowed out the back of the building directly onto the ground.

### Ten showers for 360 men

Let's do the math. When you subtract the supervisors and managers, who had their own showers, and the 20 women workers, that left about 360 men. They had to shower at the end of long days of cleaning up materials laden with bacteria and molds, and possibly contaminated with asbestos and lead. These showers weren't just for personal hygiene. They should be thought of as mandatory decontamination after asbestos and lead exposure.

If each man were allowed only a 5-minute shower, that still would be only 120 men per hour—or three hours for them all to shower. But their workday went from 4:30 a.m. to 6:30 p.m. So some might have to wait until 9:30 p.m. to get clean. Late showers and early morning showers were unrealistic for workers who had to leave



WW PHOTO: DANA GILMARTIN

After a 14-hour day, workers live in these pup tents.

the labor camp at 4:30 a.m.

The workers also suffered an inadequate supply of portable toilets. Imagine the lines at the 15 porta-potties to urinate in the morning. The hand-washing stations lacked hot water and anti-bacterial soap, so crucial when a large number of people share toilets and also have been disposing of rotting food during the workday. Workers complained there was no time in the workday to buy personal hygiene supplies, especially since very few drug stores had reopened.

Dirty clothes could be dropped off at the laundry on base, to be returned in 48 hours. This sounds like a good plan—until you realize that it required the workers to have three complete sets of clothes with them in order not to wear contaminated clothes two days in a row. Hand-washed underwear could be seen laid out to dry in the tent city.

The only saving grace is that the camp is now down to 58 employees as operations move elsewhere, including Florida. When confronted with the need to rebuild the shower building, the project manager said he would condemn the building and transport the workers to shower facilities elsewhere on base. He was willing to do this only once, at 7 p.m., with no option to shower later.

This gross travesty in failing to provide sanitation for the workers is a direct result of greed on the part of BMS Cat and lack of oversight by KBR. But they have even more despicable ways of lining their pockets.

Fire fighters doing security on this portion of the base stated that some workers had been told to show up at a particular bank to get their pay. When they arrived there, they were greeted by immigration agents who arrested undocumented workers. The labor agency was able to simply pocket their pay.

The deplorable conditions of the labor camp were well hidden on a large military base, with security checkpoints controlling access. Thus do the military and the corporations function hand in hand.

Organizers and activists need to be on the lookout for BMS Cat and others of its ilk and expose the way they treat workers. We can be "storm chasers" of a new kind, chasing the companies that take on workers for cleanup after storms. They must be held accountable for their racism and their super-exploitation of workers. □

## NEW ORLEANS

# Organizing against police abuse, racist injustice

By LeiLani Dowell

A march across the Crescent City Connection Bridge in Gretna, La., on Nov. 7 demanded accountability from police who had turned away mostly Black evacuees in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina.

The Sept. 10 New York Times reported that police from the suburb of Gretna had been "so fearful" of the evacuees that they blocked their entry to the bridge, going so far as to fire shotguns in the air as the crowd approached. The group of evacuees had been told by New Orleans police to cross that bridge in order to reach rescue buses on the other side.

The Nov. 7 march was called by the Hip Hop Caucus and United Progressives for Democracy. Announcing the march, the Rev. Lennox Yearwood of the Caucus said, "While we honor the heroic activism of Rosa Parks, we cannot celebrate the end to racism or injustice in this country. ... Instead of meeting people who are sworn to protect and serve us, these citizens met armed vigilantes in one of the most racist encounters ever documented in America."

The protest was attended by well-known political figures and activists such as Rep. Cynthia McKinney, Curtis Muhammad of Community Labor United and Kim Gandy, president of the National Organization for Women.

Meanwhile, police misconduct in the wake of Hurricane Katrina continues against people in the Gulf Coast. Three medical workers in New Orleans were physically and verbally harassed by New Orleans police on Nov. 10. The three—Greg Griffith, Emily Westerholm and Scott Weinstein—are volunteer workers

with the Common Ground Collective who were documenting police harassment outside the Common Ground Free Clinic when police attacked them.

According to a media release from the Collective, Griffith was thrown against a car and told that he would be "shot and his body thrown in the river." Westerholm was hurled to the ground by

the police and Weinstein was verbally abused.

The media release states, "This incident is the culmination of increased daily harassment this week, and are just a few of the examples of abuse that volunteer relief workers have faced over the past two months and that New Orleans residents, especially African Americans,

are facing every day."

The group held a Nov. 11 media conference at the Orleans Parish police station to demand a meeting with the superintendent of police, an immediate end to police harassment and an independent citizen review board for oversight of the New Orleans police.

Solidarity with the survivors of Katrina continues unabated, however. On "Thanksgiving" weekend, activists and volunteers will travel to New Orleans from across the country to bring much-needed supplies and to work for a week on cleanup and construction projects.

Common Ground Collective, which is organizing the caravan, said in a statement, "The poor neighborhoods of the city don't have electricity and are not being cleaned up or repaired, while the French Quarter and other predominantly white areas are relatively clean and quite functional. This seems to be a purposeful effort to keep poor and Black residents from feeling any hope of being able to recreate their lives in New Orleans. ... This effort will aid a necessary mobilization of solidarity meant to challenge the planned gentrification of this community." For more information, visit [www.common-groundrelief.org](http://www.common-groundrelief.org).

In addition, activists and community organizations are organizing for a set of events on the weekend of International Human Rights Day. On Dec. 9, a conference of Katrina survivors will be held in Jackson, Miss. The next day these survivors will be joined by allies from across the country, who will converge on New Orleans to demand the right of return and justice for Katrina survivors. For more information, visit [www.community-laborunited.net](http://www.community-laborunited.net). □

## March hits lethal stun guns



The Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) led about 150 demonstrators on a march in Gwinnett County, a northern suburb of Atlanta, on Nov. 12 to protest the deaths of two men shot by police with Taser guns multiple times.

Nationally at least 129 people have died since 2001 after being stunned by the guns' 56,000 volts of electricity. They cause intense pain and immobilize the body.

At a rally, Yanga Williams, widow of Frederick Williams, thanked the crowd for their continued support. In a police videotape showing her husband shackled hand and foot, being held by as many as seven cops and Tasered five times within a minute, Williams is heard begging the police not to kill him. The grand jury investigating his death was never shown the video by County Attorney Danny Porter.

SCLC President Charles Steele, State Rep. Tyrone Brooks and Rev. Joseph Lowery were among the speakers who called for a moratorium on the use of Taser guns by police forces across the country. "No more electrocution before prosecution," Brooks demanded.

—Story and photo by Jimmy Raynor

## GERMANY

# New regime plans more cutbacks

By John Catalinotto

The German Social Democratic Party (SPD) and the Christian Democratic/Christian Social Union (CDU/CSU) party congresses on Nov. 14 ratified their agreement on a program to form a "grand coalition" to govern Germany. This agreement ends SPD Chancellor Gerhard Schröder's seven years in office. Their common program continues and extends the SPD's most recent attacks on wages, workers' rights, health care and pensions, known as Agenda 2010.

The SPD-CDU/CSU coalition has agreed on an anti-working class program to raise the sales tax from 16 to 19 percent, increase the work week, start pensions at age 67 instead of 65, and increase workers' contributions for whatever benefits still exist. It extends the probationary period of working without job protection from six months to two years.

Labor unions and the anti-globalization group ATTAC have already said they will begin to organize popular opposition to the new regime in Berlin. How massive such opposition is will impact not only Germany but all of Europe.

The agreement focused mainly on German domestic politics. German participation in NATO's occupation of Afghanistan, however, still managed to break into the news Nov. 14 when a German "peacekeeping" soldier was killed in a suicide bombing. In an absurd display of circular reasoning, outgoing Defense Minister Peter Struck said the attack showed "that there is not a stable, quiet situation in Afghanistan" and that the NATO force there was still needed.

The current leader of the Christian Democrats is Angela Merkel, who will be Germany's first woman chancellor. She is from eastern Germany, was trained as a physicist, and, except for a role in a local chapter of the pro-socialist Free German Youth, only began her political career after the German Democratic Republic was swallowed up by imperialist West

Germany in 1990.

Voters in last September's national elections turned the SPD-Green coalition out of office after seven years. With the SPD's Gerhard Schröder as chancellor and Green's Joschka Fischer as foreign minister, this coalition joined NATO's war against Yugoslavia in 1999 and then projected German imperialist military power beyond Europe into Afghanistan. The CDU/CSU also supports both interventions.

Domestically, the SPD-Green regime opened a severe attack on workers' rights, cutting back time limits on unemployment payments and introducing a sort of "workfare" program known as 1-Euro jobs for unemployed workers. Together these attacks were known as Agenda 2010.

No longer a traditional social democratic party, the SPD is more like the Clinton Democrats in the U.S. or the New Labor of Tony Blair in Britain. Agenda 2010 separated the SPD from its base in the labor unions. A series of mass demonstrations and some strikes greeted the SPD "reforms" in 2004 and 2005, but without reaching the level of struggle needed to stop Agenda 2010.

In the Sept. 18 elections, working-class voters punished the SPD-Greens coalition, not by voting for the right-wing parties, but by voting for a more left-wing electoral coalition known as the Left Party. This voting shift has shaken the SPD organization and provoked a change in party leadership but hasn't changed its political program.

Meanwhile, the rightist CDU/CSU—about equivalent to Reagan Republicans—also lost total votes and seats in the lower house compared with the 2002 elections, narrowly becoming the number-one party with only 35 percent of the total vote.

German elections combine voting by district with proportional representation. This voting method allows some representation for minority parties, including more progressive ones, if they can get as much as 5 percent of the total

vote. Proportional voting is usually more democratic than the U.S. winner-take-all system. But German elections, just like those in the U.S., are biased toward the big capitalist parties, depending on financing and distorted by the capitalist media monopoly.

The final result of the Sept. 18 national election was 226 seats for the CD/CSU; 61 for their usual capitalist allies, the Free Democrats; 222 seats for the SPD and 51 for the Greens; and, in a new development, 54 seats for the Left Party. Since the big capitalist parties refused any bloc with the Left Party, this result meant the most likely new regime would be the "grand coalition" that finally occurred eight weeks after the election.

With 82 million people, Germany has the largest population in the European Union. It also is Europe's biggest economy and the fifth-largest in the world. Germany leads the world in exports of goods and services, with \$893 billion in 2004; the U.S. exported \$795 billion and China \$583 billion.

German workers still have better wages, unemployment insurance, job security, national and union health benefits, vacations, and retirement pay on the average than workers in the United States. Union struggles won these benefits during the Cold War period, when the West German capitalists had to take into account competition for workers' loyalties from socialist East Germany and the Soviet Union.

Since the breakup of the USSR, the gains workers made earlier have all been under attack. The German capitalists aim to maximize profits and their competitive position worldwide; now they no longer worry about a neighboring socialist camp. Unemployment within Germany is at an official 11 percent as German capital seeks investment opportunities in low-wage areas in Eastern Europe and Asia.

While both parties in the "grand coalition" support big capital, they have their differences in tactics and competition for

the political spoils, and their alliance is unstable.

## The Left Party

A politician on the left of the SPD, Oscar Lafontaine, last June joined a recent left split from that party, the WASG. This summer Lafontaine's group made an electoral alliance with the Party of Democratic Socialism (PDS), the successor to the communist party that had led the German Democratic Republic in the East. Despite the PDS's past, which the German capitalists have never forgiven, it has recently focused almost exclusively on electoral politics and "responsible" participation in local governments, which means it has accepted social service cutbacks.

This WASG-PDS coalition, now named the Left Party, then attracted support from some progressive trade unions, as well as from the German Communist Party (DKP), the anti-globalization movement known as ATTAC, and smaller left parties and anti-war forces. These groups all saw the Left Party as a means to get some voices into parliament that would speak and vote against the attack on the workers at home and military intervention abroad.

The Left Party won an unprecedented 8.7 percent of the vote and 54 seats, compared to the two seats the PDS won in 2002. The shift leftward was a message to the SPD that their pro-capitalist program was unacceptable to a growing section of the working class.

While this vote is a sign that many German workers want to oppose the SPD's "reforms," the Left Party's role is strictly as an electoral bloc. The Left Party is not a centralized group of labor, social and political grass-roots organizers, which could coordinate a national struggle.

But those trying to mobilize a struggle outside of the parliamentary arena hope the Left Party can play a role of exposing and opposing the government program and thus encourage mass mobilization in the factories, the offices, the schools and the streets. □

# Pandemic flu: A real danger?

By Hillel Cohen

Not so long ago, scare stories about bioterrorism and weapons of mass destruction were front-page news. Government officials warned that anthrax and smallpox could strike at any moment. Hundreds of thousands of soldiers and thousands of civilians were vaccinated against these supposed threats.

As it turned out, the mailed anthrax spores that killed six people in 2001 originated from a U.S. military laboratory. No cases of smallpox were ever reported. In fact, smallpox hasn't been seen anywhere in the world for over 20 years. But several people did die from smallpox vaccine that they never should have taken.

The anthrax and smallpox scares were deliberate fabrications. The scare stories were promoted hand-in-hand with the lie that Iraq had biological, chemical or nuclear weapons. It was all part of the war propaganda initiated by the Bush gang with the collusion of all the big business media—with extra assistance by now-discredited reporter Judith Miller and the New York Times.

Are today's stories about a potential pandemic of avian (bird) flu just more hype?

Not exactly. There is a real possibility that a worldwide epidemic—known as a pandemic—of influenza may break out. However, what has been buried in all the stories about bird flu is that the real danger of a flu pandemic is probably no greater this year than last. Or the year before, or the year before that.

Three worldwide pandemic outbreaks of flu took place over the last 100 years: in 1918, 1957 and 1968. The one that started in 1918 was by far the worst, with an estimated 20 million to 100 million deaths worldwide. The others were also serious but with far fewer cases and deaths.

Information about flu before 1900 is not very good, but old newspaper accounts and personal diaries suggest that pandemic flu outbreaks have occurred at least once every 40 years for several hundred years. Since the last recorded pandemic was 37 years ago, many scientists are concerned that another could hit at any moment.

Specialists believe that the 1918 flu virus was similar to the avian virus known as H5N1 that is now killing millions of wild water fowl and poultry. Over a hundred people have also died from the avian flu virus, but all the human cases have been traced to direct and close contact with

birds, especially poultry. But "similar" does not mean the same. A very important difference is that the H5N1 cannot be easily transmitted from human to human. Without that ability H5N1 cannot spread widely as a human disease.

There is some concern that H5N1 could "jump" from birds to humans. With so many birds infected, it means that more humans—such as chicken farmers—will come in contact, raising the possibility that a human may become a natural mixing vessel in which the bird flu virus mixes genetic material with a human flu strain. Such a hybrid could spread widely.

The other cause of concern is that when humans do become infected with H5N1, the death rate is much higher than with ordinary flu. Also, as in 1918, young healthy adults seem to be the prime targets. With regular flu, this group recovers quickly; it is the very old, young or sick who are more likely to die.

Already, the bird flu pandemic is creating severe economic hardships in Asian countries, with millions of chickens dying or being "culled." Outdoor farms are the ones most likely to pick up infection, since they are exposed to migrating wild birds. These farms are more common in poorer countries, which is also where farmers can

least afford such big losses. Ironically, crowded agribusiness factory farms are less susceptible since the poultry are sealed indoors.

The possibility of a human flu pandemic will not go away, even if H5N1 does not spread beyond birds and poultry. Another new type of flu virus could pop up at any time.

Even ordinary flu changes slightly every year. That's why flu vaccinations often do not give much protection from one flu season to the next. With slightly different strains emerging every year, new vaccines have to be developed every year to match them.

And every year, ordinary flu epidemics take a large toll. In the U.S. alone, millions get the flu. Most get better on their own after a few days of fever, muscle pain, fatigue and congestion. But an estimated 20,000 to 36,000 die each year in the U.S. from complications of ordinary flu. Worldwide, the death toll is much higher. Nevertheless, shortages of flu vaccine have become commonplace and little has been done to educate the public on how to lower the risk of flu.

*Next: Flu by FedEx—How government labs are taking chances with people's lives.*



## JORDAN

# U.S. moves to exploit bombings

By Larry Hales

Bomb blasts ripped open the Radisson SAS, Grand Hyatt and Days Inn hotels in Amman, Jordan, killing 57 people and injuring hundreds on Nov. 9.

Although nearly all the victims of the attack were Jordanians, Palestinians or foreigners of Arab origin, U.S. officials and media immediately reported that al-Qaeda in Iraq, which is said to be headed by Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, the shadowy leader of the even more shadowy group, had taken responsibility for the attacks.

Adding to uncertainty was the report in the Israeli newspaper Ha'aretz (Nov. 9), retracted within the day, that Israelis were evacuated from the Radisson Hotel by Jordanian security forces before the bombing.

Whoever carried out the bombing, it is instructive to see how the U.S. immediately reacted to it and how the media here responded. U.S. strategy to destabilize and take over control of an area with the majority of the world's oil supply is not something that started with the invasion and occupation of Iraq.

The capitalist media has been quick to play up so-called mass demonstrations in Jordan, which have been of a few hundred or at most a few thousand people, much smaller than demonstrations in Jordan opposing the war on Iraq. The participants are mostly people allied with King Abdullah of Jordan, and are supposed to be against Iraqis and pro-U.S.

King Abdullah, the son of the late King Hussein of Jordan, is a U.S. ally. Since the bombings Abdullah has held meetings with U.S. officials, including Bill Clinton, which indicates he is moving even closer to Washington. Most of Jordan's people are from Palestine, and have been more sympathetic to the Iraqi resistance than to the U.S. occupation. King Hussein and King Abdullah have both been closely tied to U.S. interests in the area, as could be seen in their relations with the Palestinians.

### Terror aimed at Palestinians

A constant campaign of terror against the Palestinian people has been going on since the U.S.-backed and armed Zionist occupation in 1948. This war against the Palestinian people has destabilized the entire Middle East region, as the Israeli

state expanded the area under its control, built up a nuclear stockpile, and as a U.S. junior partner threatens Middle Eastern countries, while denying the Palestinian people their right to self-determination.

Pushed out a second time by the Israeli occupation of the West Bank during the June 1967 war, Palestinians sought refuge in Jordan and began to build up their resistance forces. King Hussein waged a campaign against the PLO and Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine when these organizations began to inspire non-Palestinian Jordanian people.

King Hussein's army then opened a U.S.-aided attack against the Palestinian

Liberation Organization in September 1970—known as "Black September"—and in the subsequent civil war between then and June 1971, killed between 5,000 and 10,000 Palestinians.

It is convenient for the U.S. occupation force in Iraq to assign al-Qaeda in Iraq responsibility for the recent devastating attacks. This strategy identifies "foreign terrorists" with the Iraqi resistance, whose main strength in reality comes from the support of the Iraqi population. The Jordan events highlight the danger of the U.S. expanding the war to Syria, which is blamed for having a "porous border" allowing "foreign fighters" into Iraq.

U.S. attempts to exploit the Jordan bombing to gain support from reactionary Arab regimes shows how desperate U.S. officials are when confronted by an ever more sophisticated and popular resistance inside Iraq.

While the U.S. may gain a temporary alliance with a local king or dictator, the people of the Middle East are unlikely to be so outraged at the Nov. 9 bombings that they forget their outrage over U.S. support for the occupation of Palestine, or their current anger over the war being waged against the Iraqi people, or Western imperialism's colonial control of the region that goes back so much further. □

## Italian documentary confirms:

# U.S. used napalm in Falluja

By David Hoskins

New evidence came to light earlier this month that confirmed reports in Workers World newspaper and elsewhere that the U.S. military had used internationally banned chemical weapons, including white phosphorus and napalm, during its November 2004 attack on Falluja.

The U.S. government adamantly denied these reports at the time. Reports of the alleged U.S. war crimes were notably absent from the pages of most Western newspapers and there was virtually no discussion of the issue on cable news stations or talk radio. Al Jazeera's facility in Iraq was forcibly shut down in an attempt to stifle journalistic inquiry into these reports.

Now, almost a year later, Italian state television RAI has produced a documentary confirming that U.S. forces in fact used white phosphorus and MK77 Mod 5—a napalm derivative—in Falluja. And the Guardian of London has called Falluja an atrocity on the scale of Mylai and Guernica, estimating 7,000 civilian dead.

While MK77 Mod 5 uses a formula consisting of a smaller concentration of benzene, the effects are exactly the same as napalm. The use of these incendiary weapons is a violation of the 1980 UN Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons.

Workers World newspaper had pub-

lished an article in its Dec. 2, 2004, issue based on a talk by Workers World Party Secretariat member Sara Flounders in which she described how the use of illicit chemical weapons, poison gas and bunker busters had virtually destroyed the city of Falluja.

Jeff Englehart, a former soldier in the U.S. 1st Infantry Division in Iraq, says in the Italian documentary that he saw "burned bodies, burned children and burned women." Entitled "Falluja: The Hidden Massacre," the film contains video footage showing the bodies of civilian women and children following the U.S. air and artillery bombardment.

The innocent victims appear to have been burned to the bone. Others have partially melted flesh hanging from their bodies. These chemical weapons primarily affect the flesh of their targets. The evidence leaves no doubt that the victims were unarmed and in civilian clothing at the time of their deaths.

### Orders to shoot children

Describing the United States' intention to target civilians in Falluja, Englehart states that he was told by military superiors going into Falluja that "every single person that was walking, talking, breathing was [an] enemy combatant. As such every single person that was walking down the

street or in a house was a target." Englehart confirms that soldiers had orders to shoot children as young as 10 years old.

The use of white phosphorus and napalm in Falluja is just another example of criminal action and conspiracy to hide the truth. It fits into a domestic and international agenda to reshape world politics in favor of the extreme right wing of the U.S. ruling class. The breakup of the Soviet Union emboldened the most conservative sector of U.S. imperialism and its allies to try to assume for themselves absolute control of the world.

Recent news reports have provided myriad instances of criminality, corruption and conspiracy. Since 2004 alone, troops directed by the Bush administration have been caught committing torture at Abu Ghraib prison in Iraq, desecrating the Koran in the concentration camp in Guantanamo in occupied Cuba and now using internationally banned chemical weapons in Falluja.

The U.S. government first lied in 2002-2003, claiming the existence of massive amounts of chemical weapons in Iraqi hands, to justify the invasion of Iraq. The same U.S. government then turned its own arsenal of chemical weapons against innocent civilians in Falluja and has now been caught lying in an attempt to cover up its criminal actions. □

## Ignoring Philippine sovereignty

# Pentagon shields Marines in rape case

By Sharon Eolis

The reported gang rape of a 22-year-old Filipina woman by six U.S. Marines in a van has sparked a series of protests throughout the Philippines and other Asian nations. The people are demanding that the Marines, who have been in the custody of the U.S. Embassy, be turned over for trial by a Philippine court.

Under the Visiting Forces Agreement (VFA) signed by the government of Gloria Macapagal Arroyo, the U.S. has custody of its military personnel who have committed criminal offenses on foreign soil.

Bernadette Ellorin, a leader in the Bayan movement in the U.S., says that "since the VFA was signed, no U.S. military person has been detained or prosecuted under Philippine law. Can you imagine a Filipino living in the U.S. and accused

of rape not being detained and incarcerated immediately after being charged?"

Progressive Filipinos see the VFA as another proof of U.S. domination of their country. Ellorin added, "Our people are fighting for sovereignty and control of our country and demand that the U.S. military be expelled."

The Filipino people have been occupied by the U.S. military on and off for over a century. The two main U.S. bases have been Clark Air Force Base and Subic Bay Naval Station. The alleged rapes took place at Subic.

After huge demonstrations that brought down the government of Corazon Aquino in 1991, the U.S. military was forced out and a new constitution approved that banned foreign troops.

But after the 9/11 attacks in the U.S., the Bush administration drew up a new agree-

ment with the Arroyo government for joint U.S.-Philippine military exercises as part of the "war on terror." About 2,500 U.S. troops participated in exercises in 2002 and have never left.

In August 2005, several thousand more U.S. troops participated in a military operation with Filipino troops against the revolutionary people's movement in the southern Philippines.

The Filipina women's group Gabriela International is supporting a resolution introduced by Rep. Lisa Maza calling for the suspension of the joint military exercises until the case is resolved. This rape case was a major issue at a Gabriela International Assembly in Los Angeles in early November. It was followed by a series of demonstrations in Los Angeles, San Francisco, Seattle and New York.

Several years ago the media exposed

cases of rape, sexual assault and harassment of women in the military in the U.S. Those who had the courage to speak up and pursue their cases were harassed, humiliated and punished and often forced out of the service. Why would we expect the U.S. military to act differently in a foreign country?

An International Solidarity Mission visited the Philippines in August and helped expose the repressive measures of the Arroyo government. Since then, nearly two dozen more people have been assassinated. The Bayan movement and other organizations have been leading demonstrations of progressive organizations, peasants and workers in the Philippines in the struggle for liberation from U.S. imperialism and to oust the Arroyo government. □



# It takes an uprising

French president Jacques Chirac, shaken to the core by the massive rebellion of immigrant youth, has proposed to extend emergency law for three months. He is trying to belatedly demonstrate his “law and order” position. But he has also declared, reluctantly, that “we can build nothing lasting if we allow racism, intolerance and abuse.”

That was Jacques Chirac on Nov. 15, after a virtual insurrection swept through 300 cities. But in June 1991, as mayor of Paris, Chirac stated that France suffered from an “overdose” of immigrants, and he expressed sympathy for the “French worker” who suffered from the “noise and smell” from immigrants. In those days he was competing with Valéry Giscard d’Estaing to stir up anti-immigrant racism. And both ruling class politicians were vying with the fascist National Front to cultivate and capture the racist anti-immigrant vote.

Today Chirac and the French ruling class are being burned in the flames of a rebellion that they created by perpetuating oppression, masked by the myth of “equality” of all under the “color-blind” constitution of the “social republic.” They have been basking in the slogans of the French Revolution of 1789 while enforcing poverty, unemployment and exclusion on millions of immigrants from North and sub-Saharan Africa.

Buried in a New York Times story of Nov. 11 was a passage confirming that the French government does not permit statistics to be kept on discrimination. But the piece cited a study carried out by a former soccer player turned political adviser, Karim Zeribi, in which “resumes sent out with traditionally French names got responses 50 times higher than those with North African or African names.” Candidates for jobs are regularly asked if they are practicing Muslims.

So while the constitution and the law are sightless, the bosses are not. That is “legal,” institutionalized racism.

Frederick Engels, the co-founder of Marxism, wrote about the French Revolution in his book “Socialism: Utopian and Scientific.” He showed how the great bourgeois revolution declared that “henceforth superstition, injustice, privilege, oppression were to be superseded by eternal truth, eternal Right, equality based on Nature and the inalienable rights of man.”

“We know today,” wrote Engels, “that this kingdom of reason was nothing more than the idealized kingdom of the bourgeoisie; that this eternal Right found its realization in bourgeois justice; that this equality reduced itself to bourgeois equality before the law; that bourgeois property was proclaimed as one of the essential rights of man.”

What soon emerged was the realization that a new, modern form of exploitation, capitalist wage slavery, was the result of the bourgeois revolution, even as it carried out the progressive task of destroying feudalism, serfdom and hereditary

privilege of the great landed aristocracy.

Today, when capitalism has entered the thoroughly decadent and reactionary stage of imperialism, the slogan of “equality” under the law and the constitution in France and other imperialist countries masks not only wage slavery and exploitation but internal colonialism and the super-exploitation of millions of immigrants from former colonies and present-day neocolonies.

In this era when the world capitalist economy is in a permanent crisis of slow growth, stagnation, punctuated by periodic recessions and depressions, racism and national oppression has become a fundamental instrument, not only of the French ruling class, but of all the ruling classes of Europe and of the U.S.

What the French rebellion did was to destroy this fiction and reveal the true colonial relationship that forms a good part of the foundation of French imperialism. For the first time in French history the rulers are going to have to consider affirmative action—a concept that was forbidden under the ideology of the so-called “social republic.” Those who are concerned about supporting the rebellion should remember this. Without this righteous uprising, nothing would be done.

It is worth while remembering also that after the great mass civil right movement in the United States destroyed legal segregation, the African-American masses in the inner cities, the equivalent of the suburbs of France, discovered that dismantling legal segregation was not enough. The automatic, institutionalized racism of imperialist society was still in place, with its racist discrimination in jobs and education, its police brutality and judicial repression.

It took rebellions in over 100 cities in 1968, after the assassination of Martin Luther King, to force U.S. imperialism to officially acknowledge the institutional racism that permeated society. This was recorded in the Kerner Commission report, which declared that the U.S. was “moving toward two societies, one Black, one white—separate and unequal.” It was soon after that, in 1972, that President Richard Nixon had to reluctantly sign affirmative action into law.

Many of the gains won from the rebellions of the 1960s in the U.S. have since been pushed back, just as the immigrant population in France is rising up to tell the world about its intolerable conditions.

The failure of the labor movement in 1968 to join in solidarity with the African-American struggle for liberation from oppressive social conditions is being reproduced in France at the present moment. But the inability of world capitalism to bring anything but increasing hardship to workers, organized and unorganized, is going to force the entire working class to take a new path—a path of solidarity and class struggle—which will shake the foundations of the system and is the only road to social and economic progress. □

# Senate double-talk

Continued from page 1  
the insurgency.”

## Warner rewrites gutless Democratic amendment

This amendment was a rewrite by Warner of a Democratic amendment defeated earlier in the day 58 to 40. The Warner version omitted Democratic Party language that had called for the administration to provide “estimated dates” for redeployment of U.S. troops once a series of benchmark conditions were met, while containing a gigantic loophole for “unexpected contingencies [that] may arise.”

The amendment had been introduced by Carl Levin of Michigan, the ranking Democrat on the Senate Armed Services Committee. This gutless resolution, which gave the Bush administration miles of room to continue the war, was denounced by the Republicans as a “timetable” and a proposal to “cut and run.”

But both versions of the amendment were equally ridiculous in their posturing. No one bothered to explain how the urgings of a Senate amendment would make the puppet troops in Iraq any more capable of fighting than they are now. No one explained how the requirement to report to Congress every three months was going to make the Iraqi people hate the occupation any less or be less determined to expel the imperialist invaders.

Washington’s problem in Iraq is its total inability to stop the resistance. If 160,000 U.S. troops, 25,000 British troops and all their modern means of warfare cannot subjugate Iraq, how can an amendment instructing the White House to bolster its efforts to win and get out solve their problem?

The irony was that all this gesturing about wanting to end the war took place in the context of passing a \$491 billion military spending bill, at least \$50 billion of which was for continuing the occupation.

## McCain’s amendment

The other amendment, opposed by Bush, was from Sen. John McCain. This provision made the language of the Geneva Convention against torture into law. It declared that no detainee in U.S. custody could be subject to “cruel, inhumane or degrading” treatment. Bush adamantly declared he would veto the military bill if it included the McCain amendment. The latest word is that his national security adviser, Stephen Hadley, is quietly negotiating with McCain over the bill.

What is significant about both amendments, beyond the political posturing, is that they were each introduced by arch militarists. Warner is a former secretary of the Navy and head of the Senate Armed Services Committee. McCain was a pilot and officer in Vietnam; his father, an admiral, was commander of the Pacific Fleet during the Vietnam War.

Both have deep misgivings about the military strategy of the Bush-Cheney-Rumsfeld group. The Senate amendment is not binding on the administration and allows the war and the killing to go on. Nevertheless, it is a message to Bush that sections of the military and of the ruling class are fearful that the present Pentagon strategy is not viable. No provisional government, no elections, no constitution has been able to reverse the steady advance of the Iraqi resistance.

While the Republicans have denounced the Democrats for proposing a “cut and run” timetable, Warner’s amendment more or less told Bush, Cheney and

Rumsfeld that rhetoric about “completing the mission” is not going to work any more. The mighty high-tech U.S. military machine, which was supposed to strike fear into the hearts of the Iraqi people and the rest of the world, is being humiliated on a daily basis by a grassroots resistance with small arms, small-scale explosives and widespread social support.

The British military recently did a secret poll in which it found that 82 percent of the population in Iraq is opposed to the occupation. Tony Blair has begun to talk about troop withdrawal. The Iraqi puppets are all beginning to talk about ending the occupation—just in order to maintain some credibility. Warner said about the amendment that “we really mean business, Iraqis, get on with it.” In other words, by 2006, the time of the elections, the Republicans want some results that they can point to and the U.S. military wants to see some light at the end of the tunnel.

## Behind the ‘protest’ of the talk shop

Ordinarily, Congress is an impotent talk shop when it comes to exerting any influence on the wars of the Pentagon. The business of Congress is to deal with lobbyists; to serve as conduits for big corporations; to do the bidding of the Pentagon, and to get elected and reelected. Rarely do they assert themselves, even with the type of timid, light-weight jabs they are throwing at the White House.

John Kerry, Hillary Clinton, Joseph Biden and the entire galaxy of present-day dissenters, along with former Bush loyalists like Bill Frist, majority leader from Tennessee, and John Cornyn of Texas all voted for the war. What gives these opportunistic legislators the temerity to even sound like opponents now? Of course it is fear of the growing opposition at home, but it is also because of the leadership of militarists like Warner and McCain, who have generals and admirals behind them.

The basis for these amendments, which may be watered down when they get to the House-Senate reconciliation process, was the indictment of I. Lewis Libby, Dick Cheney’s chief of staff. The indictment of Libby was a blow at Cheney, the architect of the war, along with Donald Rumsfeld and the nest of right-wing neo-cons that surround Bush.

The indictment of Libby was followed by the humiliating defeat of Cheney’s attempts to get the Senate to defeat the McCain amendment. All the accusations about falsifying pre-war intelligence and the exposures of torture and secret CIA prisons that have been championed by Cheney have dealt the secretive right-wing cabal a severe blow.

Nevertheless, none of the senators or would-be strategists of despair has even one clue about how to change the dire situation for the Pentagon in Iraq or to defeat the Iraqi people’s struggle against the occupation.

But for the workers and the oppressed and the movement in this country, all these debates within the ruling class over timetables and conditions for “success” and withdrawal are just delaying tactics for imperialism. Each day they remain in Iraq to perpetuate their invasions, their raids, their arrests, their killing and humiliation of the Iraqi people is another day of brutal colonialist occupation.

All the congressional posturing should not deter the movement from fighting to get the troops out now, completely and without conditions. □

## Join the Workers World Supporter Program

Supporters who contribute \$75 a year receive a year’s subscription, a monthly letter and five free trial subscriptions. Sponsors who contribute \$100 also get a book published by WW Publishers. Sustainers also get five books or videos.

□ Please send me more information about the Supporter Program.

Workers World Newspaper  
55 West 17 St. NY, NY 10011

212 627-2994

ONLINE:  
WWW.WORKERS.ORG

## As Wall Street orders more austerity

# Unions mobilize in Puerto Rico

By Tom Soto  
San Juan, Puerto Rico

For a week, starting Nov. 6, three important mobilizations of workers and their families took place here in the capital of this Caribbean nation, which was invaded by the United States in 1898 and has since been ruled as a virtual colony.

Demonstrators numbered in the thousands in what may well be a harbinger of what is to come. The marches showed a developing struggle against layoffs of public employees, the government's refusal to negotiate wage increases with public employee unions, a skyrocketing cost of living, efforts to privatize state-owned corporations, and continuing cutbacks of services by the colonial government.

In September 2004, Moody's Investor Services and Standard & Poor's—two of Wall Street's bond-rating houses—had announced they were downgrading the credit-worthiness of Puerto Rico's government bonds. Moody's pointed to a government debt of \$39.4 billion and a current budget deficit in fiscal year 2005.

Throughout the summer and fall, the P.R. government has been imposing layoffs on public employees through early retirement plans. It recently repeated threats to lay off public employees en masse.

### Wall Street pushing for more

Under the direction of the Wall Street investment houses, the government has implemented an austerity plan to keep Moody's and Standard & Poor's from further downgrading the bond ratings. Representatives of these two firms and of the Puerto Rican client government are scheduled to meet on Nov. 22.

The austerity measures carried out thus far have hit the workers and the poor hardest. Electricity rates have risen 100 percent, bus fares have increased by 300 percent, highway tolls by 43 percent, car registration fees by 100 percent, tuition fees for the public universities by 40 percent, and water usage rates by 74 percent—with

another 74 percent increase to take effect next year.

These government-sponsored increases have ushered in a period of spiraling inflation, promoting further increases in the prices of all basic foodstuffs and other necessities of life.

On Nov. 10, in a barely publicized meeting, Puerto Rico's secretary of the treasury, the director of its Office of Management and Budget, and the president of Puerto Rico's Development Bank met with 50 attorneys representing Wall Street investment houses.

As a result of this closed-door meeting, Wall Street demanded that, before it would approve Puerto Rico's credit-worthiness, the Puerto Rican Legislature must approve a new tax code imposing a 9 percent "consumer tax" on the working public.

Puerto Rico has never had a sales tax because of the low salaries here—which on average are one-third of those in the U.S. Per-capita income here in fiscal year 2004 was \$12,947.

In this atmosphere of fiscal and debt crisis, the P.R. government has been adamant that it will not negotiate wage increases with public employee unions.

### Teachers' union takes lead

On Sunday, Nov. 6, thousands of teachers wearing bright yellow T-shirts identifying their union, the Federation of Teachers marched militantly through the narrow streets of Old San Juan, gathering at the Plaza de Colón, marching to the capitol building where the Puerto Rican Legislature is housed, and then to the governor's seaside mansion.

The demonstration numbered many thousands, whose lead banner said: "If you can read this, give thanks to a teacher—We demand justice for teachers." Their yellow flags and banners drew the attention of service workers, residents, shopkeepers and tourists.

Their chants, demanding retirement after 25 years' service and 15 children per classroom, echoed off the buildings. The protest was so large that when the front of

the march reached the governor's mansion, the end was still leaving the Plaza de Colón.

The Federation of Teachers is the largest union in Puerto Rico, with some 32,000 members.

Its president, Rafael Feliciano, told the crowd at the governor's mansion: "The Federation is ready to struggle ... for just salaries, and we demand that our schools give our students a quality education, that they have adequate facilities and the necessary resources, so that Puerto Rico can lift itself up, strengthening our culture and being an example for all of us."

He explained how the union had prepared its negotiating proposal for six months, but when delegates sat down to negotiate, the Department of Education had no proposal, meaning, "They have no plan to improve the educational system."

Feliciano pointed out that the Department of Education wants to eliminate parent, teacher and student participation at the local school level. He stressed that "more than 90 percent of our bargaining contract is directed at bettering the educational system. It is not a contract to enrich ourselves but to lift the education system of our country."

Referring to the government's refusal to even consider salary increases, under the guise of the current fiscal crisis, Feliciano said: "It is irresponsible to say there is no budget for salary increases for teachers because we are negotiating a contract to take effect over the next budget, not the present one."

### Electrical workers oppose privatization

On Nov. 9, the Electrical Industry Workers Union pulled out its membership in a one-day strike to demand that the government stop outsourcing the jobs of union members to private contractors and stop any effort to privatize the state-owned Electrical Energy Authority (AEE).

Early in the morning, workers began to gather at the main office of the AEE in Santurce, to later march to the capitol

building and the governor's mansion.

Behind a banner reading, "United we can stop the privatization of the AEE," the 4,500 workers—more than 95 percent of the entire union membership—literally took over the four-mile route. They were led by 300 motorcycles bearing the blue-and-yellow flags of the union.

For years the union has been campaigning against the sale of this state-owned corporation to private industry, such as occurred with the sale of the Puerto Rico Telephone Co. in 1998. This week the Legislature, under the pressure of the growing movement, approved a bill opposing privatization of the AEE, and several legislators spoke at the rally.

Agustín de Jesus, participating in a contingent of retirees, told this reporter: "Although we welcome the expression of the Legislature opposing privatization, you can never trust these capitalist politicians. Only the continued unity and mobilization of the workers can safeguard against privatization."

That same day, the governor's office issued a statement claiming that the government had no intention of privatizing the Electrical Energy Authority.

On Nov. 10, the Federation of Workers of Puerto Rico, which is affiliated to the AFL-CIO, held a demonstration in front of the governor's mansion. Unions urged members to bring their shoes, and they made a pile of them in front of the mansion. "If [Gov. Acevedo Vilá] were to put himself in the shoes of the public employees, who are threatened by a reduction of wages and by layoffs at a time when the inflation indexes have skyrocketed, he would have a different view," said José Rodríguez, president of the Federation.

The ongoing fiscal and debt crisis, the threatened layoffs and the refusal of the government to consider wage increase for public employees, the inflation in the prices of all basic commodities—all these factors are pushing the class struggle to the fore. Thus far the organized labor movement is holding its own and preparing for future battles. □

## HAITI

# Empty bellies and empty elections

By G. Dunkel

The desperate situation of the people of imperialist-occupied Haiti has grown worse. Hunger and random brutality, according to a report produced by the InterAmerican Commission on Human Rights and the Latin American office of UNICEF, are the daily fare of children and teenagers in Haiti.

Of course, UNICEF didn't put its conclusions so bluntly. It merely reported that, in 15 percent of the zones included in its nationwide survey, children were killed by gunfire. In one-third of the zones children were either injured by gunfire or beaten. In urban areas, where violence is most common, rapes of children have increased markedly.

Fewer and fewer children are going to school in this country where the illiteracy rate is more than 50 percent because schools and the streets leading to them are too dangerous. In about 70 percent of the zones UNICEF surveyed, families had fled to safer areas.

Much of the burden of the current situation in Haiti is falling on its children.

Hunger affects them more severely since they are still growing and they are less capable of resisting violence. But their parents and other adults have also suffered. An estimated 10,000 people throughout Haiti have been killed by violence since the U.S.-backed coup began in early 2004 and more than 3,000 supporters of President Jean-Bertrand Aristide are currently political prisoners.

UNICEF is pleading for compassion and mercy and aid from the very countries that created, deepened and intensified the misery of Haiti: the United States, Canada and France, with the assistance of Brazil.

The U.S. government, with some technical and political cooperation from France, organized and implemented the coup that removed from office Jean-Bertrand Aristide, Haiti's democratically elected president. U.S. Marines from the ambassador's bodyguard then put Aristide on a U.S. plane that took him to the Central African Republic.

When the U.S. and France had to pull back a bit from Haiti in order to fulfill more pressing commitments—the U.S. in Iraq, France in the Ivory Coast—Canada

stepped up its role, spending at least \$100 million to prop up the current, illegitimate government that Washington imposed on Haiti.

The current UN approach to "solving" Haiti's problems is a "selection/election" of a president and parliament that will do what they are told and certainly not challenge the U.S.'s political control in the Caribbean and Latin America or demand reparations from France for imposing a crushing debt on Haiti. In 1825, France forced Haiti to pay French plantation owners 150 million gold francs in compensation for freed slave laborers. According to an estimate by the Aristide government, this would amount to \$21 billion today. The Aristide government was actively seeking this amount as reparations when it was overthrown.

Currently the Provisional Electoral Council (CEP) claims to have registered 3 million Haitians for the proposed elections, but only a handful of its fancy identification cards—which require thumb prints and photos—have been distributed. The CEP has been forced to postpone the first round of elections, which was sched-

uled for Nov. 17 but has been pushed back to Dec. 11 and Dec. 18, despite the fact that de facto Prime Minister Gérard Latortue made a round of international visits at the end of October to the UN Security Council and various bodies in Europe swearing up and down that the next president of Haiti would take office as constitutionally mandated on Feb. 7, 2006.

The CEP has removed three candidates from the roster of 39 who are running for president because they have foreign passports, which under Haitian law means they are no longer citizens. The CEP assigned identification numbers to the 43 parties and political groups running in the elections. Some of the concerned parties registered loud protests, charging the draw was rigged because their numbers weren't in the box. □

### HAITI A Slave Revolution

Drawing from a wide range of authors, and historical texts, this book reveals the relationship between the U.S. and Haiti, and the Haitian people's resistance to U.S. aggressions and occupations. \$19.95

Order online from [www.leftbooks.com](http://www.leftbooks.com)

## EN FRANCIA

# Racismo y pobreza alimentan rebelión

Por Fred Goldstein

9 de noviembre — Los gobernantes capitalistas reaccionarios de Francia han declarado un estado de emergencia en un intento por contener la rebelión enteramente justificada de inmigrantes africanos en contra de décadas de racismo, pobreza, desempleo y opresión nacional — impuesto bajo el lema hipócrita de “libertad, fraternidad e igualdad” de la “república social”.

La rebelión, que ya se ha extendido a 300 ciudades, está liderada por jóvenes y es la expresión de la ira y la frustración de los millones de inmigrantes y sus hijos que provienen de las antiguas colonias de Francia, mayormente en el Norte de África o al sur del Sahara.

Esta rebelión es básicamente contra el colonialismo interno — evidenciado por la tasa oficial de desempleo de jóvenes que llega a casi un 40 por ciento; viviendas miserables construidas en los años 50 y 60; una campaña continua de hostigamiento por parte de la policía y la discriminación racista en viviendas y empleos.

Francia tiene 750 áreas clasificadas como Zonas Urbanas Sensitivas donde el desempleo se mantiene en un 20 por ciento — el doble del promedio nacional — y los ingresos no son más del 60 por ciento del ingreso promedio nacional, según las estadísticas del gobierno. El nivel de desempleo oficial allí entre los jóvenes de 15 y 25 años de edad es de un 36 por ciento y alcanza un nivel aún más alto si se suman solamente a los hombres musulmanes jóvenes.

El epicentro de la rebelión fue en el Departamento 93 de Saint-Denis, a 10 millas de París. Los alquileres en París han subido rápidamente. El año pasado más de 100.000 personas compitieron por solamente 12.000 apartamentos deficientes en París. “Entre los más severamente afectados por la falta de viviendas son los inmigrantes. ... Los tres incendios que surgieron uno tras otro en París durante la primavera y el verano, que mataron a muchos niños, ocurrieron en tales apartamentos en estado de deterioro”. (Noticiero ABC)

La ley que utilizaron para declarar el estado de emergencia es particularmente odiada porque fue impuesta por primera vez en 1955 como parte de la guerra sangrienta colonial de los imperialistas franceses para mantener su asimiento de Argelia. Permite a los gobernadores y alcaldes “prohibir el movimiento de gente y de vehículos”, prohibir reuniones, “allanar hogares en cualquier momento del día o la noche”, controlar “la prensa y publicaciones de todas clases”, e imponer una sentencia de dos meses por violaciones del toque de queda, entre otras provisiones. Más de 1500 personas ya han sido detenidas y se esperan cientos de arrestos más.

Varios años después de imponer esta ley en Argelia, el gobierno la extendió a la misma Francia, para sofocar el apoyo por el movimiento de liberación nacional de Argelia. Creó tal clima de represión que, el 17 de octubre de 1961, una manifestación en París en apoyo a la guerra de liberación en Argelia fue atacada por la policía. Más

de 300 personas murieron, sus cuerpos fueron lanzados en el Sena y algunos fueron ahorcados.

### Del colonialismo externo al colonialismo interno

Igual como la ley original tuvo la intención de mantener el colonialismo en Argelia, asimismo el decreto actual tiene la intención de mantener el colonialismo interno.

La clase dominante de Francia ha proclamado que en la “república social” todo el mundo es igual y el gobierno practica una política de “integración”. Pero entrevista tras entrevista de gente de todas las edades, los periodistas de las redes informativas capitalistas reportan la misma historia. “Nos dicen que somos franceses, pero no somos franceses”. “Tenemos los documentos que dicen que somos franceses, pero no somos franceses verdaderos”.

Si se tiene un apellido o nombre que suena africano o del Medio Oriente, la solicitud para trabajo o vivienda digna va directamente al fondo de la pila o lanzada a la basura. El desempleo entre estudiantes africanos graduados de universidad es cerca de un 50 por ciento. La noción de que “Nuestra profesión es empleada de limpieza” es percepción común.

Consistente con la ficción política de “igualdad”, el gobierno de Francia no mantiene estadísticas sobre la discriminación. La acción afirmativa en Francia está prohibida; estaría en contradicción con las aseveraciones de igualdad. La aplicación reaccionaria de este concepto se manifestó cuando las bufandas que suelen usar las estudiantes inmigrantes fueron prohibidas con el falso pretexto de la separación del estado y la iglesia.

Pero en la misma forma en que el

huracán Katrina expuso el racismo descarado y la opresión nacional que existe en los EEUU, la rebelión en Francia ha revelado explosivamente todas las ficciones de igualdad y justicia social. El Presidente Jaques Chirac, el Primer Ministro Dominique de Villepin y el Ministro del Interior Nicolás Sarkozy están ahora compitiendo entre sí en esta crisis.

Sarkozy es odiado por la gente oprimida y todos los progresistas a través de Francia por su línea dura, su política opresiva y sus insultos racistas. El gobierno no tiene a nadie de influencia con quien la juventud se pueda comunicar. Y el régimen entero está inclinándose hacia más represión.

Al mismo tiempo, de Villepin ha recurrido a la política de tentar con la zanahoria y amenazar con el palo, hablando de 20.000 puestos de empleo con el gobierno, dinero para los barrios, y exenciones de impuesto para empresas y desarrollo.

Tomó una rebelión en 300 ciudades, que hasta el 9 de noviembre ha durado casi dos semanas y que virtualmente ha abatido a la policía, para forzar a la clase dominante a hablar sobre reformas. Esta rebelión es impresionante y la clase dominante pronto se enterará de que las curitas no van a resolver el problema.

### Los patrones querían inmigrantes después de la Segunda Guerra Mundial

La crisis tiene sus orígenes en la crisis inexorable del capitalismo mundial. El imperialismo francés ha tratado esta crisis lanzando una campaña maliciosa y racista de dividir y conquistar dirigida en contra de toda la clase trabajadora francesa. El elemento clave en su estrategia ha sido una campaña calumniosa contra los inmigrantes. La rebelión es el fruto de esta estrategia.

Después de la Segunda Guerra Mundial el capitalismo francés estaba en escombros a causa de la ocupación Nazi y la invasión de los aliados. La población y la clase trabajadora habían disminuido. La clase dominante decidió que para recuperarse rápido necesitaba una afluencia de inmigrantes — esclavos de bajo sueldo que podían ser explotados a un costo mínimo para los patrones y así fortalecer al capitalismo francés en la lucha mundial por los mercados.

El resultado fue la apertura de la inmigración, especialmente desde África del Norte — Argelia, Marruecos y Túnez. Esta política continuó

durante todo el período de expansión imperialista hasta los años 70. El imperialismo francés había sido echado de Vietnam (Indochina), luego de Argelia, y padeció de la contracción económica más severamente que sus competidores. Pero la clase trabajadora organizada era poderosa. Se rebeló en 1968 y forzó cambios drásticos en el gobierno y algunas concesiones progresistas.

Al desarrollarse los años 70, la clase dominante revirtió su actitud hacia la inmigración. Empezó a imponer limitaciones e incluso en los años 80 amenazó con deportar a cientos de miles de inmigrantes legales y revocar su estado retroactivamente. Esta ley fue derrotada, pero solo el hecho de formularla fue una medida divisiva.

La crisis de los inmigrantes estuvo empeorada por la revolución científico-tecnológica y la baja en industrialización capitalista que golpeó los suburbios dejando pequeñas zonas de fábricas cerradas alrededor de las ciudades.

En los años 90 el fascista Frente Nacional Francés, encabezado por Jean-Marie Le Pen, acogió la campaña que fue empezada por la clase dominante avanzándola más. Le Pen continuó su campaña racista contra los inmigrantes y en 2002 llegó a la carrera final contra Jacques Chirac para la presidencia.

El liderazgo de la clase trabajadora de Francia ha sido débil sobre esta cuestión y a veces verdaderamente reaccionario. Actualmente ellos necesitan dejar de retirarse. No deben limitarse solo a manifestaciones contra las medidas reaccionarias de represión. Necesitan demandar que se retire la policía, y que los decretos de emergencia sean revocados. Necesitan salir en apoyo de esta justa rebelión.

La juventud rebelde debe ser abrazada como parte de la clase trabajadora. Ellos pueden ser desempleados, empleados parcialmente, y/o sin organización, pero ahora mismo son potencialmente los aliados más grandes de los trabajadores organizados. Ellos han abrumado a una parte del estado. Están movilizados y si se uniera una huelga de solidaridad contra el racismo, la pobreza y la opresión, toda la clase trabajadora podría repeler la ofensiva de la clase dominante.

Sería espejo, pero en una escala mucho más grande, de los trabajadores franceses que en 1968 siguieron a los estudiantes con una huelga general y sacudieron las bases del capitalismo francés. Es la falta de comprender la cuestión nacional, la cuestión colonial, la importancia de enfrentarse a la opresión nacional, que ahora es un obstáculo en el camino de una lucha unida contra la explotación capitalista. Eso tiene que ser vencido.

La clase trabajadora francesa tiene una historia gloriosa de lucha de clase y rebeliones, la cual abarca la revolución de 1848, la Comuna de París de 1871, las insurrecciones después de la Primera Guerra Mundial, y las huelgas generales de 1934 y 1968. Éste es el momento para que los líderes tomen su papel histórico y su responsabilidad para cambiar esta situación y luchar. □

