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# Memories of Vietnam Iraqi resistance leaves Bush isolated

By Fred Goldstein

Federal budgets are among the most political of documents. The recent passage by the U.S. Senate of a record U.S. military budget of \$447 billion, including a \$70 billion "bridge" fund for the next six months of bloody occupations in Iraq and Afghanistan, is a profound political statement about the underlying politics of both parties of big business in the U.S.

The vote was 100 to 0.

This is not just about the politics of the Republicans and the Democrats. The Senate is a millionaires' club. Its members are well connected to the corporate and financial establishment. As such it is as good a representation of ruling-class political sentiment in this country as you can get—particularly when there is complete unanimity.

The message of the vote is that, no matter how dissatisfied they are with President George W. Bush, no matter how much their politicians and their press accuse Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld of arrogance and tactical incompetence, no matter how they criticize the lies the Bush administration used to go to war in Iraq, their bottom line is to continue the funding—not only of this war but of future wars.

### No consensus on what to do

The establishment cannot come to a consensus on what to do about Iraq.

Some military officers have said that the war is lost in Anbar province.

Sen. John McCain represents the military faction that wants more troops.

Sen. Joseph Biden represents a grouping that wants to partition the country into three separate provinces as a last resort.

Rep. John Murtha speaks for a faction that wants to pull back "over the horizon" and remain poised to provide strategic backup for Iraqi puppet forces.

Retired generals have called for the resignation of Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld.

Then there is the pro-Bush "stay the course" grouping, apparently represented by Henry Kissinger, who has become a chief adviser to the White House on the war.

While the ruling class, the military and the political establishment are completely fragmented and distraught over the situation, the one thing they can unite on is to continue the occupation—and they prove it when both parties continue to fund the war.

None of them wants to pull out and let the Iraqi people determine their own destiny. All want to keep from "losing." By that they mean losing Iraqi oil; losing the campaign to recolonize Iraq under U.S. corporate and military domination; losing Washington's "strategic" position as overseer of the oil-rich Middle East.

It says a lot about the deception of capitalist politics that the little-publicized 100 to 0 bombshell Senate vote by Republicans and Democrats to continue fund-

## Yet Congress votes 100-0 to fund war— Only the people united can bring the troops home

ing both wars in an extraordinary act of unity, was taken at the moment that Bob Woodward's new book, "State of Denial," was hitting the bookstores and making headlines. After writing two sycophantic books praising the Bush administration, Woodward has turned on them. His latest work holds them up to ridicule and exposes their lying hypocrisy.

### Bush regime held up to ridicule

He shows that in May 2006, when Bush gave a speech about the beginning of the "long retreat" of the resistance in Iraq, military intelligence in that same month was reporting that attacks on U.S. forces were at an all-time high of 700 to 800 a week. They rose to 3,500 a month. Furthermore, the report projected that things would get worse in 2007.

He tells about how Gen. John Abizaid, commander of Centcom, said it was "critical to lower the American troop presence" because "it was still the face of an occupation." Abizaid, the highest military commander in the region, said, "We've got to get the [expletive] out." Woodward quotes Abizaid as saying

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# Early left-wing liberation: 'Unity with all the oppressed'

By Leslie Feinberg

The multinational left wing of early gay liberation was defined by its struggle against racist state repression and in defense of national liberation here and abroad. Even white activists who lacked a thoroughgoing anti-racist consciousness or were uneven in their understanding saw unity in the struggle against all forms of oppression as key to gay liberation.

For example, the Los Angeles Gay Liberation Front's statement of purpose read in part, "We are in total opposition to America's white racism." The Los Angeles chapter also started a Gay Action Patrol to monitor the police.

In cities from Houston to Chicago, gay liberationists protested local bar owners' segregationist policies that only admitted white gay men and lesbians.

In London, too, the Gay Liberation Front allied itself with Black liberation, defending Black activists like the Mangrove Nine, who were framed by police in the early 1970s.

The very first resolution from the floor of the North American Conference of Homophile Organizations conference in August 1970 was a call from the Radical Caucus to support the Black Panther Party—which was under state siege across the United States. The motion passed. A later attempt to overturn the motion was decisively defeated.

The Radical Caucus had also won passage of a resolution that called for support of Chicano grape pickers, who were trying to organize a United Farm Workers union in the field factories.

The Radical Caucus program read in part: "We see the persecution of homosexuality as part of a general attempt to oppress all minorities and keep them powerless. ... A common struggle, however, will bring common triumph. Therefore we declare our support as homosexuals and bisexuals for the struggles of the black, the feminist, the Spanish-American, the Indian, the Hippie, the Young, the Student, and other victims of oppression and prejudice."

The left wing of gay liberation won demonstrations of solidarity from the left wing of the militant nationally oppressed movements, as well.

The Black Panther Party invited the Gay Liberation Front to take part in the September 1970 Revolutionary People's Constitutional Convention. Nine members of Third World Gay Liberation and one lesbian member of GLF attended a planning meeting for the convention that summer. At that time, Panther David Hilliard reportedly told the lesbian participant that BPP leader Huey Newton was about to issue a statement in support of the gay and women's liberation movements.

Newton issued his message in "The Black Panther" newsletter on Aug. 21, 1970. It was titled "A Letter from Huey Newton to the Revolutionary Brothers and Sisters about the Women's Liberation and Gay Liberation Movements." (Full version can be found at [www.workers.org](http://www.workers.org) or "Huey Newton Reader" at [leftbooks.com](http://leftbooks.com))

Newton wrote, "When we have revolutionary conferences, rallies, and demonstrations there should be full participation of the gay liberation movement and the women's liberation movement." He urged revolutionaries to excise any historically anti-gay references to "men who are enemies of the people, such as Nixon." Newton concluded, "Homosexuals are not enemies of the people."

This message from the Supreme Commander of the Black Panther Party sent shock waves of solidarity that reverberated throughout the progressive and revolutionary movements.

## Rivera: 'A great moving moment'

Lesbian and gay delegates—Black, Latin@, Asian and white—traveled by car, bus, train and plane to take part in the Revolutionary People's Constitutional Convention on the weekend of Sept. 5, 1970. At a time when the Panthers were being rounded up, assassinated and framed by the state, some 10,000 to 15,000 people answered the Panther call to take part in the convention.

The aim of the revolutionary gathering was to draw up a revolutionary people's constitution. Each delegated group was asked to convene its own workshop to draw up its own demands for rights to be included in the constitution.

At least 60 self-identified gay men and some two dozen lesbians formed a delegation. They traveled from Ann Arbor, Mich., Los Angeles and Berkeley, Calif., Boston, Chicago, Milwaukee, New York, Philadelphia, Tallahassee, Fla., and Yellow Springs, Ohio.

There were problems at a gathering that size, to be sure. But here are some important recollections and impressions.

The publication *Gay Flames* wrote in its issue No. 2: "When we got there, the women and men each got a place where they could stay together and be with gay people from other cities. Some of the men dressed in drag the first night and rapped to some Panthers who came over."

The next morning "Panther Michael Tabor, a N.Y. 21 defendant, spoke about 'how we're all in the same boat' when it comes to facing the power of the pigs. He talked about the oppression of gays and women."

Transgender Stonewall combatant Sylvia Rivera said it was "a great moving moment to be there."

Rivera told me that when she saw Huey Newton at the convention, he already knew of her: "Yeah, you're the queen from New York!"

On Sunday morning, the multinational gay men's caucus met. Issue No. 8 of *Gay Flames* explained, "Long meetings dedicated to the adoption of [the] gay platform for the constitution were interrupted for vital discussions of racism and sexism."

*Gay Flames* No. 2 elaborated: "The most important discussion centered around the Third World/Gay Male statement. They confronted the gay whites on our racism, specifically on our willingness to criticize the sexism of black men but not that of white men. They asked us to recognize Huey Newton's recently stated position in favor of Gay Liberation as being a tremendous advance in the revolution and that the Black Panther Party holds the most out-front position in terms of the struggle to give power to the people."

Panther 21 defendant Afeni Shakur spoke to the gay men's gathering. "She helped to explain a lot about the Black Panthers to all of us. She said that all she wanted was a farm with lots of trees and grass and a place to grow cabbage, but that to get this for herself and her people, it would be necessary to fight. Most of us were convinced by what she had to say. We therefore decided to include in our statement that gay men at the Session recognized the BPP as being presently the vanguard of the people's

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**Lavender & Red focuses on the relationship over more than a century between the liberation of oppressed sexualities, genders and sexes, and the communist movement. You can read the entire, ongoing Workers World newspaper series by Leslie Feinberg online at [www.workers.org](http://www.workers.org). Stop and get a subscription while you're there!**



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# Detroit teach-in sheds light on Middle East

The Michigan Emergency Committee Against War and Injustice (MECAWI) held a teach-in on "Faces of Imperialism: The U.S.-Israeli War Against the People of the Middle East" on Sept. 30 at Wayne State University in Detroit.

The event was chaired by MECAWI leader Abayoumi Azikwe of the Pan Africa News Service, who spoke on the links between the struggles against imperialism in the Middle East and in Africa, as well as detailing the history of Zionist oppression.

The keynote speaker was Joyce Chediak, a Lebanese-American activist and writer for Workers World newspaper from New York. Chediak gave a detailed presentation on the history of the struggle in Lebanon and Palestine, explaining that "the essence is class struggle between oppressor and the oppressed."

She noted that "Hezbollah represents

the best aspirations of Lebanese, Arab and Muslim people in the struggle against imperialism. They are proud of Hezbollah for driving out Israel, and rightly so."

Hassan Nawash of the Palestine Office of Michigan also contributed an historical analysis of Zionism and put a human face on the events in Palestine by recounting stories from his own and his family's experiences in their homeland.

Anti-war activist Jerry Goldberg recounted what it was like to grow up in a typical Jewish household in the U.S. and how the struggle against the Vietnam War and imperialism helped him to unlearn the many lies he was taught about Zionism and Israel.

LeiLani Dowell of the youth organization Fight Imperialism Stand Together (FIST) gave a moving account of her recent fact-finding trip to Lebanon. She spoke on the resilience of the people there under



WW PHOTO: KRIS HAMEL

Joyce Chediak, Abayoumi Azikwe, Jerry Goldberg, LeiLani Dowell, Andrea Hackett, Sandra Cole and David Sole

Hezbollah's leadership in rebuilding their country after the U.S.-financed Israeli war in July and August.

MECAWI activist Andrea Hackett spoke on being the mother of a National Guard member sent to Iraq and how she became involved in the anti-war move-

ment because of it.

Kevin Carey, Stop the War Slate candidate for State Board of Education on the Green Party ticket in Michigan, spoke on the 10,000 prisoners, mostly Palestinians, who languish in Israeli jails.

—Report and photo by Kris Hamel

## 'Stop war on Arab world'

By John Catalinotto  
Brooklyn, N.Y.

Protesters from dozens of organizations, heeding a call from the Coalition in Solidarity with the Arab People, marched on Sept. 30 from Grand Army Plaza over two miles to the Fulton Street Mall in downtown Brooklyn. They brought their message to the diverse working class of New York's most populous borough.

The organizers chose the date because it was the sixth anniversary of the Palestinian Intifada. The main demands of the protest were:

- Stop the war on the Arab world
- Immediate and unconditional right to return for all Palestinian refugees
- End the occupation of historic Palestine, Lebanon, Iraq and everywhere
- End all U.S. aid to apartheid Israel
- Release all political prisoners
- Support the people's right to resist

While it can be harder to draw partici-

pants to a Brooklyn protest than to one in the center of New York in Manhattan, this demonstration was significant in a number of ways. For one, it had an extremely diverse composition, made up not only of North Americans of all different backgrounds and nationalities, but of representatives of immigrant organizations from all continents. For another, by going along Flatbush Avenue to downtown Brooklyn the protesters interacted with the local Brooklyn population, including many African Americans, Latin@s, people from the Caribbean and Arabs in the neighborhoods, and thus gave an opportunity for many to wave, honk horns or otherwise show their solidarity.

Equally important was the political message of the protest, which was clearly anti-imperialist, directed not only at the Israeli aggressors but at U.S. imperialism for its overall role as oppressor in the Arab/Middle East world. When one speaker raised the chant, "We are all Hezbollah," he was joined by the audience.

The crowd identified with Hezbollah's



WW PHOTO: G. DUNKEL

heroic courage and its success in leading the resistance against U.S.-backed Israeli aggression. This was an important sign that, at least on the anti-imperialist left, activists who identify with peoples all around the world understand how important it is to show solidarity with those actively resisting U.S.-Israeli aggression in the region.

The sponsoring organizations included Al-Awda, the Palestine Right to Return Coalition-New York; American-Iranian Friendship Committee; Anakbayan NY/NJ; Arab American Association of New

York; Arab Muslim American Federation; BAYAN USA; International Action Center; International League of People's Struggle; Malcolm X Grassroots Movement; New Jersey Solidarity-Activists for the Liberation of Palestine; New York City Labor Against the War; New York Committee to Defend Palestine; Pakistan-USA Freedom Forum; Workers World Party; and many other groups endorsed the action. WWP activists distributed 500 copies of the Oct. 5 Workers World to the crowds.

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## Gov't still harasses imprisoned Muslim activist

By Robert Dobrow

If you've watched any "Law and Order"-type show on television, you know how important the "plea bargain" is to U.S. court proceedings. When the defense and prosecuting attorneys come to an agreement, and the judge goes along with it, that's supposed to be a done deal, case closed, end of story.

But a vindictive U.S. attorney in Tampa, Fla., has decided to throw all that out in the continuing government efforts to harass Dr. Sami Al-Arian, a Florida academic and Palestinian activist who has been a target of the government's phony war against "terrorism."

Last April, the government concluded its case against Dr. Al-Arian with a plea agreement. In return for pleading to several lesser charges, Al-Arian was scheduled to leave the United States after being released from jail in April 2007. In late September, however, the rules all changed. The government is now trying to force Al-Arian to testify against an Islamic organization in a new case in Virginia. If he refuses to testify, he could face further

imprisonment.

"It is a clear violation of the plea agreement," said former attorney William Moffitt, "which was supposed to end his business with the United States."

Linda Moreno, Moffitt's co-counsel, told the St. Petersburg Times (Sept. 26): "The plea agreement doesn't mention cooperation and that is intentional. That Dr. Al-Arian would not cooperate was negotiated."

Three years ago, just one month before the United States invaded Iraq, Attorney General John Ashcroft announced the case against Al-Arian. Ashcroft insisted Al-Arian was "the North American leader of the Palestinian Islamic Jihad" and asserted that the professor's arrest was "a milestone in the war against terrorism."

The right-wing media, from Bill O'Reilly of Fox News to the Tampa Tribune, waged a fervent campaign against the Palestinian activist. Under the Patriot Act, all sorts of dubious evidence was entered into the case. This included some 400,000 wire-tapped phone calls, which had been part of a 10-year-long surveillance of Palestinian

Continued to page 7

## 'Accompany human rights lawyer to court!'

# Lynne Stewart to be sentenced Oct. 16

By Leslie Feinberg

Catch a train or a plane, walk, hail a cab or carpool it, but show up for court in lower Manhattan on Monday, Oct. 16, when human rights defense lawyer Lynne Stewart faces sentencing.

Supporters of this long-time legal activist from far and wide are asked to accompany Stewart to court that morning at 9 a.m. An overflow crowd will rally in Foley Square at Centre and Worth Streets.

On the eve of sentencing, a rally and tribute to Stewart has been organized to honor her long legal efforts and activist political life. The event will begin at 4 p.m. at Riverside Church—between 120 and 122 Streets and Riverside Drive on the Upper West Side of Manhattan.

Stewart, who is 66 years old, is facing decades in prison. She was convicted for violating a gag order imposed on her client, Muslim cleric Sheik Abdel-Rahman.

Then-Attorney General John Ashcroft had actually announced Stewart's indictment on the David Letterman show in April 2002.

After her conviction, the National Lawyers Guild stated: "The U.S. Department of Justice was resolute from day one in making a symbol out of Lynne Stewart in support of its campaign to deny people charged with crimes of effective legal representation. The government is bent on intimidating attorneys from providing zealous representation to unpopular clients."

For more information, visit [www.lynnestewart.org](http://www.lynnestewart.org). □

## As housing market falls

# Is \$10 trillion bubble ready to burst?

By Milt Neidenberg

Is the biggest real estate bubble in history about to burst? Wall Street pundits and commentators are concerned that the industry's downward spiral could exacerbate the slowing down of the general capitalist economy.

The \$10 trillion housing market is on the skids. Sales of new homes have plummeted, and now prices are following.

According to an article posted Sept. 25 on MarketWatch.com, a Dow Jones Web site, "The collapsing U.S. housing market crossed another milestone in August, as the median sales price of existing homes fell for the first time in 11 years and for just the sixth time in the past 38 years, the National Association of Realtors said Monday."

On Sept. 2 it reported that new home sales had "plunged 21.6 percent in July from the year earlier, inventories of unsold homes soared and prices fell—there is little debate that the housing market is stumbling much faster than most expected."

This is another way of saying that the real estate market may be in for a crash, not merely a "soft landing," as market optimists have hoped.

The National Association of Realtors covers a wide array of real-estate investors, speculators and banks heavily invested in all types of mortgages.

Over the last five years, housing prices had been rising at a hectic rate. Now the day of reckoning has come. "The deceleration has been the fastest in the history of the [Realtors] survey," says MarketWatch.

Developers have cut back on construction as overproduction in residential

housing has led to big-time inventories of unsold new homes. However, plummeting prices may bring buyers back into the market, temporarily relieving the glut.

Mortgages that allow homeowners to take out equity based on the assessed valuation of their homes have been a key driver of continued strong consumer spending—accounting for two-thirds of the Gross Domestic Product. The GDP is the total value of a country's goods and services. But declining home prices will cut into this, meaning bad news for the overall capitalist economy.

Current consumer debt has reached record-breaking numbers. Spending levels of consumers can no longer be sustained. Homeowners will spend less and tighten belts to save the homes they have.

An Aug. 10 Wall Street Journal survey was headlined: "Outlooks for GDP and Employment Are Cut, While Concerns About Recession Edge Up." The newspaper's economists have raised to 26 percent "the probability of a recession over the next 12 months."

Wall Street economists who predict an impending recession are behind the times. The recession is already here for a large part of the multinational workforce.

Plants are closing, wages relative to inflation are dropping, benefits are disappearing, and layoffs are spreading throughout the industrial and service sectors.

The capitalist economy is drowning in debt, deficits and the virus of hyper-speculation in non-traditional mortgage lending. These dire developments were only worsened by a recent announcement of the Federal Reserve Board that the economy

needs to slow down to contain inflation.

Not true. A slowdown will develop into stagflation—stagnation on top of inflation. The workers and oppressed nationalities now face a slowing economy, soaring prices for food, health care and other necessities of life, and a housing bubble about to burst.

The tycoons of Wall Street, however, prefer a slowing economy to inflation. They reacted favorably to the Fed's announcement, sending the stock market up to new highs during the week of Sept. 25.

### Lenders run wild

In a revealing Sept. 1 Wall Street Journal article headlined, "Housing Chill Begins to Pinch Nation's Banks," Robin Sidel wrote that "[B]anks have begun to warn investors that the housing slowdown is starting to hurt their business."

The article explains that financial institutions are already grappling with "a difficult interest-rate environment, competition for traditional banking customers, a saturated credit-card market, and expectations that strong consumer-credit quality will soon show signs of weakening. ... As a result real estate, including mortgages, home-equity loans, and commercial loans, represented a record 33.5 percent of the U.S. banking industry's \$9,298 trillion in assets in July, according to the Federal Reserve. The numbers represent the highest level in the Fed's database going back to 1973."

Since then, this dependence on real estate assets has continued to rise.

Sandra Thompson of the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation, speaking on Sept. 20 at the opening session of the Senate Banking Committee on Banking, warned of the dangers of nontraditional mortgage loans: "According to the publication Inside Mortgage Finance, an estimated \$432 billion interest-only loans and payments-option ARMs were originated during the first half of 2006," she said. ARMs are adjustable rate mortgages.

### Dreams turn into nightmares

In a frenzy of real estate loans, bankers and financial institutions have created mortgage portfolios that include ARMs. They feature no down payment, no interest, and what is called negative amortization: the buyer pays less than the interest due and the unpaid principal and the interest rates will grow exponentially. Down the road, the increase in mortgage payments will force homeowners to ante up big bucks far exceeding their incomes. This likely will lead to record levels of mortgage defaults and foreclosures, which are now beginning to rise. Homeowners are helplessly trapped as their home values fall.

The banks and financial institutions have spread the risk to the secondary mortgage markets—Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac—which are government-sponsored enterprises and big-time speculators. Hedge funds, pension funds and insurance companies are big players in this market.

Will there be a rerun of the 1987 stock market crash? That's when many savings and loans banks—primary lenders in mortgage financing—went belly up. It cost the worker/taxpayers \$ 150 billion to bail out those banks and financial institutions. Will the current housing bubble throw the economy into another such crisis?

The warning signs are there.

Housing is a multiplier industry. The impact of the growing housing crisis affects a wide range of industries and workers. Steel, lumber, home furnishings,

financial institutions, construction and other related industries are dependent on this bubble, which has reached an unprecedented size.

According to the June 16, 2005, Economist, the housing bubble has become a global phenomenon. "The worldwide rise in house prices is the biggest bubble in history. ... Property markets have been frothing from America, Britain and Australia to France, Spain and China. Rising property prices helped to prop up the world economy after the stock market bubble burst in 2000. What if the housing boom now turns to bust? ... It is larger than the global stock market bubble in the late 1990s ... or America's stock market bubble in the late 1920s."

That bubble led to the 1929 crash, which triggered the greatest depression in U.S. history.

"The housing market has played such a big role in propping up America's economy that a sharp slowdown in house prices is likely to have severe consequences. Over the past four years, consumer spending and residential construction have together accounted for 90 percent of the total growth in GDP."

Interest rates for those years were the lowest in history and cheap money saturated the monetary system. "And over two-fifths of all private sector jobs created since 2001 have been in housing-related sectors...."

The U.S. \$10 trillion housing bubble contains the potential for class struggle. There is brewing within it a clash of class interests. Within the housing industry is a multinational workforce in conflict with construction bosses and a myriad of related companies. At the first signs of a downturn in the industry, layoffs will spiral. Homeowners will struggle with banks and financial institutions, which will strip them of ownership as soon as they falter on mortgage loans. Their dreams of home ownership can turn into nightmares.

As the institutions of high finance face bankruptcy—victims of their own greed and hyper-speculation—the government will bail them out at the expense of the worker/taxpayers, leading to a conflict between the people and the government.

On the other hand, real estate institutions and investors like Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac—government-sponsored enterprises that package billions of dollars of mortgage-backed securities—will have the backing of the government when they fail.

Ultimately, as recession and further social convulsions ignited by "preemptive" wars engulf the imperialist government, the predatory interests of the billionaire class will be pitted against the entire multinational working class. Organized and unorganized, immigrant and native, poor and middle class, they will be swept into the raging sea of class struggle, with great consequences for the whole world. □

## AK Steel workers reject 'final offer'

By Martha Grevatt  
Cleveland

Since March 1, some 2,100 members of the International Association of Machinists (IAM) Local 1943 have been locked out at AK Steel in Middletown, Ohio. Last July, AK CEO James Wainscott said he would keep the workers out "for as short or as long as it takes." Steel industry analyst David McGregor praised him. "It's nice to see you're still in fighting form," he told Wainscott.

McGregor's words could be applied to the locked-out steelworkers. After walking the picket lines for nearly seven months, on Sept. 25 they were asked to vote on the company's "final offer." Many were losing homes and cars and some were going through divorces. Yet a majority voted to stay out.

For almost 60 years the workers at AK steel, formerly Armco, were represented by the Armco Employees Independent Federation (AEIF). In July a majority voted to merge with the IAM. A sizable minority voiced a preference for the United Steelworkers (USWA), but only 10 voted to remain independent.

There was almost unanimous feeling that the workers needed the backing of an AFL-CIO union to win a decent contract. The AEIF leadership backed the IAM, hoping that access to the IAM pension fund would ease negotiations around the critical issue of retaining defined-benefit pensions.

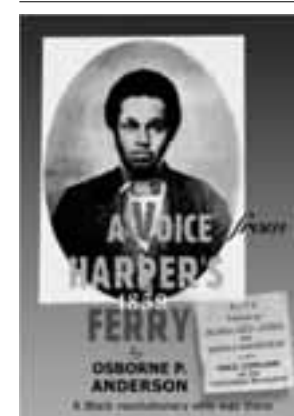
When Wainscott took over AK from Richard Wardrop, he was portrayed as

more conciliatory to the workers. It was Wardrop who had locked out USWA members for over three years at the Mansfield, Ohio, plant. Wardrop's intransigence toward the Ohio Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and Middletown-area residents over the spewing of soot and metallic flakes netted AK a \$1.7 million fine. A lawsuit by the U.S. EPA over illegal water pollution and waste dumping, launched when Wardrop was at the helm, is still unresolved.

Soon, however, Wainscott proved to be no less anti-union. The company presented the union with a 2-inch-thick "final offer," giving the union only three days to review it. While it allowed for participation in the IAM pension fund, it gave AK the right to terminate that plan in five years and replace it with a 401(k). It reduced the number of job classifications and had questionable language that could allow outsourcing of jobs. It had a six-month phased return to work for the union members, forcing them to work alongside scabs during that period.

The IAM leaders, including former AEIF President Brian Daley, recommended the company's offer be rejected. "It's a matter of members weighing their personal financial condition or taking the risk of a proposal fraught with uncertainty," stated Daley after the rejection vote.

The bosses immediately retaliated, getting a judge to slap on an injunction limiting the number of pickets and their proximity to the plant. But after seven months, the bosses are not the only ones "in fighting form." □



By Osborne P. Anderson, a Black revolutionary who was there. With an essay on 'The Unfinished Revolution' by Vince Copeland and prefaces by Mumia Abu-Jamal and Monica Moorehead.

www.leftbooks.com

## Important victory in South

# Sanitation workers force mayor to meet demands

By Peter Gilbert  
Raleigh, N.C.

Raleigh sanitation workers have taken a step forward and forced Mayor Charles Meeker to meet with the union to discuss their demands.

The elected workers' committee and union representatives met with the mayor on Sept. 26 demanding an end to forced overtime, time-and-a-half pay for all overtime, immediate hiring of all temporary city workers as permanent workers, an end to bosses' harassment, and the right to organize.

The city has hired at least 10 temporary workers to full-time positions, and committed to hire more. The city has also been forced to pay the workers regular overtime pay.

Workers will meet with the mayor again Oct. 3 to further press their demands.

The North Carolina Public Service Workers' Union, United Electrical Local 150, represents a large majority of sanita-

tion workers, as well as other city workers in Raleigh and throughout the state along with a variety of other public-sector workers. North Carolina is the only state with a law preventing any public workers from having a contract—a relic of the racist Jim Crow era and a clear violation of the workers' human rights.

The courageous work stoppage of the sanitation workers that took place for several hours on Sept. 13 and their struggle for justice that continues to gain momentum are a first step toward pushing back a century of anti-worker laws and racist repression in the U.S. South.

The spirit of these workers, taking a stand for dignity to improve their conditions, is resonating with workers across the South and the entire United States. When the most oppressed sector of the work force, low-paid Black sanitation workers, take such a stand it encourages the working class as a whole.

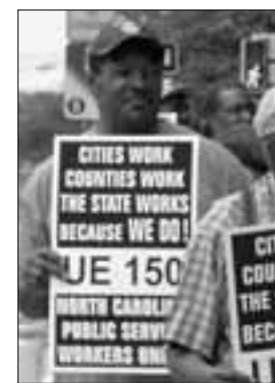
Workers across North Carolina and other city workers are being drawn further

into this struggle. They are building power to overturn the state's racist anti-worker laws. Solidarity statements are also coming in from fighting unions across the country.

### Building community solidarity

Inspired by the sanitation workers' struggle, community groups and leaders are coming together. Anti-war and anti-racist activists have covered the city with signs and leaflets. Supporters and activists with Raleigh FIST—the youth group Fight Imperialism Stand Together—travel the city every day in a sound truck, holding street meetings, distributing yard signs, and building visible solidarity with the workers.

Union supporters from the International Action Center in New York and Atlanta have traveled to Raleigh to help in the fight. Activists in at least four other cities have helped organize through computer help. The North Carolina conference of the NAACP has been very vocal in its support



of the sanitation workers; its president, Rev. Dr. William Barber, serves as UE-150's most vocal champion in the fight for full collective-bargaining rights.

Ministers at Black churches from across the state have motivated their congregations and are organizing mass support for these workers. Residents across the city have expressed continuous solidarity, putting signs on their trashcans or in their yards, honking and waving at the trucks, offering cookies and coffee to the workers on their routes.

Although the workers have now won significant gains, and continue to meet and confer with the mayor and other city officials, they have their eyes constantly on a larger struggle—that is to win full union recognition, collective-bargaining rights, and to help organize all unorganized workers in the U.S. South.

*The writer is an organizer with Raleigh FIST. Contact [FIST@workers.org](mailto:FIST@workers.org) for more information.*

## ON THE PICKET LINE

by Sue Davis

### NWA flight attendants continue CHAOS

Negotiators for Northwest Airlines flight attendants attended a mediation session on Sept. 27—the first since NWA imposed a 40-percent pay cut along with new work rules in July. The members have twice voted down these changes.

On Sept. 21, the union—American Flight Attendants-Communication Workers of America—asked the National Mediation Board to release it from further mediation because negotiations with management were at an impasse.

“The NMB was created to protect employees, not strip away their rights as the courts have done,” said Mollie Reiley, AFA-CWA's interim master executive council president.

Her statement, in a union news release, continued: “Management has no motivation to negotiate—they have already taken over \$200 million a year from us and the district court has prevented us from striking. If Northwest is allowed to get away with destroying our careers, you can be sure that this practice will soon spread and other companies will use this as a method to destroy the lives and the professions of thousands of employees. The right to strike is the only tool working women and men have to counter the greed of management that is eroding corporations across America—it's the one thing that forces management to negotiate fairly.”

The mediation session was inconclusive; another is scheduled for the week of Oct. 9.

NWA flight attendants and their supporters are continuing to implement CHAOS—Create Havoc Around Our System—by holding informational picket lines at airports from San Francisco to Tampa. For more information on how to support CHAOS in your area, visit [www.nwaafa.org](http://www.nwaafa.org).

### Detroit teachers strike for 16 days

Defying a court order to go back to work on Sept. 8, Detroit school teachers vowed to continue the strike they began Aug. 28 for a better contract. They were insulted by an offer that included a 5.5-percent pay cut and revised work rules after they had already agreed to \$70 million in concessions to avoid a strike in 2005.

Then, on Sept. 13, after a 12-hour negotiating session in the mayor's office, the teachers were offered a very different three-year contract. Although there will be no raises in 2006, seniority raises were restored. In 2007 the teachers will have a 1-percent raise, and a 2.5-percent raise the year after. But there were givebacks: 10-percent increases in health care co-pays and one prep period cut for elementary teachers. A significant improvement was a 60-day notice to teachers before a layoff (as opposed to 10 days) with provisions for legal representation.

Will the members of the Detroit Federation of Teachers, AFT Local 231, accept this contract? Results of the vote will be announced Oct. 6.

### N.C. Kroger workers win health care

In late September grocery workers at Kroger stores in the Raleigh-Durham, N.C., area beat back the bosses' attack and signed a contract that protects and even improves quality, affordable health care for workers and retirees.

During negotiations in July, Kroger had proposed a plan to raid employee health-care reserve funds and force 1,917 members of United Food and Commercial Workers Local 204 to pay \$1.4 million from their own paychecks to cover the resulting shortfall.

Kroger backed down after the workers voted to strike in early August. The workers took their demand for a fair contract to area neighborhoods in early September, and initiated a national campaign that

flooded Kroger with e-mails demanding protection for worker's health benefits.

“We're very satisfied with this contract,” said Local 204 member Nina Tilley in a Sept. 28 union news release. “I don't think we would have an agreement like this without the support we got from the community here and from UFCW members all over the country.”

### Huge sit-in targets L.A. hotels

On Sept. 28 more than 300 supporters of immigrant rights staged a sit-in, snarling traffic for three hours in front of two hotels near Los Angeles airport. Chanting, “Si se puede” (Yes, we can), “No justice, no peace” and “Boycott Hilton,” about 2,000 demonstrators protested the treatment of immigrant workers by 13 hotels near the airport. The action was organized by UNITE HERE and the We Are America Coalition.

The Los Angeles Times called the event “the largest civil disobedience in Los Angeles in a generation and one of the largest in the city's history. The protest saw more arrests than any labor action in 60 years.” (Sept. 29)

The housekeepers, dishwashers and other employees, who are overwhelmingly Mexican and Central American immigrants, earn an average of \$9.55 an hour, which is 20 percent less than similar workers make elsewhere in the city.

“I am happy, as happy as I've ever been,” Daniel Briones, a cook at the Glendale Hilton, told the Los Angeles Times as he sat in the middle of the street and prepared to be arrested for the first time in his life. “I'm doing this for my colleagues in the hotels down here.”

Though workers at the targeted hotels marched, they did not take part in the sit-ins due to the threat of being fired.

“The struggle of these hotel workers is the struggle of all cities and communities in Los Angeles,” Salvador Sanchez, a community college professor, told the New York Times before he was arrested. “People can't afford rent or food. They have to have two jobs to pay for living expenses, and that's ridiculous.” (Sept. 29)

### Hotel workers win contracts

On Aug. 31, room attendants and other non-tipped workers at four Hilton hotels in Chicago won immediate raises of \$1.10 per hour, with \$3.90 over the life of the three-year contract. Workers represented by UNITE HERE Local 1 will also receive 47 additional cents an hour in their pension plan by the end of the contract. And their daily room quota was reduced for heavy checkout days.

Four days later four Hyatt hotels in Chicago agreed to the same terms for 1,900 workers. And 900 workers at five Starwood hotels won the same terms on Sept. 14. Eleven other Chicago hotels have signed “me-too” agreements with the union.

On Sept. 19, workers represented by Local 483 at two Hyatt hotels on the Monterey Peninsula in California won \$5 per hour raises over the course of a four-year contract. That amounts to a 33-percent pay raise. Hyatt also agreed to increase the workers' health insurance by 70 percent during the contract.

### First union for pizza delivery workers

The American Union of Pizza Delivery Drivers is a first. Over the summer the union won recognition from the National Labor Relations Board as the bargaining agent for drivers at six Domino's Pizza stores in Pensacola, Fla.

Domino's driver Jim Pohle told the Associated Press on Sept. 22: “When they declared us tipped employees and refused to pay us the Florida minimum wage of \$6.40, I was kind of angry. I came home that night and I told my buddy, ‘We are forming a union.’”

Using the Internet, Pohle found St. Louis labor attorney Mark Potashnick, who had worked on unsuccessful organizing efforts by pizza workers in St. Louis and in cities in Ohio and Michigan. Potashnick coached Pohle on submitting the successful petition to the NLRB. Besides fighting for livable wages, the workers are aiming for increased job safety, since they are often robbed. □

# Ann Richards: No friend of poor and oppressed on death row

By Gloria Rubac  
Houston

Former Texas Gov. Ann Richards' death brought accolades from politicians as far apart as former President Bill Clinton and current Texas Sen. Kay Bailey Hutcherson. Yet when it came to executing the poor and oppressed, Richards presided over 48 executions—a record that has only been broken by one other governor: George W. Bush.

Of the 48 executed, over half were people of color, some were disabled and others were immigrants who were not citizens and yet were denied their consular rights guaranteed under the Vienna Convention.

Richards was no friend to James Russell, a Black prisoner executed under her governorship in 1991, while a large number of anti-death-penalty activists protested outside the death house in Huntsville. Russell had written a book about his case giving substantial evidence of his innocence.

Richards was no friend to Johnny Frank Garrett, who was executed on Feb. 11, 1992, for a killing he committed when he was 17 years old. Garrett was, according to Amnesty International, "extremely mentally impaired, chronically psychotic and brain-damaged."

Texas executed Jesus Romero in 1992. The entire defense offered by his Texas court-appointed attorney was a 20-word statement to the jury: "You've got that man's life in your hands. You can take it or not. That's all I have to say." Richards, known for her quick responses, found no words for this travesty.

In 1993, Richards' third year as gov-

ernor, national attention was drawn to two separate murder cases in Texas. Both defendants were 17 years old at the time of the crimes. In one of the cases, a white supremacist skinhead, Christopher Brosky, was given 10 years probation for the murder of Donald Thomas, a Black man. Yet a young Black defendant, Gary Graham, also known as Shaka Sankofa, had been condemned to death for the killing of a white man on the testimony of only one eyewitness who was 40 feet away in a dark parking lot.

Richards did not comment on that glaring inequity.

Despite a massive campaign by his supporters around the world, Sankofa was executed by then-Gov. George Bush on June 22, 2000.

In 1993, Richards became the first and only U.S. governor to execute two people who were not citizens just two days apart.

Carlos Santana was executed on March 23. He was a citizen of the Dominican Republic. He admitted to participating in a robbery in a period in which, he explained, he couldn't find work in Houston and his wife was pregnant with their second child. He expressed that he was shocked when his partner shot and killed a man during the robbery.

Former Attorney General Ramsey Clark, who is from Texas and had been friends with Richards over the years, tried to see her before Santana's execution to present a 120-page clemency petition. She refused a meeting with Clark and with the ambassador from the Dominican Republic.

Two days later, on March 25, Mexican citizen Ramón Montoya was executed. The

people of Mexico were so outraged over his execution—the first of a Mexican citizen by the U.S. in over 51 years—that his body was met by more than 3,000 people at the international bridge into Reynosa, Tamaulipas.

Richards rejected clemency for Montoya despite pleas from Mexican President Carlos Salinas de Gortari and the Vatican.

Shortly before Leonel Herrera's execution in 1993, a group of prominent Texas attorneys and former judges called on Richards to develop mechanisms so that condemned prisoners alleging miscarriages of justice would receive full and fair clemency hearings.

In the case of Herrera, the U.S. Supreme Court had ruled in 1993 that it was not unconstitutional to execute an innocent person. The Supreme Court stated that Herrera had received a fair trial, even if he was innocent. The judges also ruled that a defendant with a claim of innocence still has the opportunity to apply for executive clemency.

The only response from the governor's office was a claim that she would "study" the group's recommendations.

Herrera was executed that May.

During Richards' four years as governor she increased the rate of Texas executions, essentially paving the way for her successor—George W. Bush—to triple her record.

Today, 12 years after she left office, the struggle against the death penalty is steadily growing. Proof of innocence has released 123 prisoners from death rows across the country, and these cases are

changing hearts and minds.

Beginning Oct. 1, five men on Texas death row began a "starvation" hunger strike that is not scheduled to end until Jan. 1, 2007. "Our hearts are set on refusing to accept another morsel from an oppressive system that has no respect nor consideration for those they hold in captivity. There are five of us that stand so strong in our beliefs that we are willing to sacrifice our health and well being to show others the seriousness of our predicament. Our goals are to open the eyes of our fellow captives and society," the prisoners state.

Neither Democratic nor Republican politicians are leading the fight for justice.

Death row prisoner Howard Guidry recently told Workers World from the county jail in Houston, "We activists, both inside and outside of the walls, are the leaders in the struggle for abolition. If we wait on politicians, it will never happen."

Guidry spent ten years on Texas death row before a federal judge threw out his case in 2003 based on the fact that Houston police had refused to allow him an attorney. They forced the then-18-year-old to sign a confession to a crime he knew nothing about, even though he kept asking for his mother and for his attorney. His new trial is set for Jan. 29, 2007.

"We will end the death penalty and expose the systemic racism and injustice of the whole criminal justice system," Guidry concluded. "I am not shedding any tears for Ann Richards. My tears are reserved for my comrades who were murdered by the state, like Kamau Wilkerson, Emerson Rudd and Shaka Sankofa, not for Ann Richards." □

## Somerville 5 youth tells WW

# 'Racial profiling is growing'

By Phebe Eckfeldt  
Boston

In April 2005, five Black Somerville High School athletes were racially profiled, attacked and beaten by white Medford, Mass. police. The cops, courts, media and school officials carried out a campaign to frame and vilify them. The youth, however, were seen as heroes by many in the working class and oppressed communities for defending themselves against a brutal, unprovoked attack.

For the past 14 months, important mass organizing by the Committee to Defend the Somerville 5 has been crucial in exposing the racist lies and fabrications. The Somerville 5 became a symbol in the Boston area for the need to stand up and fight back against rampant police terror.

This past June, two of the five, Calvin Belfon and Isiah Anderson, were tried by a jury of 11 whites and one African American. Belfon was found not guilty of five assault and battery charges but guilty of disorderly conduct and resisting arrest. Anderson was found not guilty of seven charges that included assault and battery but guilty of two charges of assault and battery and one each of disorderly conduct and resisting arrest. Both were sentenced to two years' probation and some community service.

The next scheduled hearing for the remaining Somerville 5 members—Earl Guerra, Cassius Belfon and Marquis Anderson—will begin on Sept. 26 at a Cambridge, Mass., courthouse located at Third and Thorndike streets.

Supporters of the Somerville 5 will be demanding "Drop all charges NOW!" and "Stop the Racist Frame-up!" at a picket line beginning at 8:30 a.m. outside the courthouse.

This past August, Workers World interviewed Calvin Belfon, who is 19 years old. He grew up in Dorchester, Mass., and his family is from Trinidad/Tobago. He is currently in his first year of college and is a football player.

**WW: What is your view of the verdict and sentencing?**

**Calvin Belfon:** It was unjust for the simple fact that we did not do anything. But I am also grateful that it turned out the way it did because it could have been a lot worse. We could have been found guilty of more serious charges and possibly face jail time.

**What is your view now of the so-called justice system?**

It is hard to believe in it now. Sitting there watching the police lie and fabricate things, it made me think how many times has it happened and who could I turn to if the cops lie and they are supposed to be protecting you.

**What impact do you think community support and the work of the Committee to Defend the Somerville 5 had on your case?**

It had a great impact on our case. I am not the only one who noticed it, the judge noticed it also—all the support from fam-

ily, friends and the community. I feel that people would not have put themselves out there and put their reputation on the line if we were that bad. It helped us a lot.

Looking around and seeing people packing the courtroom motivated me. It took some of the fear away, knowing that they were there to support me and knowing that I did not do anything. I'm glad I did not have to do it alone, although I could have.

**What would you like to tell your supporters across the country?**

Thank you for believing that we did not do anything. My gratitude will always go out to the people who helped and were there in spirit even though they could not really be there. I know that the verdict would not have come out in our favor if they were not supporting us.

**What would you say to other youth of color caught up in the dragnet of racial profiling and police brutality?**

First and foremost, I would say your reputation can't help you but it can hurt you. Be aware of your surroundings and know who you are with, keep yourself around good company. My mother says, "Tell me who your friends are and I will tell you who you are."

[Racial profiling] is a growing pandemic because I was sitting with my father and he said that every Black person will have a profile by the time I am his age. [It's] sad because if you really did not do anything and try to live a straight life, they have



WW PHOTO: LIZ GREEN

Calvin Belfon

something on you. You can't do anything to further yourself in society because the cops are going to continue to harass you. They mess up kids' lives. I could not go to school or see my friends, or go to the prom or finish my senior year of football—all this for allegations of me attacking the cops late at night while I am walking home. Even the dumbest fool would not do something like that. What happened to us was worse than a nightmare. I've had nightmares that were better than this.

**Communities of color in Boston are being occupied by the cops; millions of dollars are stolen every day from jobs programs, hospitals, recreation centers, financial aid and schools and funneled to the U.S. war on Iraq and Lebanon. Youth of color are being sent to the front lines to die. What do you say about this?**

Give the community more options; the options are so limited. Compare the  
*Continued on next page*

# Victims of racist cop lead protest

By Larry Hales  
Denver

On Sept. 30 CopWatch activists, community members and victims of police brutality—Loree McCormick-Rice and her family—protested against the latest case of police brutality in Aurora, Colo.

Pedestrians and people in cars showed a lot of support. People also stopped to recount horrible incidents of terror at the hands of Aurora and Denver cops. Many people talked about being stopped by cops for no reason and being made to strip on the side of the road, a violation of all their rights.

The protest was called for Loree McCormick-Rice and her daughter, Cassidy McCormick, who say Aurora cop Sgt. Charles DeShazer beat them brutally on June 17.

What makes this latest case even more despicable is that McCormick-Rice is disabled. She suffers from severe asthma and has had one of her lungs removed. Cassidy, her daughter, is only 12 years old.

Workers World interviewed them after the demonstration to get their take on what happened last June. Their story follows:

On the night they were beaten, McCormick-Rice and Cassidy were leaving a King Soopers supermarket in Aurora. DeShazer, who moonlights as a security guard for the supermarket, approached them.

McCormick-Rice was parked in a handicapped parking spot. DeShazer asked where her handicapped placard was and she pointed it out. She had to point it out twice to him, and then pointed to her carbon dioxide and a nebulizer to relieve asthma, which were on her seat.

A white woman who did not have her placard displayed openly approached McCormick-Rice. The white woman remarked: "That's just pure racism. When will it ever end? I'm parked right here next to you in a handicapped zone without a placard and he walked right pass me and didn't question me, and yet he's harassing you."

## Somerville 5

classes we had at SHS [a majority white school-WW] to East Boston High School [majority Latin@] that I attended in my senior year. SHS had sociology, history, child development, vocational education. SHS had so many classes. East Boston had none of these. It was so demeaning and degrading to see. At SHS they would tell the kids, "You can go to Boston College, or BU or Ohio State or Harvard," but at East Boston they would tell you to go to a community college. They set the standards so low. They were constantly trying to get you into the Army. The Army and the Navy Seals were in the cafeteria every week. You could see what they were trying to do. It was real sad. People of color want to do better things with their lives but can't because of what happens to them in the streets.

People are asked to phone and/or fax Middlesex County District Attorney Martha Coakley and demand all charges be dropped immediately against the remaining three defendants. Call 617-494-4300 or 617-679-6500 or fax 617-225-0871. Call the Committee to Defend the Somerville 5 at 617-522-6626 to confirm the trial date and time beforehand, as they are subject to change. Eckfeldt is an organizer of the Committee to Defend the Somerville 5.

DeShazer, as he was walking away, said, "F—king n—s." The woman talking to McCormick-Rice volunteered her name and number as a witness. Other witnesses also said they overheard the slur.

When DeShazer admitted to McCormick-Rice that he had used that racist insult, Cassidy suggested they report him to the store manager. Back in the store, another woman of color, overhearing McCormick-Rice's complaint at the Service Desk, volunteered that she had had problems with DeShazer before.

As McCormick-Rice was walking to her car after lodging a complaint, DeShazer, who was sitting in a blue Ford Taurus, called her a "f—king idiot." She responded.

McCormick-Rice and Cassidy drove out of the parking lot. DeShazer pulled up behind them and flashed his lights. McCormick-Rice turned to pull back into the parking lot, which is well lit. It was 10 p.m. She and her daughter were afraid. DeShazer blocked their way and yelled for them to "Get out of the f—king car."

McCormick-Rice asked DeShazer if they could go into the parking lot where there were witnesses, and DeShazer again yelled at her, this time saying, "Turn off your f—king engine."

McCormick-Rice told Cassidy to go and get help. DeShazer grabbed the young girl by her arm, after threatening her if she didn't get back into the car. DeShazer, a large man, shook the small, young girl repeatedly.

Cassidy screamed for help from her mother. DeShazer threw the child against the car and put her in handcuffs, while McCormick-Rice pleaded for him to let her daughter go and not to hurt her.

McCormick-Rice then got out of the car and put her arms around her daughter. DeShazer threw the mother to the ground. Witnesses noticed the attack. McCormick-Rice picked herself off the ground and tried to get her cell phone, which was ringing. It was her 15-year-old son, and she told him she needed help.

DeShazer grabbed her and threw her to the ground again. He put McCormick-Rice in handcuffs, stood up, stepped down on her and kicked her. He then threatened the witnesses who were gathering.

The "back-up" that DeShazer called for arrived. McCormick-Rice told them what had happened, but they laughed her off and refused to give her her medicine. When asked what he was charging them with, DeShazer said, "I'll think of something."

McCormick-Rice was having difficulty breathing, but was repeatedly denied her medicine and was told that she was faking.

DeShazer continued to be belligerent, even asking, "You still want to screw with me?"

The full-time security guard for the store came and corroborated McCormick-Rice's story about the racial slur, but was told to accompany DeShazer into the middle of the street, where they had a brief conversation.

McCormick-Rice said she was worried about her daughter because they were put in separate cars. She heard Cassidy screaming and crying. Finally, one cop said that McCormick-Rice should be let go. A female cop threw McCormick-Rice's shoes at her when she asked if she could have them back.

When McCormick-Rice returned to her car, she noticed that her purse had been rummaged through and that the witness list was gone. Cassidy was taken to the Aurora police station. The 12-year-old was bruised and crying when her family picked her up.

Cassidy's shoulder was fractured, it was later discovered. McCormick-Rice and Cassidy were charged with obstructing a peace officer, resisting arrest and failure to obey. McCormick-Rice also received a charge of disturbing the peace.

This is their story. This latest episode is an outrage for many reasons, but it illustrates that incidents of police brutality are not isolated.

Young Cassidy would later ask her mom, "Is this what we get for being Black?"

The reality is that cops are agents of the racist capitalist state. But what's more, the agenda of the racist state filters down through the capitalist-run media, which constantly demonizes people of color. Even a 12-year-old Black woman, who has received numerous school accolades and, after this ordeal, support letters from



Cassidy McCormick

teachers, principals and deans of students of schools she has attended, is seen as less than human and brutally attacked.

However, the family has vowed to fight until DeShazer is fired, and to continue to fight against racism and police brutality. And the community has rallied around them, even trying to start a defense campaign.

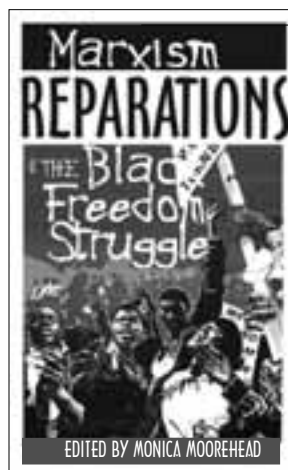
DeShazer, though, is not an anomaly, a bad cop among good cops. He is one among an army of thugs whose job is to protect capital and to keep the poor, people of color and workers in line. □



Loree McCormick-Rice and her daughter, Cassidy McCormick.

## Marxism, Reparations & the Black Freedom Struggle

Authors include  
Mumia  
Abu-Jamal,  
Monica  
Moorehead,  
Larry Holmes,  
Sam Marcy,  
Minnie Bruce  
Pratt,  
Bill Cecil,  
Consuela Lee,  
Pat Chin and  
Leslie Feinberg.



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## Gov't still harasses imprisoned Muslim activist

Continued from page 3  
organizations.

Yet not one phone conversation could be found in which a violent act was plotted. And in a stunning defeat for the government, the jury acquitted Dr. Al-Arian of all the most serious charges, deadlocking 10-to-2 over acquitting him on the others.

In late September, Al-Arian was moved from Tampa to a jail in Virginia. The trip took 72 hours. His arms and legs were continuously shackled. His jailers refuse to accommodate his religious beliefs, depriving him of a Koran and prayer rug. Despite the fact that the Muslim holy

month of Ramadan had begun, he was barely given any food or water for over 18 hours at times. Al-Arian is a diabetic, but he was denied his daily medication. His health has suffered as a result.

The Tampa Bay Coalition for Justice and Peace has asked supporters to condemn the harassment of Al-Arian. They ask people to contact the Justice Department and the U.S. attorney's office to demand "the end of the government's pursuit of Dr. Al-Arian and his continued mistreatment while in federal custody," and to "request that prosecutors honor the terms of the plea agreement." □

# Iraqi resistance leaves Bush isolated

*Continued from page 1*

that “Rumsfeld doesn’t have any credibility anymore.” (Washington Post, Oct. 1)

Woodward reveals how Andrew Card, the former White House chief of staff, twice tried to have Rumsfeld removed. How Bush had to tell Rumsfeld to return Condoleezza Rice’s phone calls when she was Bush’s national security adviser.

George Will, a right-wing columnist for the Washington Post, on Oct. 4 held Vice President Dick Cheney up to ridicule by recounting how “while leading the hunt for weapons of mass destruction in the summer of 2003, David Kay received a phone call from ‘Scooter Libby,’ Dick Cheney’s chief of staff, who wanted a particular place searched: ‘The vice president wanted to know if you’ve looked at this area. We have indications—and here are the geocoordinates—that something’s buried there.’ Kay and his experts located the area on the map. It was in the middle of Lebanon.”

As for Bush, Woodward said that in venting his frustration about the Iraqi government, he blurted out, “Where’s the leader? Where’s George Washington? Where’s Thomas Jefferson? Where’s John Adams, for crying out loud?”

## Bush turns to Kissinger

But ridicule aside, one of the most important revelations of the book is that Henry Kissinger, former national security adviser and secretary of state for Richard Nixon during the Vietnam era, “exerts a powerful and largely invisible influence on Bush’s Iraq policy.”

“Of the outside people that I talk to on the job,” Vice President Cheney told Woodward in the summer of 2005, “I probably talk to Henry Kissinger more than I talk to anybody else.” Woodward told the talk-show host Charlie Rose that Kissinger, after the publication of Woodward’s book, said he has met with Bush 15 or 20 times.

Kissinger’s message is that “the only exit strategy is victory.” Woodward told Mike Wallace on CBS’s 60 Minutes on Oct. 1 that “Kissinger’s fighting the Vietnam War again. Because in his view the problem in Vietnam was we lost our will. That we

didn’t stick to it.”

Kissinger is reported to have given Bush’s speechwriter his 1969 “salted peanuts memo” on withdrawal of troops. He warned Nixon at that time that, “Withdrawal of U.S. troops will become like salted peanuts to the American public; the more U.S. troops come home, the more will be demanded.” Shortly thereafter Bush gave his “Strategy for Victory in Iraq” speech.

It is important to remember that Kissinger is a war criminal who threatened the Vietnamese with nuclear annihilation during negotiations. But more important than that, he is the proponent of ruling class delusions about why liberation struggles win: because the ruling class in the U.S., under the impact of the media, public opinion and so on, “loses its will.”

What Kissinger leaves out of his rendition of the defeat of U.S. imperialism in Vietnam is, first and foremost, the willingness of the Vietnamese people to fight “10 or 20 years if necessary,” as the Vietnamese revolutionary leader Ho Chi Minh put it.

But Kissinger also leaves out the fact that in the U.S. during that war, the Black people in urban centers all over the country were rebelling against poverty, racism and repression, and many of them were Vietnam veterans. Kissinger does not mention that the 82nd Airborne Division had to be sent to Detroit to put down an armed rebellion in 1967 or that U.S. troops had to guard the White House and the Capitol building after Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. was assassinated in 1968, touching off rebellions in over 100 cities.

Alongside the Black rebellion were organizations of Chicano resistance in the Southwest and of Puerto Rican resistance, both on the island and in the U.S. The Black Panther Party, the Young Lords, the Brown Berets, and many other manifestations of political resistance of the oppressed surged during the Vietnam era.

Kissinger also leaves out the mass anti-war movement that was increasingly in a resistance mode. Government officials could not travel outside Washington, D.C. without sparking protests; draft boards were burned down; the ROTC and the

CIA were driven off campuses across the country. Attempts were made to stop troop trains; corporations were targeted; the slogan “Big firms get rich while GIs die” became a battle cry.

Most importantly, the rank-and-file soldiers were rebelling against the war and the military command was suffering disintegration. Troops were refusing to go into battle by the late 1960s and early 1970s. Hundreds of officers were being killed in a practice called “fraggings”—that is, by grenades thrown by their own troops. Morale was so bad that the high command allowed hard drugs to proliferate.

## Vietnam: why U.S. pulled out

In short, the decision to pull troops out of Vietnam was due not merely to a lack of will but to a calculation of class interests by the main sections of the U.S. ruling class. The social stability of the system was coming apart in the face of a many-pronged rebellion at home and the determination of the liberation forces in Vietnam.

Woodward’s book holds up a mirror for the ruling class to contemplate, without spin or makeup, the character of the group that is running the capitalist state. What he has written is not new. It has been whispered and written about in scattered articles and books. But he has pulled it all together to present a unified picture. His switch from cheerleader to devastating critic represents the disillusionment of the establishment with the Bush administration and the occupation.

But it is important to point out that the U.S. ruling class was demoralized about the war in Vietnam quite early on. Lyndon Johnson was forced out of running for reelection because he wanted to escalate the war beyond the 500,000 troops already there. Despite this discontent, the troops were not pulled out until the country and the military machine were in the early stages of becoming ungovernable.

Woodward’s book makes Rumsfeld the principal enemy. But the truth is that there is not now, nor would there have been, a true “strategy for victory” in Iraq. Each establishment grouping is looking for the fundamental cause of the problem.

But none of them will acknowledge the simple truth that occupation breeds resistance—whether that occupation is carried out “competently” or incompetently. The Iraqi people were colonized by the Turkish empire, then the British empire. They threw the colonialists out in 1958 and they don’t want a new colonizer.

As of Oct. 4, the latest news from Iraq is that nine U.S. soldiers were killed in one day—the highest number since April. Seventeen have been killed in the last five days, most in Baghdad. Many were killed in separate attacks, either by roadside bombs or by small arms fire. There are no reports on the number wounded or on how many Iraqis have been killed, wounded or brutalized in U.S. military raids and roundups.

The U.S. high command and the Iraqi politicians have declared one after another new “security” plans for Baghdad: neighborhood by neighborhood operations; curfews; digging trenches around the city; setting up checkpoints; and now the latest plan announced by puppet Prime Minister Nuri Kamal al-Maliki is local committees.

Each new plan is met with increased Iraqi resistance. The official number of U.S. soldiers killed in September, when troops were transferred from Anbar province to Baghdad, is 74.

With each new “strategy for victory” announced by Bush or the U.S. clients in Baghdad, the resistance develops new tactics to fight back. With each new act of aggression, each new atrocity by U.S. and British forces, there is greater hatred and willingness to fight the occupiers.

No faction in the ruling class, the military or the political establishment knows how to win or has any answer to their crisis in Iraq. The only thing they can unite on is not to “lose” in Iraq, and this means to keep fighting, no matter how much Iraqi and U.S. blood is spilled, no matter what damage it does to the economic and social well-being of the workers and oppressed at home, who have to pay for this war.

The lesson of history is that a united, mass resistance will get the troops home. Then and only then will the ruling class “lose its will” to keep funding the war and fighting for its empire. □

# U.S.-led occupation falters in Afghanistan

By G. Dunkel

The offensive that the Afghan resistance began last spring as soon as the weather was warm enough to fight has seriously shaken the U.S. occupation of Afghanistan. Washington has been trying to shift the burden of most of the fighting onto NATO, but the European imperialists appear reluctant to insert more of their soldiers into the meat-grinder of combat in Afghanistan.

U.S. Marine Corps Gen. James Jones, the supreme commander of NATO, in a press conference given at the Pentagon Sept. 20, said he was surprised at “the ferocity of the Taliban resurgence” in the past few months.

The 18,500 soldiers in the NATO force average about five fatalities per week. The U.S. has about the same number of troops as NATO has contributed and just put 12,000 of them in eastern Afghanistan under NATO command.

The United States is so short of troops in the Middle East that, on Sept. 25, Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld went to Montenegro, a small country of 650,000 people whose government split it from Serbia a few months ago, and offered it significant military aid if it would supply troops for Afghanistan. (Asia Times online, Sept. 30)

Prime Minister Milo Djukanovic’s government had just ended the draft and was cutting Montenegro’s 4,000-troops army down to 2,500. He made no commitment.

The current Afghan army is a ramshackle collection of at most 40,000 troops. The government of Hamid Karzai, which seems barely able to control Kabul, the capital, is so split that the U.S. State Department oversees Karzai’s personal security.

## Karzai shows his weakness

A rumor floating around the Afghan community in New York is that Karzai is going to be replaced before the end of the year in a shakeup of the whole Afghan government. Bush nevertheless praised Karzai as an “invaluable ally” in a speech he gave to the Reserve Officers Association Sept. 29.

In connection with his appearance at the U.N. General Assembly in September, Karzai made a 10-day trip, including a speech to a joint session of the Canadian parliament, in which he thanked Canada for its soldiers having “given their life” for Afghanistan. British and Canadian troops have recently taken relatively heavy losses in Afghanistan, increasing popular resentment against the intervention there.

Karzai’s visit was marked by the state dinner he shared with U.S. President

George Bush and Gen. Pervez Musharraf, president of Pakistan. There has been tension between Karzai and Musharraf, with Musharraf accusing Afghanistan of not doing enough to end the Taliban threat. The Taliban has been linked to Islamic parties inside Pakistan that oppose Musharraf and his close, subservient connection to the United States.

Karzai says that Pakistan played a significant role in the creation and the formation of the Taliban as a counterweight to factions in Afghanistan supported by India and Russia and is now giving support to the Taliban under the table. (The role that Pakistan allegedly played in the creation of the Taliban is described in the book, “Taliban: Militant Islam, Oil and Fundamentalism in Central Asia,” by Pakistani journalist Ahmed Rashid, who writes for the Far Eastern Economic Review and from time to time for the Washington Post.)

The day after the state dinner, a report started circulating in the British press that Taliban officials have opened an office in the bus station of the capital of North Waziristan—the area in Pakistan where Osama bin Laden allegedly has his headquarters. (The Australian, Sept. 30)

Taliban officials have distributed leaflets calling on the people of North Waziristan

to contact them on all matters relating to law and order.

Pakistan was forced to give substantial internal autonomy to both North and South Waziristan a few months ago after its army was unable to suppress a local uprising.

All these charges and countercharges on the issue of troop levels, the ability of the Taliban to maintain reasonably secure rear bases in Pakistan, and the inefficient and insufficient organization of the U.S.-installed Afghan regime ignore the ability of the Afghan resistance to express the anger of the people over being occupied by a foreign power. The resistance includes an unarmed, civilian movement that has started to show its face in Kabul, Kandahar and Herat.

According to Syed Saleem Shahzad, a Pakistani journalist writing in the September *Le Monde Diplomatique*, Mullah Dadullah, a seasoned Taliban military commander with good diplomatic skills, helped obtain political unity among Taliban factions in Waziristan that had previously been divided. Dadullah was able to connect with two significant factions of resistance fighters opposed to the Karzai government, writes Shahzad, and to work out strategic alliances with some Uzbek and Tadjik opponents of Karzai’s puppet government. □



## EYEWITNESS LEBANON

## Reconstruction begins amid the ruins

By Sara Flounders

*Flounders, of the International Action Center, was part of a fact-finding delegation to Lebanon, organized by the Campaign for Accountability, from Sept. 11-17. Others on the delegation included Palestinian artist Samia Halaby of Defend Palestine-New York and LeiLani Dowell of Fight Imperialism Stand Together (FIST).*

Every town in South Lebanon displayed signs on store windows, poles and buildings graphically illustrating the different sizes and shapes of cluster bombs. Red tape and signs tied around fields and circling houses warned that cluster bombs were present. Buildings with "M42 Cluster" painted in red kept people away.

The Sept. 13 Israeli newspaper Haaretz reported an Israeli Army commander saying, "What we did was insane and monstrous, we covered entire villages with cluster bombs." He charged that "the Army dropped more than 1.2 million cluster bombs," more than 10 times the 100,000 cluster bomblets previously reported.

The 1.2 million had included only those bomblets dropped by a Multiple Launch Rocket System. Haaretz reported other bomblets were fired from 155-mm mortars or dropped from the air.

The UN has found that Israel dropped 90 percent of all the cluster bombs it used in Lebanon in the three days immediately preceding the cease-fire, that is, after the cease-fire had already been negotiated.

With the fields, roads and town centers carpeted by cluster bombs, it is much more difficult to do the intense work of clearing away bombed rubble and the rebuilding that is already underway.

Even towns not extensively bombed have had their livelihoods destroyed. A visit to the town of Houla, less than 650 feet from the Israeli border, confirmed the wide and systematic damage. Houla is often called the Moscow of Lebanon. It has an elected Communist Party government. Mayor Qasin explained how the ash created by the bombing has coated the crops and destroyed vegetables, tobacco, banana and orange groves.

Houla's crops are too dangerous to harvest. The region relies on agriculture for its income because decades of continued Israeli occupation and invasions of the south have wrecked the infrastructure and limited all industrial investments there.

When asked how the war had impacted the town of 15,000, Mayor Qasin responded: "Which war? Do you mean the Israeli attacks of 1948, where we lost 90 young men, or do you mean 1956 or 1968 or 1978 or 1982? Maybe you mean 1986 or 1996 or 2000. Or do you mean this year only?"

### Prison now a museum

Israeli bombing almost totally destroyed Al-Khiam, population 30,000, a city on a high ridge with a magnificent view of the entire region. From the hilltop one can see Israeli settlements in occupied Palestine, the still-occupied Shaba Farms, occupied Golan and Syria. Out of 4,800 houses in Al-Khiam, 1,000 were totally destroyed and 3,000 badly damaged, along with four of its five schools, two mosques and two churches. Hezbollah has vowed to rebuild them all.

Above Al-Khiam is a building that was once the location of an Israeli prison. Notorious as a torture center, it was controlled by an army of collaborators known as the South Lebanese Army. It held resistance heroes before the Lebanese resis-



WW PHOTO: SARA FLOUNDERS

tance drove Israel out in 2000.

After that liberation, Hezbollah turned the prison into a museum. Artists came from around the world to paint works in the tiny cells where prisoners were held in solitary confinement. Exhibits showed where prisoners were tortured. In July 2006 one of Israel's first acts in the invasion was to destroy the prison turned museum. Then the Israeli air force bombed the town for days.

A local resident told us that despite the intense bombardment, a small group of 15 Hezbollah fighters continued to fire Katyusha rockets from the high ground of the prison at Israeli targets for more than two weeks. This was the first time a Lebanese resistance force was able to strike back from Al-Khiam at Israeli targets within Israel.

### Bint Jbeil—turning point of resistance

The city of Bint Jbeil is the main urban center of south Lebanon. It had a population of 45,000 before the Israeli war began on July 12. The city was the scene of some of the heaviest fighting between the Israeli Army and Hezbollah militants.

At the city's entrance a sign reads, "Bint Jbeil—Capital of Freedom." Bint Jbeil withstood days of aerial bombardments and a month-long siege that left most of the town in ruins. Hezbollah fought for 28 days in the rubble of the city without yielding an inch of ground. Its fighters' determination turned the Israeli invasion into a stunning retreat.

In Bint Jbeil on July 26, Israel suffered its heaviest one-day losses of the invasion. In a bold, daylight ambush, resistance fighters killed nine members of the elite Golani Brigades, wounded many others, destroyed a Merkava tank and an armored troop-carrier, and stopped the Israeli Army's advance on the city.

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The news of their casualties in this small Lebanese city stunned the Israeli public, who were expecting triumphant reports from the front. The Israeli high command was thrown into disarray.

The guerilla militia's daring tactics and weaponry, particularly their anti-tank missiles, took Israel by surprise. There were street-by-street gun battles. According to Jane's Weekly, a publication that reports on military equipment and tactics, the resistance included hand-to-hand combat. A few dozen well-disciplined Hezbollah fighters held their ground despite the continual aerial and artillery bombardment.

Bint Jbeil is now a wasteland of scattered rubble and bombed wreckage, most of its buildings uninhabitable.

We visited the hospital in Bint Jbeil and met with its director, Dr. Fouad Taha. He described the bombing of the operating room, the generators and the electrical network. The medical staff continued to work by candlelight and without running water. He said that he worked days without even being able to shower. But the enormous difficulty was worth it, he said, because in the end the invading force was driven back.

The hospital, although still severely damaged, was again functioning. Generators are now housed in tents, as is the operating room. Across from the tents lies a large unexploded missile in a field roped off due to cluster bombs. In front of the hospital a destroyed Israeli tank, left behind in the rushed Israeli evacuation six years ago, is now a shrine to the resistance.

On the main street small shopkeepers sorted through rubble to salvage some of their stock. A small shoe store was named Queens Shoes, since the owner previously operated a shoe store in Queens, N.Y.

On the rubble of every home people have painted numbers giving the street address and the house number, and codes describing whether it can be repaired or must be cleared away. This reminded us of the tracts of destroyed homes in New Orleans. But here in Bint Jbeil, with the social support of the resistance organizations, hundreds of people were hard at work clearing and taking the first difficult steps of rebuilding.

In the small town of Aaitaroun, close to the Israeli border, a woman described the night the Israeli military appeared in tanks, armored personnel carriers and armored earthmovers to bulldoze the town. She proudly pointed out the top of the ridge where local resistance fighters ambushed

them, stopping them from reaching the town. Like many others, this young woman had stayed behind to help the resistance when many others were evacuated.

We headed north with the Lebanese/Israeli border sometimes no more than 20 feet away. All along the roads were signs, pictures and shrines to past martyrs of the 1982-to-2000 resistance.

Every town square, regardless of how much destruction there was, was draped in yellow flags and banners of Hezbollah and sometimes of Amal, another resistance organization. Political slogans were everywhere—in Arabic and in English. Even in small towns, in front of the worst destruction a large sign would declare: "Made in USA."

Emergency generators and temporary water tanks provide basic services to many southern villages.

### Reconstruction needs organization

Throughout much of Lebanon workers have patched roads together, cleared rubble from major highways and again marked streets. Detours around bombed bridges and highway overpasses slow traffic to a crawl. But traffic does move.

On our return, as we passed the Beirut airport we saw hundreds of dump trucks piled with concrete rubble lining the road to the landfill. This operation's director told us that 1,000 trucks a day, more than a truck a minute, arrived at the landfill. The work began and the trucks began arriving the day after the war ended. They had been working around the clock for 34 days. All the work was organized and paid for by Hezbollah, he said.

All the trucks were coming from a huge clearing operation in Dihye in the southern section of Beirut. Because Israel considered the entire neighborhood of Haret Hreik as solidly in support of Hezbollah, its air force bombed the whole district into rubble. Block after block of apartment buildings was destroyed, along with the schools, mosques and small shops that sustained the area.

We returned again to this neighborhood, which we had visited on our first day in Lebanon. This was a neighborhood where, just days after our departure, Hezbollah held a giant rally of up to a million people on a 37-acre site that had already been cleared.

In downtown Beirut bridges and highway overpasses were not yet repaired. Roads have been opened and reconstruction is underway. The mobilization for reconstruction has generated enormous pride and great determination. At each site when we asked who had organized the cleanup or the removal of tons of twisted concrete and steel girders, people would reply that it was Hezbollah.

As we headed to the airport on our final day, our cabdriver pointed out key highway overpasses on the road to the airport that have been destroyed. He also expressed his fear that the corrupt forces who have collaborated with Israel in the past and who want the U.S. to have a foothold in Lebanon may attempt to inflame a civil war.

This man, a Christian, described how his family had opened their home to a Shiite family from south Beirut. He spoke very movingly of the mood throughout Lebanon for unity and the new determination not to allow old religious differences to again divide Lebanon.

For more reports and photos, see [www.PeopleJudgeBush.org](http://www.PeopleJudgeBush.org) and [www.iacenter.org](http://www.iacenter.org).



## Senate's anti-immigrant bill

It's no surprise that a body of 100 people who are overwhelmingly white, male, millionaire U.S. citizens is reactionary and at the service of the capitalist ruling class. It should be no surprise that this same body is also incompetent. That body is the U.S. Senate. And its latest example of reactionary incompetence is the immigration bill it passed Sept. 29.

If the Senate wanted to help workers, it would legalize the status of the 12.4 million immigrants who have been building the economy here. It would allow them to live, work and raise their families in the U.S. without fear of deportation and repression. Such a situation would benefit all workers here, as it would more easily allow unionization. It would strengthen the mutual interest of U.S.-born and foreign-born workers, who could then jointly struggle for higher wages and better working conditions.

If the Senate, instead, were competent in helping those capitalists who exploit low-wage immigrant workers, like the owners of large farms and orchards, it would pass a guest-worker program. This would damage the workers' interests but would stabilize the supply of low-wage labor.

This year, for example, increased repression against immigrants prevented many workers from Mexico and Central America from reaching West Coast farms. The abundant crops rotted in the trees or on the ground, ruining many farmers. This disaster demon-

strated how absolutely strategically necessary immigrant workers are to the economy.

Instead of either of the above, the Senate passed a bill to build a 700-mile-long fence on the U.S.-Mexico border in order to prevent Mexicans from entering that half of their own territory that the U.S. had stolen from Mexico in 1848 through a war of territorial expansion. The war ended with a treaty, the Treaty of Hidalgo, that guaranteed Mexicans could always pass over that border.

It was such an insult to pass this bill that even outgoing Mexican President Vicente Fox, a crony of Bush and former Coca-Cola executive, had to register an angry complaint.

The \$26 billion authorized by the new bill will serve only to murder more immigrant workers, who will look for a way to cross the border as long as there are jobs here and not in Mexico, whose economy has been undercut by NAFTA—the trade treaty with the U.S. and Canada.

When Congress last winter threatened to pass the even more onerous Sensenbrenner-King anti-immigrant bill, the strongest workers' demonstrations ever seen in this country were organized by immigrant groups from March until May. What is needed now is solidarity from U.S.-born workers with immigrant workers to build a movement that can say no to the dangerous, reactionary incompetents on Capitol Hill and in the White House. □

## At FLOC conference

# Farmworkers review historic struggles

By Cheryl LaBash  
Toledo, Ohio

The Farm Labor Organizing Committee celebrated its 10th triennial Constitutional Convention in Toledo, Ohio, on Sept. 30. This was the first convention with delegates from North Carolina, who attended under the banner "From North to South, Justice Has No Boundaries."

The convention not only celebrated the victories won through 37 years of struggle, but expressed the needs and issues of FLOC's membership today. Primary among these issues are immigrant rights and expanding union organizing in the South.

Special tribute was given to workers who died from heat stroke this summer. After the convention, FLOC members and supporters marched to the Lucas County Courthouse to demand immigrant rights.

In 2004, FLOC—which began battling for justice in the tomato fields of northern Ohio in 1968—won union recognition for more than 7,000 migrant workers in North Carolina. These workers enter the United States from Mexico with temporary H2A visas to harvest a wide variety of crops, from sweet potatoes and tobacco to Christmas trees.

The agreement, won through a five-year boycott of Mt. Olive Pickles, called for "the country's second-largest pickle producer to give [North Carolina Growers] association members 10 percent more for their cucumbers, which is to be passed on to workers." (Toledo Blade, Oct. 3, 2004)

This union strategy of targeting the corporations that set the prices instead of individual farmers also led to FLOC's victory 20 years ago at the Campbell Soup Co.

The immigrant farm workers' union victory in North Carolina came just before the massive immigrants' rights movement that has swept through large and small cities and towns in virtually every state this year.

FLOC explains the connection this way: "When FLOC opened its office in Monterrey, Mexico, on March 17 of this year it was in response to the realities of NAFTA and the global economy as much as it was to the contract needs in North Carolina. Workers from depressed rural areas must come to the American Consulate in Monterrey en route to jobs on the farms in North Carolina." ([www.floc.com](http://www.floc.com))

Frequently the corporate media report that Latin@ immigrants will become the

"largest minority" group in the United States. But FLOC President Baldemar Velasquez rejects this attempt to pit African-American and Latin@ workers against each other. He said, "We are not overtaking the African Americans—we are joining with them to make the struggle for justice stronger."

When Velasquez introduced Black Workers for Justice speaker Ajamu Dillahunt, he recognized the important support and assistance BWJ gave when FLOC went to North Carolina to take on Mt. Olive, including participating in a delegation to Mexico.

Dillahunt said that FLOC's 2004 victory was "a victory not only for farm workers but all workers. All workers need collective bargaining, including public employees."

Describing how BWJ is working for a Black-Brown alliance, he said: "We support each other. We learn history. We fight against backward ideas. Martin Luther King and Fannie Lou Hamer are our heroes—Baldemar Velasquez and [FLOC Vice President] Letitia Zavalla are 21st Century freedom fighters."

Noted Latina author Sandra Cisneros told the delegates, "You are the heroes of the new millennium."

AFL-CIO President John Sweeney presented a \$60,000 contribution. He said FLOC is "an example for the entire labor movement. The victory in North Carolina is particularly significant because it is the most 'union-free' state in the U.S. We are committed to helping this union continue to organize in the southern United States and all across this country."

Resolutions passed at the FLOC convention supported the right to legal residence in the United States; better housing and bathrooms in the fields in Ohio; creating a fund for humanitarian support; increasing workers' participation in the movement; recognizing the right to a driver's license; bilingual education; establishment of a pension plan; pesticide safety and education; telephones and washing machines in the camps; negotiated rest periods during the work day; establishment of a free clinic in North Carolina for union members; support for young people and unionizing other industries, among others.

One resolution that lifted the delegates to their feet recognized that the shortage of workers in Ohio has caused the loss of acres of cucumbers. It invited the "Minutemen" and other anti-immigrant groups to come to the fields to harvest the crops. □

## Gay left wing seeks unity

Continued from page 2

revolution."

Many of the white lesbians left the convention with resentments. The most often expressed grievance—that the Panther women related to them as Black and as Panthers rather than bonding as women—showed a low level of understanding of national oppression by the white women.

In the gay men's caucus, a revised version of the Third World Gay Revolution platform "was adopted by the group as the basis of a national gay liberation program. ... Gay people formed a 15-member delegation under the leadership of Third World people and women, which attempted to present the 16-point pro-

gram to the Panthers. This delegation gave gay people the experience of women and men, Blacks, Latins and Asians and Whites, working collectively in a practically revolutionary context, though the chaos and crowd kept the delegation from completing its task."

The gay men's statement, read by the delegation at the convention, concluded: "We recognize as a vanguard revolutionary action the Huey P. Newton statement on gay liberation. We recognize the Black Panther Party as being the vanguard of the people's revolution in Amerikkka."

Next: *More solidarity: D.C. 21, Panthers, Young Lords, Cesar Chavez.*  
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## California city welcomes immigrants

By Bob McCubbin

The mayor of National City, Calif., demographically the second poorest municipality in San Diego County, has declared the city a sanctuary for immigrant workers.

This progressive move so enraged area Minutemen—the racist, self-appointed "guardians" of the border whose hostile and violent attacks on day laborers have made clear their fascist sympathies—that they mobilized their forces for two Saturdays in a row in downtown National City to protest the pro-immigrant proclamation. But the multinational communities of this city, who overwhelmingly sup-

port the proclamation, were not about to be intimidated.

At protests on Sept. 23 and 30, huge contingents of police protected the racists from angry city residents and local progressive forces. Nevertheless, on both Saturdays, the pro-immigrant demonstrators faced off the racists and outlasted them. At the second protest, as police escorted the lone remaining Minuteman to his car, the Unión del Barrio, one of the organizing groups, led community residents, students and anti-racist activists into the street for a spirited victory march and rally.

The message was loud and clear: Bigots not welcome here! □

## Mexican gov't masses troops

# Oaxaca's people stand firm

By Bob McCubbin

The struggling people of the southern Mexican state of Oaxaca, one of the most impoverished and Indigenous parts of the country, now face an imminent military threat from the national government headed by Vicente Fox, the outgoing president.

Reports in the Mexican dailies *La Jornada* and *Prensa Latina* indicate that as September ended, national police and military forces as well as military equipment—including helicopters, troop transport planes, armored personnel carriers, all-terrain vehicles and command vehicles—were being amassed at the Oaxacan coastal towns of Huatulco and Salina Cruz and at the city of Oaxaca's airport.

In addition, as of Sept. 30, military helicopters and other surveillance aircraft had begun low overflights of the city of Oaxaca, focusing on the city's central plaza, where hundreds of protesters remain encamped.

For months now, the workers and poor of Oaxaca have stood in solidarity with the Oaxacan teachers' union and against Oaxaca's Gov. Ulises Ruiz, whose resignation they are demanding. Organizing themselves into the Popular Assembly of the People of Oaxaca (APPO), they have effectively had control of the capital city since June 14, when police attacked a rally where teachers were demanding higher wages.

A *La Jornada* report on the sudden military buildup referred to the peoples' organization as "the Oaxaca Commune," recognizing, perhaps, that it is functioning



Teachers march to Mexico City from Oaxaca, Mexico on Sept. 21.

as a peoples' grassroots government.

In response to the developing military threat, an APPO leader, making use of a radio station controlled by the people, called for solidarity brigades from all over the country to come to Oaxaca to form security belts around the city. He also suggested that city residents use mirrors to reflect sunlight from their rooftops to show defiance of the military overflights.

APPO is also trying to strengthen the barricades defending the city. A leader of the women's movement in Oaxaca called on the people of Mexico City to respond immediately to any repression in Oaxaca with an occupation of the Mexico City Zócalo (central plaza) for the purpose of initiating actions of resistance and to denounce President Fox and his successor Felipe Calderón as the people responsible for the violence.

APPO is also demanding that the

national government begin discussions with APPO on its "Pact on Governability, Peace and Development of the State of Oaxaca." The alternative to negotiations, APPO is pointing out, will be the blood of the people on the hands of Fox and Ruiz, because "the people are going to respond" to the threatened repression.

Andrés Manuel López Obrador, the progressive Mexican presidential candidate who has refused to accept the July 2 election results widely viewed as fraudulent, and who has vowed to set up a parallel government, denounced the military moves against Oaxaca. He said his electoral opponent, Felipe Calderón, and the Institutional Revolutionary Party that

backs the governor of Oaxaca would bear full responsibility for any bloodshed in Oaxaca.

Meanwhile, the national teachers' union in Mexico City is planning a huge reception for the caravan/march of Oaxacan teachers currently en route to the capital from the city of Oaxaca. They are due to arrive on Oct. 9. □



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Después de reñidas elecciones

## Los pobres en México piden un gobierno paralelo

Por Teresa Gutiérrez

Las elecciones presidenciales de México en julio de este año ya pasaron. A pesar de haber vasta evidencia de un gran fraude por parte del gobierno, Felipe Calderón, el candidato del Partido de Acción Nacional (PAN), partido conservador pro estadounidense, fue declarado presidente el 5 de septiembre por el Tribunal Federal Electoral (TRIFE)—la corte electoral más alta del país.

El TRIFE declaró que el candidato progresista, Andrés Manuel López Obrador, fue derrotado.

Antes de las elecciones, López Obrador había dirigido una campaña presidencial masiva bajo la bandera de la recién formada coalición "Para el Bien de Todos." Su campaña electoral dio vida a un movimiento de masas.

A pesar de la proclamada derrota del candidato progresista, que fue un claro golpe contra el movimiento, la lucha del pueblo mexicano está lejos de estar finalizada. De hecho, los políticos capitalistas continúan caracterizando la situación de México como "un momento decisivo" lo que realmente quiere decir, "estamos preocupados".

Todo indica que a pesar del resultado de las elecciones, el movimiento político de México ha revivido y no está menguando. AMLO, como se conoce cariñosamente a López Obrador, no ha retornado derrotado a los pasillos del gobierno. Se ha quedado en las calles con las masas.

De hecho, al recibir la noticia de la decisión de la corte la semana pasada, él dijo, "Al diablo con las instituciones" y rehusó reconocer a Felipe Calderón como presidente.

### Las masas ocupan el Zócalo

El 2 de julio, cuando se hizo evidente que las elecciones habían estado contaminadas con fraude, López Obrador rehusó lidiar con el asunto dentro de los confines del parlamentarismo burgués. En vez de eso, él abrazó el impulso en las calles y llevó el argumento fuera de los confines de la ley capitalista e instó a movilizaciones de las masas.

La Plaza del Zócalo en el corazón de la capitalina Ciudad de México, se convirtió en el cuartel de López Obrador donde sus partidarios acamparon, se reunieron y protestaron a favor de la justicia.

El Zócalo es lugar de incontables acciones de masas desde los tiempos de los aztecas. Una cantina cerca de la plaza anuncia que tiene agujeros de balas disparadas por el revolucionario héroe mexicano Pancho Villa.

Las manifestaciones invocadas por AMLO crecieron hasta casi 2 millones de personas, demostrando que el pueblo mexicano ya está harto de lo mismo de siempre. La ira de las masas no es solamente por el fracaso del gobierno mexicano para garantizar unas elecciones justas sino por la intensa tasa de explotación que se ve hoy en todo el país.

México enfrenta hoy una de las peores crisis económicas y sociales de su historia. Un enorme subempleo y desempleo ha conducido a olas sin precedente de migración hacia el norte. Como resultado de políticas como el TLC, el imperialismo de los EEUU ha quedado profundamente enraizado en las estructuras políticas y económicas de México.

El movimiento que actualmente sacude a México es el resultado de esta condición.

La masiva ocupación de la Plaza del Zócalo que comenzó en julio y siguió por siete semanas consecutivas, fue tan efectiva que la agencia France Press reportó que bloqueó las avenidas más importantes. El campamento fue tan exitoso que interrumpió el comercio, costando a la economía alrededor de \$709 millones de dólares, según un reporte publicado por una representación de una asociación de frenéticos empresarios.

El comercio no fue lo único que se interrumpió. Tradicionalmente, el gobierno capitalista celebra el 16 de septiembre en esa plaza. Sin embargo, este año, el actual presidente saliente, Vicente Fox del PAN, fue forzado a conmemorar el día 16 de septiembre, día de la independencia de México de España, a distantes millas fuera del Distrito Federal como resultado de la ocupación masiva en la Plaza del Zócalo.

A principios de septiembre, legisladores del Partido de la Revolución Democrática (PRD),

un partido de oposición partidario de López Obrador, también pudieron interrumpir al gobierno con una significativa demostración de poder. L@s legislador@s peredeístas bloquearon el podio donde Fox iba a dar su último discurso sobre el estado de la nación. Esto forzó a Fox a retirarse y presentar su discurso en la noche por televisión.

### Llamado a un gobierno paralelo

A pesar de que el campamento en el Zócalo había sido desmantelado, las tensiones no "parecen tener una reconciliación en el futuro cercano". (Christian Science Monitor, 18 de septiembre)

Esto es debido a la nueva fase de lucha del movimiento.

López Obrador y el movimiento que encabeza claramente no van a desaparecer. El campamento ha sido desmantelado por ahora, después de siete semanas de una ocupación masiva, pero el movimiento no se ha desmantelado.

Por más de un mes, después de manifestaciones masivas en julio y agosto de millones de mexican@s, el campamento se mantuvo firme.

Luego, el 16 de septiembre, el campamento culminó en una masiva Convención Nacional Democrática.

Más de un millón de personas asistieron a esta convención, según reportó La Jornada. Llenaron no solamente la enorme plaza sino también las calles que la rodean. Votaron alzando las manos para declarar a López Obrador su presidente y le llamaron a formar un gobierno paralelo. Él va a nombrar un gabinete de gobierno que será inaugurado el 20 de noviembre, días antes de la inauguración de Felipe Calderón el 1º de diciembre.

El 20 de noviembre es la fecha en que México conmemora la Revolución de 1910.

López Obrador dijo el 16 de septiembre que su gobierno paralelo trabajará preparando propuestas para reescribir la constitución de México de modo que los derechos de "alimentación, trabajo, cuidado de la salud, educación y vivienda" estén garantizados. Dijo también que desea cambiar las instituciones públicas corruptas. (Noticias de ABC, 17 de septiembre)

La coalición que se formó para la elección presidencial acordó continuar su alianza hasta el 2009. Su consigna es "Para el Bien de Todos, los Pobres Primero".

Reuters reportó que l@s delegad@s a la convención también votaron para apoyar un boicot contra algunas de las compañías más grandes en México, incluyendo a Wal-Mart, Citigroup y Coca-Cola. Un boicot grande de la Coca-Cola en México serían buenas noticias para los trabajadores colombianos que se enfrentan a una campaña de escuadrones de muerte a quienes los sindicalistas acusan de proteger los intereses de la Coca-Cola. Se vende más Coca-Cola en México que en cualquier otro país latinoamericano.

La Jornada reportó el 17 de septiembre que la convención también había votado para iniciar un "Plan de Resistencia Civil y Pacífica" contra el fraude electoral, prometiendo interrumpir a Calderón dondequiera que hable. Formaron tres comisiones para llevar a cabo el trabajo, y se hicieron planes para la segunda reunión de la convención el 21 de marzo de 2007.

Seguro que la clase dominante estadounidense está preocupada por los acontecimientos en México. ¿Habrá surgido otro Hugo Chávez tan cerca de la frontera estadouni-

dense? ¿Estarán maduras las circunstancias para que las masas mexicanas fomenten su segunda revolución, esta vez más cercana al modelo cubano? Solo el tiempo dirá.

Mientras tanto, el gobierno capitalista actual de México está pensando romper relaciones diplomáticas con Venezuela. ¿Por qué? Porque el Presidente Hugo Chávez de Venezuela dijo en La Habana el 18 de septiembre que su gobierno no reconoce la victoria de Calderón a causa de las irregularidades reportadas.

Seguro que Chávez no está perdiendo el sueño por la posibilidad de una ruptura de relaciones. Tiene un buen amigo en La Habana que es mucho más importante — un amigo que el pueblo mexicano también tiene en su corazón. □

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