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Which way for the immigrant struggle?

Teresa Gutierrez: 'Repressive laws will be repealed in the streets'

The week before the March and Rally for Immigrant Rights set for Oct. 21 in New York City, sponsored by the newly formed New York United for Immigrant Rights, Workers World talked to Teresa Gutierrez, a leading organizer of the May 1st Coalition. The May 1st Coalition is a member of NYUIR.

WW: The Oct. 21 demonstration comes about six months after the huge protest marches that swept the country last spring. Looking back on those protests half a year later, how would you characterize them?

Gutierrez: The massive demonstrations of immigrants last spring were a phenomenal step forward for the class struggle in this country. The spring mobilizations were a welcome development not least because there has been such a longstanding period of reaction. It had appeared that the capitalist ruling class and its representatives in the U.S. government had the upper hand completely, and that the mass struggle was dormant.

But then came the demonstrations of March, April and May. This development shook the ruling class. It frightened and deeply worried them. It gave a glimpse, even in the midst of periods of reaction, of the vast, crucial struggles that are on the horizon. This is the meaning of the actions carried out last spring by a vital and previously unheard-from section of the working class: that everyone who witnessed them knew that they were a glimpse of the future.

Why haven't these huge numbers been seen again in the months since?

Massive demonstrations of millions of people, especially demonstrations as thoroughly working-class in character as those

last spring, made up as they were of some of the most oppressed strata of our class, are difficult to sustain. There are practical considerations. For example, many who attended the demonstrations missed work and lost a day's pay. How many times can a worker do that in a given period?

It would be at a different phase in the struggle that we would see millions continue to come out month after month, week after week. Sustained protests in the streets of that size and character would be a revolutionary or near-revolutionary development. We are not in such a period yet.

And it's not just the immigrant-rights movement where you see this. The anti-war movement is at nowhere near the level of struggle that we wish, the level that would be commensurate with the atrocities being carried out by U.S. imperialism in Iraq and elsewhere. There should be outrage at the racist, gross way the media is treating North Korea right now, but the U.S. has been very successful in demonizing North Korea. The reality is that none of the progressive movements are currently able to sustain an ongoing high level of mobilization and mass struggle.

How did the bourgeois media view the immigrant-rights protests?

Bourgeois pundits in the mainstream media paid and are still paying close attention to the state of the immigrant-rights movement. They are deeply interested. After all, when millions of workers demonstrate, and one of those demonstrations is on a weekday, May Day no less, and workers stay out of work to take to the streets, you can be sure they are monitoring the situation closely.

When the demonstrations that many groups called in September turned out to be nowhere near as big as those last

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Resistance lives behind prison walls

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PHOTO: ROBERTO MERCADO

Lynne Stewart, right, at rally before receiving judge's decision on Oct. 16. She is joined by Pam Africa, left, leader of the International Concerned Family and Friends of Mumia Abu-Jamal.

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Early gay liberation: Demonstrations of anti-racist solidarity

By Leslie Feinberg

One particularly militant action by a multinational group of gay men took place during the fall 1970 Revolutionary People's Constitutional Convention, convened by the Black Panther Party. It included a demonstration of anti-racist unity.

During the convention, a group of four gay men—two Puerto Rican, one African American and one white—at least one of whom was reportedly wearing “a bit of makeup,” went out to eat at an area restaurant.

Management at the restaurant, which reportedly catered to a white clientele, refused to serve the group. The four left, and returned with 30 or more gay men. The restaurant boss ordered them out.

According to a report in the Advocate, “A fight erupted when management, security guards and several patrons attacked one Puerto Rican and two black Gays. Glasses were thrown, windows broken and other damage done in the free-for-all which developed.” (“The Gay Militants,” Donn Teal)

The other gay men of various nationalities came to their aid and fought alongside them.

After the group left the restaurant, police stopped 12 of the gay men as they drove away and charged them with assault, illegal entry and destruction of property. The defendants later won an important legal precedent—the right to vet prospective jurors about their prejudices against same-sex love. Ultimately the charges were dropped.

More solidarity

As early as November 1969, left-wing gay liberationists actively organized in support of Chican@/Mexican@ grape pickers who were trying to organize a union—the United Farm Workers (UFW)—in the fields of California. The “Radical Caucus” at the Eastern Regional Conference of Homophile Organizations won a resolution in support of the farm workers, even though the convention had drawn more moderate forces.

Renowned labor leader César Chávez continuously extended his hand of solidarity to gay liberation, as well.

Last summer, when the National Executive Board of the United Farm Workers—a predominantly Latin@ union—announced its principled stance in support of the right of same-sex marriage, UFW Southern California Political Director Christine Chávez restated her grandfather's support of gay rights.

She recalled, “Beginning in the 1970s, before there was widespread public acceptance of gays, especially among Latinos, my grandfather, César Chávez, spoke out strongly for gay rights. He attended gay rights rallies and marches. He brought with him the UFW's black-eagle flags and farm workers who wished to participate.” (www.ufw.org)

Chávez helped carry the lead banner in the 1979 march on Washington for lesbian, gay and bisexual rights.

Early gay liberation won support from Puerto Rican revolutionary youth as well, particularly from the Young Lords Party.

When Gay Liberation Front (GLF) activists went to a Puerto Rican street festival on Aug. 8, 1970, sponsored by the Young Lords Party, members of the Puerto Rican revolutionary youth party helped hand out leaflets advertising an upcoming GLF dance. (Philadelphia Gay Liberation

Front-Newsletter, Aug. 9, 1970)

Shortly after Huey Newton issued his powerful statement of support for the gay and women's liberation movements in The Black Panther newspaper on Aug. 21, 1970, the Young Lords Party formed an internal gay caucus. One of its first members was Latin@ trans Stonewall combatant Sylvia Rivera.

Rivera described joining in autumn 1970: “It was just the respect they gave us as human beings. They gave us a lot of respect. It was a fabulous feeling for me to be myself—being part of the Young Lords as a drag queen—and my organization [STAR—Street Transvestite Action Revolutionaries] being part of the Young Lords.”

The Young Lords Party held its own inquiry into the death of a Black gay prisoner—Raymond Lavon Moore—after he was found dead in November 1970 on the fourth floor of the Tombs prison in lower Manhattan. That was the floor where gay and trans prisoners were locked up.

Prison officials claimed Moore took his own life. But gay prisoner Richard Harris courageously came forward with his eyewitness account of the beatings Moore sustained from guards preceding his death.

The Young Lords charged that the administration had killed Moore. Gay liberation activists formed the Gay Community Prisoner Defense Committee after Moore's death.

On at least one occasion, Gay Liberation Front in New York provided bail money for two jailed Young Lords members.

Support for Panthers

Not all Black Panther Party leaders supported gay rights and not all gay activists supported the Panthers. But many left-wing gay liberationists—Black, Latin@, Asian, Native and white—worked hard to build and widen solidarity for the Panther Party.

The “Radical Caucus” at the Eastern Regional Conference of Homophile Organizations also won a resolution in support of the Black Panther Party, and when the conference leadership tried to overturn the measure, a wider vote sustained the resolution.

A Gay Liberation Front (GLF) representative spoke at the huge May 1970 rally in New Haven organized to free Panther co-founder Bobby Seale.

The case of the Panther 21 drew demonstrative support from gay liberationists of all nationalities. The 21 were arrested in New York on April 2, 1969, in a pre-dawn police raid and charged with conspiracy to bomb the Botanical Gardens, department stores and other sites. They were finally acquitted of all charges on May 13, 1971, after 45 minutes of jury deliberation following what had been the longest political trial in the city's history.

During the long trial, gay activists, including members of the Gay Liberation Front, had organized in support of the Panther defendants. The GLF Marxist study group—Red Butterfly—organized a gay liberationist contingent at a massive rally to “Free the Panther 21 and All Political Prisoners.”

The New York GLF donated \$500—quite a sum for activists in those days—to the Committee to Defend the Black Panthers.

Support for the Panthers became the stated basis for an internal struggle within the early gay liberation movement that eventually led to a significant political split.

*Next: Two-line struggle split gay movement
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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.



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As glaciers melt and methane burps

Murdoch, Clinton pose as saviors of the planet

By Deirdre Griswold

Does it worry you that the role of savior of the planet is now being preempted by the likes of Rupert Murdoch, Bill Clinton and Arnold Schwarzenegger?

The planet is in grave danger—and so are many living things—from dramatic climate change caused by global warming. The most recent findings by scientists show a much quicker rise in global temperatures than was predicted just a few years ago.

Glaciers all over the world, from Antarctica to the Andes to Greenland to the Alps, are melting.

Paradoxically, the huge amount of fresh water pouring into the North Atlantic as a result may be pushing the Gulf Stream away from the British Isles and could actually be bringing more severe winters to parts of northern Europe.

The polar ice caps are melting, too. A recent report by a NASA team, published in *Geophysical Research Letters*, says that the sea ice covering the Arctic Ocean shrank by a phenomenal 14 percent—the area of Texas—in just one year, from 2004 to 2005.

Then there's the permafrost, which for 40,000 years has stabilized the ground in the far north. Starting a few feet below the surface of the ground, the frost never melted, even on hot summer days. That is changing, according to a study reported in the Sept. 7 issue of *Nature*.

In vast areas of Russia, Canada and Alaska, the once permanently frozen land is melting during the short—but lengthening—summers. Roads that once crossed the frozen ground safely are collapsing into the bog. Buildings, dams and pipelines are in danger of sinking and breaking up.

But even more dangerous for the whole

world, vast amounts of methane gas once trapped in this frozen jello are starting to be released. Methane is a greenhouse gas that contains carbon; it is 23 times more potent than carbon dioxide in trapping the Earth's heat. Scientists are now finding methane bubbles rising out of the thawed swamps.

Researchers estimate that more than 4 million tons of methane are now being released each year as Siberia warms. But if the planet continues to heat up, some 90 percent of the 500 billion tons of carbon locked up in the permafrost of Siberia could rise up into the atmosphere. A similar process is happening in the tundra areas of Canada and Alaska. (New Scientist, Sept. 30)

Jim Hansen, director of NASA's Goddard Institute for Space Studies, says that the Earth is already as warm as at any time in the last 10,000 years, and is within 1 degree Centigrade of being its hottest for a million years.

That one degree could be the "tipping point" that scientists are warning of, when the processes first unleashed by human activity are accelerated by feedback mechanisms. These mechanisms include more of the sun's heat being absorbed by the newly open oceans, as well as the destruction of northern forests by insects that used to be held in abeyance by cold winters—already a growing problem in Canada and Russia. Trees help moderate the greenhouse effect by taking carbon out of the air.

No one can predict exactly what will happen, or if other counter-mechanisms may kick in. But much of what was considered speculation just a few years ago—like the increase in atmospheric methane—is now observable fact.

So where do Murdoch, Schwarzenegger and Clinton come in?

They are all, in different ways, pushing

schemes to supposedly help counteract global warming. These schemes are market friendly; that is, they are based on the premise that technologies can be developed that will be both "green" and profitable for their owners.

Putting profits first

They are for using the power and money of the government in this endeavor, but in ways that will subsidize private industry, which supposedly will then come up with the best ways to solve the problem.

Murdoch, as most readers already know, is a right-wing, anti-worker media mogul who heads News Corp. It in turn owns the Fox Broadcasting network, 20th Century-Fox, the *New York Post*, *The Weekly Standard*, MySpace, part of DirecTV, more than 110 Australian newspapers, the book publisher HarperCollins, and five British newspapers, including the most sensational and chauvinist tabloids. It also controls satellite-television providers in Britain, Italy and most of Asia.

Murdoch was a strong supporter of both Ronald Reagan and Margaret Thatcher. His news media have played an often decisive role in promoting political figures whose policies have vastly enhanced the wealth and power of the already super-rich.

Recently, Murdoch's company donated half a million dollars to Bill Clinton's Climate Initiative, announced this summer. This undoubtedly shocked those on the far right who love Murdoch and for years have echoed the energy companies' mantra that global warming was a hoax and that even the mildest effort to get an international agreement limiting greenhouse gas emissions, like the Kyoto accords (which the U.S. has never signed), was a Third World conspiracy.

However, Murdoch is a very political member of the capitalist ruling class,

and he is positioning himself right now to shape future policies on what the government should do about global warming, especially if the Democrats come out ahead in the next two general elections.

Another figure offering support to Clinton's initiative is Gen. Wesley Clark. He appeared on a panel recently with Sen. Hillary Clinton and the former president of Costa Rica, José María Figueres. This military leader, who led the U.S.-NATO war that broke up Yugoslavia, explained that global warming is a "national security" issue, warning that huge natural disasters like Hurricane Katrina not only can do terrible damage but can also affect social stability.

Also getting into the mix on the Republican side is Schwarzenegger. The California governor just met with New York's billionaire mayor, Michael Bloomberg, and the two announced they were teaming up to promote clean energy.

Suspicious? You should be. All these figures speak for a ruling class that is directly responsible for the type of economic development that has polluted the planet while making them wildly wealthy. "Corporate America" has no qualms about making money from wars of conquest—the most concentrated assault on the environment. They all thought it was great to invade and destroy Iraq for its oil—until the Iraqi people proved capable of putting up a good fight.

Now they want to be in the business of "green" technology. And they want the government to put up a lot of the money that will then go into their pockets.

Don't expect this to fix anything. Remember how privatizing the schools and the prisons was going to make everything work better? Now these foxes are setting themselves up to stand guard over our threatened global chicken coop. □

Shut out of Michigan 'debates'

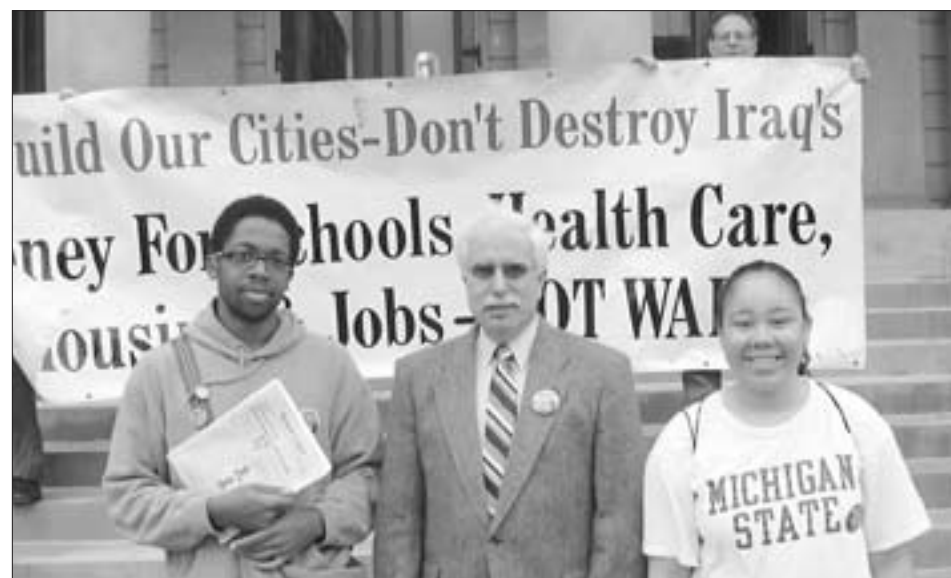
Antiwar slate runs grassroots campaign

By Kris Hamel
Detroit

The Sole for U.S. Senate campaign is taking its antiwar message across Michigan. David Sole and Michael Merriweather, a Wayne State University student who is running for WSU's Board of Governors, recently returned from a northern campaign trip. Both candidates are on the Green Party ticket and are running on the Stop the War Slate.

In Traverse City, over 30 people met at a local bookstore to hear the candidates speak on the Iraq war and growing joblessness. A dozen students from Northwestern Michigan College attended, as well as some high school students. Sole was interviewed by the *Traverse City Record Eagle*, the local daily newspaper, and a high school paper.

While Democratic Sen. Debbie Stabenow and her Republican challenger, Michael Bouchard, were debating Oct. 15 at public TV/radio station WGVS in Grand Rapids, Sole and campaign activists protested his exclusion outside the station. Sole and campaign organizer Jerry Goldberg disrupted a press conference afterward and confronted Stabenow on her pro-war position.



From left, Stop the War Slate candidates Michael Merriweather, Dave Sole and Lauren Elizabeth Spencer, at Capitol Bldg., Lansing, Mich.

A press release issued by Sole's campaign stated: "The Oct. 15 Senate candidates' debate demonstrated why it is so critical that David Sole, the Green Party candidate for U.S. Senate and the only antiwar candidate, be included in the debates and have his views publicized by the media.

"On the same day polls indicated that 65

percent of the people of Michigan oppose the Iraq war, in the so-called Senate debate both Stabenow and Bouchard voiced support for the war. While Stabenow stated she initially voted against the war, she made clear ... she has voted for every single military appropriation to fund and maintain the war. When asked if she would call for a time limit for the withdrawal of U.S.

troops, she refused to do so, and echoed the Bush double talk about the Iraqi forces taking a more active role, a total joke in light of recent events. Bouchard echoed Stabenow's support for the war.

"In contrast, David Sole stated: 'I call for the immediate and unconditional withdrawal of all U.S. troops from Iraq. Three thousand U.S. troops have been killed, tens of thousands more have been seriously injured, and hundreds of thousands of Iraqi people have been killed as a result of this illegal ... war, fought at the behest of the U.S. oil companies. ... The cost of the Iraq war is now \$334 billion. If that money had been used for human needs, Michigan's share, \$8.9 billion, could have gone a long way toward providing health care, housing and jobs at living wages for all.'

"Sole continued: 'In the debate Stabenow was asked if she supported a national health plan. She ducked the question. I support a free national health plan, which would be funded by dramatically slashing the Pentagon budget that was recently passed without opposition in the U.S. Senate. Both candidates expressed their anti-immigrant views. I support amnesty

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Strikers to Goodyear: Stop 'picking us to the bone'

By Martha Grevatt
Akron, Ohio

Ghosts, witches and skeletons, even tombstones—these are a common sight this time of year. Outside the last existing Goodyear plant in Akron, however, their purpose is not to greet the hungry trick-or-treaters. On strike since Oct. 5, members of United Steel Workers of America (USWA) Local 2L have put up a skeleton with a sign accusing Goodyear of “picking us to the bone.”

At another entrance the pickets have erected tombstones with names of cities—Akron, Buffalo, Gadsden, Lincoln, Union City—that have been dying as plants manufacturing rubber and other goods are closed.

Altogether about 15,000 USWA members are striking at 16 plants in the U.S. and Canada. Key issues include Goodyear's plans to close two entire plants and eliminate 5,000 jobs, threats to the pensions of current and future retirees, and a five-tier pay scale that would employ new hires for 40 percent less than that paid current employees, who may also face a pay cut.

At one time the rubber industry dominated the Akron landscape, employing over 50,000 workers—12,000 at Goodyear



WW PHOTO: MARTHA GREVATT

Their numbers are down, but the spirit of Goodyear workers is up.

alone. Like the steel and auto unions, the United Rubber Workers waged fierce battles to win recognition from the likes of Goodyear, Firestone and B.F. Goodrich. These battles, which made Akron a union town, became part of the rich labor history of Northeast Ohio.

It is a history that is not forgotten. When

asked if there was 100 percent support in the community, a striker replied, with total seriousness, “Well, I think it's more like 99.9 percent. There is one guy who keeps driving by and telling us to get a job.”

International solidarity is already a factor also. Fred Higgs, secretary general of the International Federation of Chemical,

Energy, Mine and General Workers Unions (based in Brussels) called on “trade unions in the rubber industry—and particularly Goodyear plants in Central and South America—to monitor inventories and production to ensure that they are not undermining the USWA's strike action.”

The fight for job security is indeed critical.

Now the rubber industry is almost all gone—it truly is running with a skeleton crew. The rubber workers union was so reduced in number, it chose to merge with the Steelworkers. The only Goodyear tire plant left here employs less than 500 people, who make specialized tires for NASCAR stock car races. Future NASCAR races, which are enormously popular in the U.S., could be jeopardized if the strike goes on.

“I've been saving for this day since 1976,” one striker told this reporter, referring to the 146-day strike that won a cost of living adjustment. “He [the Goodyear CEO] has to borrow a billion dollars.” Days earlier Goodyear took out loans for almost that amount, specifically to weather the effects of the strike.

Their numbers may be diminished, but the spirit of Goodyear workers is as strong as it was 30 years ago. □

Which way for the immigration struggle?

Continued from page 1

spring, the bourgeois commentators declared that the movement was dead.

But it isn't!

Not at all. It's true that organizers around the country report a tepid mood now among immigrants. But this is not because they've lost interest or hope. And it doesn't at all mean that the struggle won't flare up again. But the reality is that, although the mass demonstrations had a huge impact, and succeeded in getting the repressive Sensenbrenner bill defeated in Congress, the reactionary anti-immigrant offensive is rolling forward. And it has a chilling effect.

Can you detail some of the specifics of this offensive?

The Senate voted to allocate \$6 billion to build a wall on the U.S.-Mexico border. This is one of the worst outrages.

At the same time, massive raids are being carried out by Immigration and Customs Enforcement, a branch of the Department of Homeland Security. In cities across the country, ICE is trying to push immigrant workers further underground and terrorize them away from organizing and fighting for their rights. These ICE sweeps are similar to the Palmer Raids of the 1920s.

According to the Detention Watch Network, from April through September of this year, 3,704 immigrants were picked up in these raids. News accounts report that as a result, some neighborhoods are turning into ghost towns. These numbers, by the way, could be a conservative count since most of the statistics come from ICE news releases which could be under-reporting the scope of the raids.

In addition to the border wall and the ICE raids, local and state governments, most notably in Pennsylvania and Arizona but also elsewhere, have been passing vicious anti-immigrant legislation. So all in all, there is a calculated attempt to create a thoroughly intimidating and threat-

We must also be passionately working to win over U.S.-born workers to come out in solidarity with immigrants.

ening climate for immigrant workers, especially the undocumented. A friend and comrade just sent me an email from Philadelphia where a local pizza shop, Geno's, had a huge sign on its front door: “If you are legal, come in, if you are illegal, go home.”

This is all a result of the immigrant-bashing sweeping the country. Lou Dobbs, U.S. Rep. Tom Tancredo of Colorado, the Minutemen—the diatribes from these forces create the conditions for these kinds of hateful racist acts.

But the ruling class doesn't really want to get rid of immigrant workers, does it?

Without immigrant labor, the economy would collapse. So why the witch hunt? To drive immigrants further underground. To further manipulate this reserve army of labor.

This is also deeply connected to the economic crisis workers face in this country. The Million Worker March Movement wrote in a piece directed to the immigrant-rights struggle that “the corporations want to super-exploit immigrant workers. They just don't want to be responsible for paying them the value of their labor or to provide social services and basic democratic rights. They are using the anti-immigrant legislation to mask the truth about the massive unemployment and the crisis facing U.S. workers and the huge financial debt of the government.” The MWMM said the bosses are “trying to make immi-

grants the scapegoats for the crisis. This criminalization is also aimed at creating a xenophobic hate of foreigners against the rising tide of change developing throughout Latin and South America that challenges U.S. global policies.”

This perspective focuses on immigrant workers as part and parcel of the class struggle in this country. And this is right on, and a real contribution to the debate. It says that attacks against immigrants must be seen as attacks on all workers. Otherwise the ruling class can pit immigrants and U.S.-born workers against each other to the detriment of all except the bosses.

The immigrant-rights movement has to do its part as well, reaching out to the African-American community, building unity. Links should especially be made to the survivors of Katrina and the activists who are fighting on their behalf. It would be a powerful movement if these two struggles genuinely linked up and marched forward hand in hand.

The ruling class goes out of its way to foster divisions between the Latin@ and Black communities, because the bosses know that if the Black and Latin@ communities unite they are a powerful force, a mighty force, one that can unite the struggle of all the immigrants from Asia, the Pacific, Africa and all over the world.

We must also be passionately working to win over U.S.-born workers of all nationalities to come out in solidarity with immigrants. We need to call on the labor movement to step forward. We need anti-war forces to join up with us, progressive clergy, other social forces—we have to make this a movement in which the immigrants are not on their own, but are buttressed on all sides by allies who stand with them and refuse to be divided.

So you see this as key to moving forward?

Absolutely. We need unity, a multinational united force, to build on the gains made from the demonstrations last spring

and reignite the momentum that we saw was so powerful.

We need to boost immigrant workers and show them that they are not alone. We need to build confidence and raise consciousness among immigrants, including those without documents, pointing toward the great outpourings of last spring and also toward current developments in Mexico, the Philippines and elsewhere, where workers are in motion.

The Oct. 21 demonstration will be an important step in this direction. It will show that the immigrant-rights movement is still very much in motion, developing, building, growing. No matter the size of the demonstration on the 21st, what is important that the momentum continues.

It's really important to be clear that the movement is ongoing, that it's heading forward, that mobilizing has already begun for a massive national demonstration for immigrant rights on May 1, 2007, so that those immigrant workers who may have a wait-and-see attitude at this point can see that there is a basis for coming out into the streets again.

At the same time, we have to understand that this is a dynamic struggle. It ebbs and flows. Not every demonstration will draw a million people—but every demonstration, every meeting, every action will be a blow against the racist anti-immigrant forces, and I'm confident that step by step, day by day, this movement will grow. The government can pass anti-immigrant laws but those laws will be repealed in the streets, I fully believe.

When immigrants in this country, whether documented or undocumented, again enter the class struggle in the United States, they can change everything in this country. It was the struggle of immigrants in the U.S. that led to the historic International Women's Day as well as May Day. Immigrants will make that kind of history again. That page is just around the corner. □

After massive worker struggles in China

Union starts organizing foreign-owned sweatshops

By Milt Neidenberg

A movement of the laboring masses is on the march in a strategic center of the world. This development is taking place in China, 10,000 miles away from Wall Street. But the Fortune 500 players nestled in their comfort zone are worried. And rightly so. Chinese workers and peasants are pouring into the urban centers seeking economic justice. Their demands have reached the highest levels of the ruling Communist Party.

Last year, columnist Howard French wrote that “Zhou Yongkang, the public security minister, told Reuters last month there were 74,000 mass incidents, or demonstrations and riots, that occurred in 2004, an increase from 58,000 the year before, and only 10,000 a decade ago.” (New York Times, Aug. 24, 2005) It is not clear how many of the 160 million workers organized in the All-China Federation of Trade Unions (ACFTU) participated.

Capitalist enterprise zones have superseded township and village enterprises in China and gained enormous leverage, becoming wide open to foreign investment, primarily from U.S. transnational corporations. Since the late 1970s, this development to encourage an open-door policy was labeled “market socialism” by the Communist Party, under the leadership of Deng Xiaoping.

Low-wage workers have clashed violently with Chinese bureaucrats who support capitalist restorationists. The newly rich have fattened at the expense of the people’s welfare and are nourished by 152,000 foreign-funded enterprises.

Social unrest, social change

Now, according to the Oct. 13 New York Times, “China is planning to adopt a new law that seeks to crack down on sweatshops and protect workers’ rights by giving labor unions real power for the first time since it introduced market forces in the 1980s.

“The move, which underscores the government’s growing concern about the widening income gap and threats of social unrest, is setting off a battle with American and foreign corporations that have lobbied against it by hinting that they may build fewer factories here. ...

“The skirmish has pitted the American Chamber of Commerce—which represents corporations including Dell, Ford, General Electric, Microsoft and Nike—against labor activists and the All-China Federation of Trade Unions.”

The ACFTU, the official state union, would be empowered to negotiate workers’ contracts covering wages, working

hours, safety and health on the job, and other benefits. The new law would make it more difficult to fire workers. Most important, the laws would be strictly enforced.

The ACFTU was founded in 1927 on May Day. The organization is divided into 31 federations, including provinces, autonomous regions and municipalities, and encompasses 10 national industrial unions. The entire structure is directly under the central government and the Chinese Communist Party (CCP).

ACFTU Chairperson Wang Zhaoguo is a member of the highest bodies of the Communist Party—the Central Committee Politburo and the Standing Committee—and is vice chairperson of the latter.

The ACFTU constitution describes the duties of the Chinese trade union as “to protect the legitimate rights and interests of the workers and staff members. In the course of developing the socialist market economy, the trade unions, in accordance with the regulations of the State’s Labor law and other relevant laws, actively safeguard workers’ political rights, their right to work and their material and cultural interests, participate in coordinating labor relations and regulating social contradictions and make efforts to promote the economic development and a long-term social stability of the country.” (ACFTU Bulletin, Aug. 10, 2005)

It is the implementation of a “socialist market economy” that has allowed the rise of capitalist restorationists and has led to class strife.

At the ACFTU’s 14th and most recent congress, in September 2003, the union targeted Wal-Mart, the biggest retailer in the world. Wal-Mart entered China’s domestic market in 1996 and currently has 62 super-sized retail enterprises there, employing some 32,000 workers. Their suppliers employ many more.

Wal-Mart’s headquarters in China responded just as they do to unions around the globe. They went on the offensive.

At that time, the People’s Daily described the encounter: “Wal-Mart said that according to Chinese law, a trade union could only be installed at the free request of employees, and since there have been no requests yet, there is no necessity to establish a union.”

The ACFTU responded as any union would. “They [the workers] cannot afford to raise the issue with their employer for fear of losing their jobs or other benefits.” Since the 2003 Congress, Wal-Mart’s defiance has collapsed.

With the support of CCP General Secretary Hu Jintao, the Communist Party leader who called for “union building in foreign-invested enterprises,” the ACFTU drive to set up union branches has snowballed. At least 17 branches have been formed. (China Labor Bulletin, Aug. 15)

The party leadership is now taking credit for these long overdue measures, which should have been done the day the first imperialist corporation entered China. These companies had operated with a virtual free rein until working-class resistance forced the authorities to make these concessions.

The struggle comes home

This significant victory against Wal-Mart has resonated back here in the imperial fortress of monopoly capitalism. It is making finance capital think twice about their dream that exporting jobs and services to China assures them cheap labor and huge profits forever after.

An article in the Oct. 13 Wall Street Journal headlined “China to Press More Firms to Unionize” confirms the fears of the Fortune 500. It reports that Guo Wencai, director general at the ACFTU, “said the union’s success with Wal-Mart has boosted morale and increased demands to establish unions in all foreign-funded enterprises in China. ‘These include Fortune 500, Hong Kong and Taiwan companies,’ he said, adding that the ACFTU has begun ‘an irreversible trend.’”

The article continues: “The ACFTU is on track to meet its target of getting 60 percent of foreign companies in China to unionize by the end of this year, officials say. The union has seen an unprecedented 6 percent rise in membership in the first six months of the year to 160.32 million members, with 2.58 million new members working with foreign companies.”

Wall Street is fighting back against the proposed new laws and the growth of the ACFTU. Among other tactics, U.S. capitalism is trying to empower the transna-

tional companies to set up rival company-type “independent” unions. They will try to reach migrant workers, most of them emigres from the poorest provinces, who complain about abuses such as having their pay withheld or being forced to work without a contract.

Will labor leaders here join the China-bashing chorus or will they champion and support the ACFTU successes? Andy Stern, president of the Service Employees International Union (SEIU) and architect of the Change to Win Federation that split from the AFL-CIO, supports the ACFTU. He has met with them four times since 2002.

Stern is quoted in the Oct. 13 Wall Street Journal: “I think what happens to Chinese unions will have a huge impact on what kind of global wages and benefits workers everywhere make. You’re seeing growing unrest among workers, a more aggressive ACFTU and I think a lot of that will be focused on foreign-owned enterprises.”

SEIU and the ACFTU shared strategies and talked about developing national agreements with companies rather than local contracts. “We’d rather have their wages come up, rather than American wages go down,” said Stern.

In contrast, AFL-CIO President John Sweeney has never met with the ACFTU and to date has not welcomed its significant achievements, particularly the impact on U.S. transnational corporations. In a July 21 statement, ignoring the ACFTU Wal-Mart victory, AFL-CIO Secretary-Treasurer Richard Trumka said he had “called on the Bush administration in June to take action under the Trade Act of 1974 to end the brutal suppression of workers’ rights in China and stop the flow of good U.S. jobs overseas.” (www.afl-cio.org) This is a dead end policy.

The growth of the U.S. labor movement lies in building international solidarity. The Chinese experience is one of many. The class struggle here will develop from below, from the exploited, the oppressed nationalities and the immigrants. Ultimately, these forces, organized in unions and the unorganized, will regroup, unite and build an independent classwide movement.

And challenge the Wal-Mart of the world. □

Lebanon eyewitnesses tour West Coast



Two women activists recently returned from Lebanon brought a strong message of optimism to meetings in San Francisco, Los Angeles and San Diego.

The “Eyewitness Lebanon” program in San Francisco on Oct. 15 featured LeiLani Dowell of Fight Imperialism Stand Together (FIST) and Samia Halaby of Al-Awda, the Palestine Right to Return Coalition-New York. This was the final stop on their West Coast tour. Both had gathered evidence to present to the Campaign for Accountability for U.S./Israeli War Crimes in Lebanon. Dowell and Halaby documented the massive rebuilding effort undertaken by the Lebanese people since the withdrawal of Israeli troops, thanks to the support and leadership of Hezbollah.

Earlier that week, in Los Angeles, the International Action Center hall was filled with people eager to hear about the experiences of the two. Their rare reports, both inspiring and enraging, used photos and video to create an exciting presentation followed by questions and comments. In addition, Larry Hales gave a powerful presentation about the police brutality struggle in Denver that was very well received by the multinational audience, a quarter of whom were Black women. San Diego activists also met to hear these reporters.

—Judy Greenspan and John Parker

Marxism, Reparations & the Black Freedom Struggle

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By Mumia Abu-Jamal from death row

The vampire's freedom

Taken from a Sept. 21, 2006, audio column

The words "freedom" and "democracy" spilled like water from a fountain.

If they were not spoken at the United Nations, they might have more resonance.



If they were spoken by someone other than the American president, George W. Bush, they might provoke more than dismissal.

But they were.

U.S. President Bush lectured to the U.N. delegates with a tone and turn of phrase that almost suggested that the panorama arrayed before him were schoolchildren.

He spoke of U.S. efforts to "defend civilization" and, pointedly, glaringly claimed, "We respect Islam." He told Iranian delegates, "The U.S. respects you."

It seemed incredible, almost vaudevillian. Some global delegates peered at the U.S. president in disbelief. Others wore smiles that seemed ripe to burst into guffaws any minute.

It seemed ridiculous because the words contrasted so strongly with the world we all know: the glaring failures in Iraq; the Taliban resurgence in Afghanistan.

Diplomats are trained to, well, use diplomacy and tact. Their faces were immobile masks hiding inner words locked within minds like, "Can you believe this guy?" or "Freedom? Democracy? Yeah—right!" Such words might've had more power had not Iraq been the plummeting disaster that it is.

And U.S. puppets installed in Middle East countries? They are both enormously unpopular in their new so-called 'democracies' and fear their own people more than anything else.

When empires speak of "freedom," they don't mean the freedom of their subject peoples. They mean the freedom of their elites to pluck from the stocks of the poor and the powerless.

It's the freedom to feed upon those whom they see as their imperial prey.

It's the false "freedom" of vampires.

Writer Jerry Fresia captured the spirit of that kind of imperial freedom in "Toward an American Revolution" (Boston: South End Press, 1988), where he quotes the late U.S. State Department honcho, George Kennan, telling Latin American ambassadors that America's major foreign policy concern was "the protection of our raw materials." (Notice the imperial "our.") Kennan also criticized the idea that governments have to care about the "welfare" of the people. Fresia writes:

"This condemnation of the idea that government has a direct responsibility for the welfare of the people captures wonderfully the legacy of the vision of empire and the Lockean notion of rights: 1) The globe is up for grabs. It is all potentially private property, suitable for development. You are free to try and acquire it and if you do, you own it. And what you do with it once you own it is up to you. It's your right, unless, that is, 2) a group of people, Church-based groups, unions, or popular coalitions who believe in community more than in free enterprise, gain control of a government and define limits to acceptable individual activity in accord with ethical standards. 3) The greatest threat to private power (free enterprise, the market system, contracts, production for profit and private ownership of productive property) has primarily been public power (a government controlled by common people for the welfare of the common people in the interests of community)." [pp. 81-82]

Even with the megaphones of the corporate media and the vaunted power of the presidential bully pulpit, Bush's message got swamped by something far more powerful. Truth.

Like a latter-day Orwell, his words evoked something quite unlike what was intended.

When he said "freedom," people thought "secret CIA prisons."

When he said "democracy," people thought "puppets."

When he said "liberty," people thought "occupation."

When he said "human rights," people thought "Abu Ghraib."

When he said "We respect Islam," people thought of piles of naked Muslim men in Iraq, or men chained to the floor at the U.S. prison at Guantánamo Bay in Cuba. They thought of the many, many people who are caged in immigration prisons on pretextual charges, and others sent for rendition to repressive regimes throughout the Arab world. They thought of U.S. support for these regimes for decades.

Bush is shouting, but no one hears him.

Go to www.prisonradio.org to hear Abu-Jamal's audio columns.

As ACLU files brief

Freedom sought for Lucasville Five

By Sharon Danann Cleveland

On Oct. 12, the American Civil Liberties Union filed a brief in U.S. District Court seeking a hearing for prison imam Siddique Abdullah Hasan, known in court documents as Carlos Sanders.

The ACLU brief was based on exhaustive research by advocate/attorney Staughton Lynd, who has also written a book about the events, "Lucasville: The Untold Story of a Prison Uprising," from which much of the information in this article is taken.

Hasan had been convicted and sentenced to death on the testimony of an inmate who stated that Hasan had been responsible for the decision to kill a guard during the April 1993 rebellion at the state prison in Lucasville, Ohio. That alleged witness has since recanted his testimony against Hasan.

The prosecution had threatened him with a heavier sentence, including a possible death sentence, if he did not change the facts as he observed them at the time of the siege to put the blame on Hasan instead. The prosecution knowingly based its case on perjured testimony. Lynd presents compelling evidence that Hasan was framed.

In addition to Hasan, four other men were given the death penalty for their roles as leaders and spokespersons during the rebellion. Hasan's case is the closest to exhausting its appeals.

Justice requires that the convictions be overturned and that Hasan and his brothers walk free.

Prior to the rebellion, overcrowding was making the prison a pressure cooker. Lucasville was designed to hold 1,540 inmates. When the uprising began, there were 1,820, with 820 "double celled," including 75 percent of the highest security level prisoners.

According to findings of an investigation at the prison, the Southern Ohio Correctional Facility, "double celling of the inmate population was voiced by a vast majority of both staff and inmates as a cause of the disturbance." In addition, one of the Lucasville Five, Keith Lamar, recalls that the warden had scrapped all the educational and



S.A. Hasan

other positive programs.

Lynd quotes testimony of prisoners that guards beat prisoners to death, and that weapons and fights among inmates were common in Lucasville.

Shortly before the uprising, Hasan was a spokesperson for the Sunni Muslim prisoners on the issue of TB tests. In one type of test, an injection is used that contains phenol, an alcohol. Alcohol is prohibited by the Sunni Muslim faith.

The Muslims were willing to undergo chest X-rays, sputum analysis and urinalysis, all of which are actually more specific for active TB. But the Lucasville prison warden was prepared to go ahead with a plan in which Muslim prisoners would be forcibly given the injection-style TB test. This was to happen on a Monday. The uprising took place the day before.

Mumia: 'They did not betray each other'

In negotiations with the prison administration during the 11-day siege, Hasan represented the Sunni Muslims; George Skatzes and Jason RobbspokefortheAryanBrotherhood. Racial divisions were set aside and convict unity was forged, resulting in a negotiated settlement.

Death row journalist Mumia Abu-Jamal has written about the Lucasville Five: "They rose above their status as prisoners, and became, for a few days in April 1993, what rebels in Attica had demanded a generation before them: men. As such, they did not betray each other; they did not dishonor each other; they reached beyond their prison 'tribes' to reach commonality."

Hasan and Namir Abdul Mateen, also known as James Were, were tried in Hamilton County, the county that includes Cincinnati, even though they were indicted in another county. Professor James Liebman of Columbia

University, in a study of serious reversible error in capital cases, states that Hamilton County has "the seventh highest death-sentencing rate in the nation among relatively populous counties. Hamilton County has twice the death sentencing rate of Cuyahoga County (Cleveland) and the state as a whole, and nearly three times the death sentencing rate of Franklin County (Columbus)."

Cincinnati is notorious for its racism. The killing of young Black men by Cincinnati police officers resulted in a Justice Department investigation. It was a hostile venue for the defendants. In addition, the judge did not allow testimony on prison conditions that may have caused the uprising.

Immediately after the Lucasville uprising, a new category of prisoners was created: "high maximum security." The Lucasville Five were among the first inmates to be transferred to a brand-new supermax prison in Youngstown, Ohio.

A death row cell there is the size of a parking space for a compact car. The door is solid steel, not bars. Inmates spend 23 hours a day in their cells. Even so, the prisoners managed to grab some of the guards and stage a small uprising. The SWAT team that responded beat Robb until his skull was fractured and he wasn't recognizable, except by his tattoos.

Youngstown, now part of the "Rust Belt," is home to a cluster of new prisons. The plan is: demolish the steel mills, throw the workers in jail, and hire other former steelworkers to be the guards.

A campaign to free the Lucasville Five is building.

Messages of solidarity can be sent, along with stamps and envelopes to facilitate responses, to S.A. Hasan (#R130-559), Keith Lamar (#317-117), Jason Robb (#308-919) and James Were (#173-245) at the Ohio State Penitentiary, 878 Coitsville-Hubbard Rd., Youngstown, OH 44505-4635.

And to George Skatzes (#173-501), P.O. Box 788, Mansfield, OH 44901-0788.

Hasan is co-sponsor of the Web site prisonersolidarity.org and also has a Web site at www.ohiodeathrow.com/carlos_sanders.htm.

Keith Lamar has written a book, "Condemned," which can be obtained from him at the address above. □

An update from Mumia's legal counsel

Dear friends:

Pursuant to a recent order of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Third Circuit, Philadelphia, the 4th-Step Reply Brief will be filed Oct. 23, 2006, on behalf of Mumia Abu-Jamal. Our objective is to win a new and fair trial in this case. At the conclusion of the retrial, I want my client to walk out of the courtroom a free person. We are grateful for your support in this great struggle against the death penalty and justice.

Thank you for your support in this struggle for human rights.

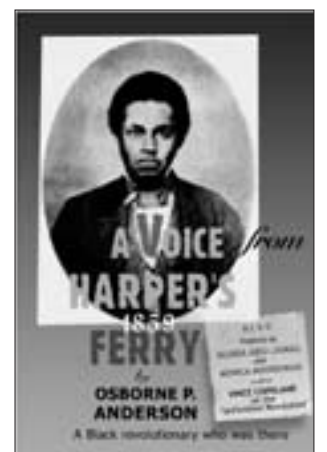
With best wishes,

Robert R. Bryan

Law Offices of Robert R. Bryan, 2088 Union St., Suite 4, San Francisco, Calif. 94123

Lead counsel for Mumia Abu-Jamal

Go to www.millions4mumia.org for the latest legal briefs.



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

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Abu Ghraib in New Jersey

Prisoners begin hunger strike

By Monica Moorehead

Prisoners at New Jersey State Prison in Trenton, N.J., began a hunger strike on Oct. 12 in protest against horrendous conditions inside the walls. The struggle has gotten very little attention in the corporate media but deserves both national and international support. An estimated 1,400 inmates housed in general population are participating in the hunger strike.

According to a press release sent out by the People's Organization for Progress (POP), a long-active community group based in Newark, N.J., the prisoners are demanding an end to the brutality they face day in and day out from the guards as well as a halt to eliminating and/or cutting back rehabilitative, educational, recreational and religious programs. The prisoners requested that POP help present their demands during any negotiations with Department of Corrections officials.

The hunger strike was motivated by lockdowns of the prison in May and December 2005 and in June, July and August 2006—the last one for a whole month. During the lockdowns, prisoners were denied any legal access, laundry services, and yard or other opportunities for recreation.

The prisoners have compared their conditions, especially during these lockdowns, to Abu Ghraib, the notorious prison where Iraqi detainees were tortured and humiliated by the U.S. military.

At the New Jersey prison, half-naked inmates were forced to run the gauntlet of not only intimidating guards but also barking dogs. The inmates say their property was either damaged or destroyed during the lockdowns.

The prisoners have presented 16 demands to prison authorities:

1) That a person or persons independent of Department of Corrections (DOC) influence aggressively investigate the circumstances leading to the prisonwide searches in 2006 and 2005 and the manner in which the searches were conducted.

2) That corrective measures be taken based on the results of the investigation called for in [demand no.] 1, including discipline of any DOC staff member responsible for introducing contraband into the prison.

3) That discipline be imposed on anyone for misconduct during the searches.

4) That area, unit, and cell searches be conducted in a professional manner, with respect and due regard for an inmate's person, property, and living space and for the property of and space allotted to inmate.

5) That there will be accountability for theft, damage to property, or other misconduct during searches.

6) That a person or persons independent of DOC influence be allowed to inspect searched areas to ensure that inmates' rights are protected.

7) That there be an evening and weekend program and activity schedule, to include school, vocational, legal access and recreation activities.

8) That the previous daytime recreation schedule be reinstated.

9) That all inmate groups be reopened or restored to full functioning capacity, which includes opportunities to meet and to conduct group activities. **10)** That any inmate removed from an assignment without good cause be reinstated, with good cause defined as conduct by the inmate being removed from the assignment that violates prison rules or makes

the inmate unsuitable for the particular job assignment.

11) That there is an annual or other periodic cost-of-living increase in wages for prison jobs and program assignments.

12) That a reliable phone system be installed.

13) That the ban on retention and possession of hardcover books be repealed.

14) That laundry services, recreation opportunities, legal access and phone privileges be made available during any and all lockdowns.

15) That a diverse body, to include prison administrative officials and members of the legal profession and civil rights groups, with input from inmates and relevant experts, be formed to propose and implement programs and policy at New Jersey State Prison and other prisons under the control of the DOC that encourages rehabilitation and reintegration into the community.

16) That amnesty be granted to all participants in the hunger strike.

On Oct. 13, five POP representatives, including the chair, Lawrence Hamm, met with Department of Corrections Acting Commissioner George Hayman at his office to discuss the prisoners' demands.

After the meeting, Hamm stated, "We met with the commissioner and his staff for more than two hours. We have begun a dialog on the prisoners' demands that we will attempt to continue."

Hamm told WW that whether the hunger strike ends sooner or later, it is crucial that the word get out about the inhumane conditions that led to the hunger strike and that everyone should both call and write Hayman to strongly urge the implementation of the prisoners' just demands.

Write to Acting Commissioner George Hayman, Department of Corrections, Whittlesey Road, P.O. Box 863, Trenton, NJ 08625-0863 and call his office at 609-292-4036.

E-mail mmoorehead@workers.org

Lynne Stewart sentencing

'A victory for the movement'

By Monica Moorehead
New York

A political victory was won on Oct. 16 when long-time civil rights attorney Lynne Stewart was given a 28-month prison sentence by a Manhattan federal judge. The Bush administration, through its prosecutors, had been pushing for the maximum sentence of 30 years in prison.

Hundreds of Stewart's political supporters from around the country gathered outside the New York City courtroom before and during the sentencing, demanding that she not be given any prison time at all, especially after her recent struggle with breast cancer. Holding up signs and banners, they chanted, "Free Lynne, Free Lynne!" as she went into the courtroom.

U.S. District Judge John G. Koeltl, who presided over the proceedings, told Stewart that she would be allowed to stay out of prison while she appeals her conviction. The appeals process could take at least a year, if not more. In the meantime, she has been barred from practicing law.

Thousands of letters supporting Stewart were reportedly sent to the judge before the sentencing.

Stewart was found guilty on Feb. 10, 2005, of helping a former client, Omar Abdel-Rahman—a blind Egyptian Islamic cleric sentenced to life for plotting to blow up New York City landmarks—to commu-



PHOTO: ROBERTO MERCADO

Lynne Stewart, right, with her spouse Ralph Pointer, left, leads a march of supporters as they walked to the federal court room on Oct. 16.

nicate with his followers on the outside. Abdel-Rahman had been labeled a "terrorist" under the repressive U.S. Patriot Act, which was passed following the 9/11 attacks on the World Trade Center in 2001.

This racist legislation has legally sanctioned the outright political persecution of thousands of Arabs and South Asians by the U.S. government, resulting in long periods of jail time without charges and trials as well as massive deportations.

Stewart's co-defendant, Ahmed Abdel Sattar, formerly a postal worker in Staten Island, received a 24-year prison sentence. Mohamed Yousry, an Arabic translator Stewart depended on for translating between herself and Abdel-Rahman, was sentenced to 20 months in prison.

When Stewart was first arrested in 2002, it was John Ashcroft, the notorious former U.S. attorney general, who publicly read the charges against her. Her arrest was meant to send a clear message to all progressive lawyers not to energetically represent any Arab, South Asian or Muslim whom this government painted as a "threat" to the national security of the U.S.

Many activists are convinced, and understandably so, that the U.S. government wanted to make an example of Stewart because of her consistent, and in many cases successful, legal defense of poor and oppressed peoples for the past


30 years.

She had represented, among other people, David Gilbert of the Weather Underground; Richard Williams of the United Freedom Front; Larry Davis, acquitted by reason of self-defense of the attempted murder of New York City police officers; Sekou Odinga of the Black Liberation Army; and Nasser Ahmed, released after being imprisoned for over three years on non-existent "secret evidence."


Before her sentencing, a number of solidarity meetings were held for Stewart in New York. These included an Oct. 12 cultural event at Solidarity Center sponsored by the International Action Center; an event in Harlem on Oct. 13 that included an array of speakers representing the Black and Latin@ movements, and a meeting at Riverside Church on Oct. 15. Stewart attended every one of these events, where many of the African American speakers compared her to the historic anti-slavery fighter John Brown.

In response to her sentencing, Stewart stated that it was "a victory for doing good work all one's life. You get time off for good behavior usually at the end of your prison term. I got it at the beginning." Stewart also said she hoped to once again be able to work in court on behalf of defendants, as she had done for 30 years. □

**A QUARTER CENTURY STOLEN!
MUMIA MUST BE FREE!**



This December 9th marks 25 years since the Philadelphia police beat and shot Mumia, nearly to death. It marks a quarter century that he has spent on death row despite innocence. Mumia's struggle for justice has unified international movements against racism, sexism, and war. His life is in more danger now than ever. Unite with us and take a stand for justice!



**Saturday, December 9th, 2006
Philadelphia City Hall at 12 Noon
We need you there to take a stand for freedom!**

International Concerned Family and Friends of Mumia Abu-Jamal
215-476-8812 www.MUMIA.org ICFFMAJ@aol.com

Iraq: Top British general wants to 'cut and run'

By Robert Dobrow

The British Army "could break" if it's kept too long in Iraq, according to the top military officer in Britain. Gen. Sir Richard Dannatt made his comments after an exclusive interview with the Daily Mail, under the front-page banner headline, "We must quit Iraq says new head of the army." British troops, he said, should "get ourselves out some time soon because our presence exacerbates the security problems."

The statement was a stunning blow to the Tony Blair government and set off alarm bells in Washington. According to the British Observer, a few hours after the general's interview was made public the U.K. Ministry of Defense received a phone call from the U.S. Embassy. "As you Brits say, what the f—k is going on?" hissed the diplomat.

Britain has 7,200 troops in Iraq and is the only significant enlistee in Washington's ridiculously named "coalition of the willing." If British forces were to pull out of Iraq it would be a huge political blow to Bush's push to "stay the course."

The day after the Mail interview, both the White House and Downing Street were in full damage control, claiming in

unison that the general's words had been "taken out of context." Even Sir Richard himself backed off some by stating that his comments did not represent a split with the government.

But the British capitalist press has been near unanimous that the episode is a huge political crisis for the Blair administration. A commentary in The Observer speculates that "This crisis could change our relationship with the U.S."

The general, a veteran of British missions in Ireland, Bosnia, and Afghanistan, was, of course, not speaking out of sympathy for the Iraqi people or remorse for the more than half a million Iraqi civilians who have died since the onset of the U.S.-British invasion. His concern is for British imperialist interests and his fear is that the British military is overstretched and so bogged down in Iraq as to threaten its "commitments" elsewhere.

For instance, just one day after the general's interview it was reported by The Independent that British forces in Afghanistan are so short of helicopters that the Ministry of Defense is "being forced to scour the world for civilian aircraft to support its troops. ... When U.K. commanders asked for temporary deployment of U.S. helicopters in Afghanistan, they were told

there were none to spare."

Class truth with regard to the general's message was poetically expressed by a British soldier stationed in southern Iraq. As told by Britain's Guardian: "Inside the army base yesterday, a tall, thin, 20-something private was preparing his Warrior for a patrol into the city centre. His camouflaged uniform has long since faded under the scorching sun, and his flak jacket was covered with grease. The private, who has been in Iraq for five months, and has a few weeks to go before being relieved, was unimpressed by the general's comments. 'He's just saying this because he wants to take us to another f—king war, in Afghanistan or somewhere else,' he said. 'He doesn't care.'"

U.S. killed British journalist

British readers also learned last week that a coroner in London ruled that U.S. forces unlawfully killed a popular British television journalist in the opening days of the Iraq war. Veteran ITN reporter Terry Lloyd died, according to the coroner, "following a gunshot wound to the head. The evidence this bullet was fired by the Americans is overwhelming."

Witnesses testified during the week-long inquest that Lloyd, who was inter-

viewing civilians about their reaction to the invasion, was first shot in the back by Iraqi soldiers when caught in crossfire between Iraqi and U.S. troops. A ballistics expert said he could have survived with rapid medical treatment. But U.S. troops then started firing at the clearly marked TV buses driven by the ITN team. Lloyd was killed when he was hit in the head by a U.S. bullet as he was being taken for medical treatment by an Iraqi civilian.

"I have no doubt," said the coroner, "it was the fact that the vehicle stopped to pick up survivors that prompted the Americans to fire on that vehicle."

The National Union of Journalists said Lloyd's killing was a "war crime." This was echoed by Lloyd's widow, Lynn Lloyd, who called the killing "a despicable, deliberate, vengeful act."

Lloyd was one of the few Western journalists covering the Iraq war as a "unilateral" reporter rather than being "embedded" with U.K. or U.S. forces and subject to military censorship.

The Pentagon responded to the London coroner's inquest by stating that its own investigation exonerating U.S. forces "was completed in May 2003" and offering that it was "an unfortunate reality that journalists have died in Iraq." □

Human cost of U.S. invasion of Iraq revealed

By Hillel Cohen

A scientific article just published in the prestigious British medical journal, The Lancet, reports that the Iraqi death rate more than doubled for the period after the U.S. invasion in March 2003 compared to the period before, starting from January 2002. This led to an estimate that over 650,000 have died because of the invasion and occupation. Of these an estimated 600,000 were violent deaths.

These estimates far exceed the numbers that have been put forward by the U.S.-installed Iraqi government or by private organizations, including Iraq Body Count. While the earlier "counts" were based on highly selective, partial accounts, the Lancet study is based on systematic and rigorous survey and sampling methods that are widely used in public-health research.

Not surprisingly, the Bush administration has attacked the report as unreliable and exaggerated, with Bush himself saying, "It's not credible." The huge cost in Iraqi lives makes clear that the Bush administration, the Pentagon, the war profiteers like Halliburton and General Electric that support them and all the politicians and pundits that went along with the war are guilty of carrying out or supporting an enormous war crime. Since Bush promoted the criminal invasion with outright lies about non-existent weapons of mass destruction and false links of Iraq to 9/11, his credentials as an expert on credibility can hardly be taken seriously. However, some others without such obvious bias have also critiqued the study estimates.

Most attention has been given to the 650,000 number which the study authors present as the most likely specific number (known as a point estimate), within a range of 390,000 to 940,000 where the

true number is likely to fall (known as a 95 percent confidence interval).

It is well known that any study that tries to estimate a large number, whether by counting or sampling, is subject to error. Even the U.S. Census, which expends huge resources to count all U.S. inhabitants, is widely believed to systematically undercount residents of poor communities and the undocumented. Election polls based on survey and sampling techniques often get the wrong answer.

Carrying out a systematic population survey in the chaotic, dangerous conditions of occupied Iraq is an enormous and difficult project. In the article, the authors acknowledge the limitations of their work and the possibility of error, but also present the detailed methods that indicate their estimate is likely to be as good an approximation as can be done under such circumstances.

Funding for the study was provided by the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT). Three of the study authors are affiliated with the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health and one with the School of Medicine of Al Mustansiriyah University. The authors had previously published a report estimating 100,000 excess deaths after the first 18 months of the invasion. This later study was based on a substantially larger sample.

The investigators randomly selected "clusters" of households (based on street and block locations within each of Iraq's provinces proportional to the populations of those provinces as estimated by the Iraqi government Planning Ministry). Doctors fluent in both Arabic and English interviewed the households selected and asked who from that household had died during the study periods before and after the March 2003 invasion. A sample of 1849 households was interviewed.

Investigators were shown death certificates for 80 percent of the 629 reported deaths and over 98 percent of the sampled households responded. These are very high response rates. The investigators also took into account the clustering sampling method when making their statistical calculations to estimate the population numbers. These methods are much more likely to get a valid estimate than counting up haphazard, sporadic accounts from reporters or even morgues.

Four important aspects of the report have been largely overlooked. Critics point out that estimating large population numbers from relatively small samples can be seriously distorted by errors in the population estimates for the provinces and if the selection process did not yield a representative sample. However, the estimates of pre- and post-invasion death rates (the number who died per 1,000 per year), and particularly the relative rate, are much less susceptible to that problem.

These investigators report that overall the average rate more than doubled, from 5.5 per 1000 per year before to 13.3 per 1000 per year after the invasion; this average includes a doubling from the 2004-2005 rate of 10.9 to the 2005-2006 rate of 19.8. Even more important is that the base rate used for comparison already includes a very big increased mortality that had been taking place for the 13 years of sanctions that lasted from 1990 through 2003.

These sanctions spanned the first U.S. war against Iraq under Bush's father George H.W. Bush, and continued through both Clinton terms and the first two years of the current Bush administration. U.N. agencies and others have estimated that between 500,000 and 1,500,000 died from the sanctions prior to the 2003 invasion. These deaths were primarily due to

disease, contaminated water, destroyed sanitation and sewage and inadequate food and medicine supplies, and were mostly among newborns, young children and the elderly.

The current excess deaths, in contrast, are predominantly by violence (gunshots and bombings) and mostly among young adult males. The health emergency that started during the sanctions and that has affected the youngest and oldest, continues, and has even increased as indicated by the current study's estimate of non-violent excess deaths that are over and above those of the period in the midst of the sanctions.

Thirdly, these estimates are only regarding deaths. The very large number of people who have been severely maimed and psychologically scarred has not even been estimated. While some attention has been given to Gulf War Syndrome-type illnesses of returning U.S. veterans with evidence of illness from unknown environmental exposures, the impact of the environmental disaster of the war and the sanctions on the people of Iraq has not been estimated. Finally, it is also quite possible that the current study underestimates the true mortality total.

No matter what that true numbers are, what is very, very clear is that hundreds of thousands of Iraqi people, mostly non-combatants, have died and even more have suffered due to the criminal invasion and occupation by the U.S., Britain and their imperialist allies. What remains to be seen is how these war criminals will be held accountable.

The complete text of the Lancet study can be seen online at: www.thelancet.com

Hillel Cohen is an epidemiologist and doctor of public health.

Security Council imposes vicious sanctions on DPRK

By Fred Goldstein

The United Nations Security Council has voted 15-0 to impose draconian sanctions upon the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) in retaliation for its nuclear test of Oct. 9. The sanctions resolution was piloted through the Security Council by the U.S. government, which has 10,000 nuclear warheads and is the only power ever to use nuclear weapons in warfare.

The sanctions violate the United Nations Charter, which recognizes the right of nations to self-defense against aggression or intended aggression. Washington has been threatening the DPRK with nuclear attack since its 1950-53 war in Korea. The testing and development of a nuclear bomb by the DPRK has taken place strictly within the framework of unrelenting threats by Washington.

Most recently the Bush administration referred to the DPRK as part of an "axis of evil," threatened the government of North Korea with "regime change," and authorized the Pentagon in 2002 to develop "flexible plans" to use nuclear weapons against non-nuclear states, including the DPRK, as well as authorizing first-strike nuclear use. Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld threatened the DPRK with nuclear attack in 2003. And the Pentagon also began developing a new generation of "bunker-buster" nuclear warheads aimed at underground facilities in the DPRK and Iran.

Another part of Bush's "axis of evil," Iraq, was also threatened with "regime change" after Sept. 11, and the Pentagon invaded and overthrew the government of Saddam Hussein. Iran is also under constant military and economic threat from Washington.

The Clinton administration twice threatened the DPRK with nuclear war—once in 1993 when the government in Pyongyang said it might leave the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) in response to demands that it permit intrusive inspections by the International Atomic Energy Agency.

The Clinton administration was only prevented from launching an attack on North Korean nuclear installations by last-minute negotiations between former President Jimmy Carter and then North Korean leader Kim Il Sung. Clinton carried out mock nuclear exercises against the DPRK in 1998.

Right now the Pentagon has nuclear-armed submarines and guided missile destroyers in the sea off the Korean peninsula and nuclear-capable bombers on the island of Guam. The U.S. carries out military exercises on a regular basis that are open practice for war against the DPRK.

The big business media has called the government of North Korea "paranoid" and "irrational." Paranoid means seeing threats that are not there. Irrational means doing things that don't make sense. The threat of nuclear attack from the U.S. government is clearly there and has been for years. Thus it makes sense to try to develop a deterrent against a known threat.

Sanctions resolution 'A declaration of war'

The DPRK has declared before the U.N. that "The resolution cannot be construed otherwise than a declaration of war." In fact, the sanctions resolution violates the U.N. Charter, which forbids acts of aggression and protects the right of sovereignty of nations.

It is said that the governments of China and Russia negotiated with Washington to moderate the language of the final resolution, making it less threatening and aggressive.

From the point of view of unrestrained great-power chauvinism and imperialist arrogance, the sanctions resolution can perhaps be regarded as "moderated" from its original more stringent requirements. But from the point of view of the DPRK, the sanctions laid out in the resolution can only be regarded as an attack upon its economic and military survival and its very sovereignty as a nation. The resolution is filled with high-handed dictates in the language of colonialism.

It "demands" that the DPRK stop any further nuclear tests or ballistic missile launches. It "decides that the DPRK shall suspend all activities related to its ballistic missile program" and that it "shall abandon all nuclear weapons and existing nuclear programs in a complete, verifiable and irreversible manner."

But it does not stop there. Section 8 of the resolution, among other things, decides that "all member states" will prevent the "supply, sale or transfer to the DPRK" of "any battle tanks, armored combat vehicles, large caliber artillery systems, combat aircraft, attack helicopters, warships, missiles or missile systems ... or related material including spare parts." It further calls for the prevention of any "technical training, advice services or assistance related to the provision, manufacture or use" of all military items specified.

This amounts to an order to undermine the entire military establishment of the DPRK precisely when it is threatened with war.

It calls for all member states to "freeze immediately the funds, other financial assets and economic resources which are on their territories... that are owned or controlled, directly or indirectly by persons or entities ... engaged in or providing support for" nuclear weapons or ballistic missile programs and to "prevent any funds being made available" to those parties.

It requires that all member states "shall take the necessary steps to prevent the entry into or transit through their territories of the persons designated ... as being responsible for, including through supporting or promoting, DPRK policies in relation to the DPRK's nuclear-related, ballistic missile-related ... programs, together with their family members."

This provision virtually forbids every government official, party leader, or military personnel and their families from traveling, subject to approval by the "great powers."

And it calls for the search of all cargo going into or out of the DPRK. This demand for other countries to search DPRK cargo can, by itself, be considered a demand for acts of war.

No threat from Korea

The latest hysteria being drummed up by the Bush administration and the capitalist media is the so-called "threat" by the DPRK to conduct a second nuclear test. They are all acting as if the DPRK were threatening the people of the U.S.

Unlike the Bush administration, the DPRK has pledged not to be the first to use a nuclear weapon. In other words, the nuclear weapons program of the DPRK is strictly a retaliatory deterrent directed against a potential nuclear attack by Washington, and nothing else. It is also

military logic that the DPRK is not going to initiate a nuclear war with the imperialist power that has enough nuclear weapons to wipe out a good part of the world.

The only "threat" caused by the DPRK's nuclear testing is the threat to the nuclear ambitions of U.S. imperialism in Asia and the threat to its ability to wage "preventive warfare" and to carry out "regime change" in the DPRK—a goal which it has had for years and which was intensified after the collapse of the Soviet Union and the Eastern European socialist countries.

The DPRK has already experienced one war, led by the United States, in which 4 million Koreans were killed and every village, town and city in the country was reduced to rubble. The DPRK came under attack then for the same reason it is coming under attack now: It is a socialist country that refuses to bow down to imperialism.

Korea was divided by Washington after World War II. The Korean liberation forces led by Kim Il Sung had driven the Japanese imperialists out of Korea, ending 35 years of brutal Japanese colonization. But the south was occupied by U.S. troops, who then were armed to the teeth by the Pentagon in preparation for war with the socialist revolutionaries in the north.

The government of the DPRK, set up in 1948, has time and again offered the basis

The sanctions attack the DPRK's economic and military survival and its national sovereignty.

for overcoming the crisis. They have put forward the demands for recognition of their sovereignty, for guarantees against attacks by Washington, for normalization of relations with the U.S., including signing a peace treaty to formally put an end to the Korean War. The DPRK has repeatedly put forward proposals for the denuclearization of the Korean peninsula and the region around it.

Instead, Washington has only increased its threats and arrogant and bullying demands aimed at increasing tensions. It has forced the DPRK into a corner, where it has to submit to imperialist bullying or fight for its life. The DPRK has chosen to fight in self-defense for national salvation. It is the U.S. government that is the real threat to peace and international stability on the Korean peninsula. □



Los Angeles rally against sanctions on Korea.

PHOTOS: MINJOK TONGSHIN

Activists demand 'Hands off Korea!'

Protests were held on both U.S. coasts from Oct. 11-12 in support of the people of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and against sanctions being championed in the U.N. by the U.S.

A press conference was held on Oct. 12 at the federal building in downtown Los Angeles, initiated by Korean Americans for Peace, Korea Truth Commission (KTC), International Action Center (IAC) and Bayan USA.

Leaders from the Korean community plus a member of the FMLN of El Salvador who was tortured by U.S.-supported death squads and members of the Los Angeles IAC all spoke.

Each speaker affirmed the right of the DPRK to self-defense in the face of a history of aggression, constant threats of sanctions, military assault and the threat of a nuclear assault from the U.S.

Later in the day there was a spirited rally demanding "Hands Off Korea!" The protesters joined with others who mount a weekly protest denouncing the war in Iraq.

In New York, a demonstration organized by Nodutdol for Korean Community Development, KTC and the IAC was



WW PHOTO: JUDY GREENSPAN

John Parker from the International Action Center speaking at Los Angeles rally.

held near the United Nations building on Oct. 11.

David Sole, a Green Party candidate in Michigan for the U.S. Senate and a Workers World Party member, issued a statement demanding the U.S. respect North Korea's sovereignty, stating, "The present crisis arises directly out of the implacable hostility of the U.S. imperialist government to the socialist government of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea." The full statement can be read at www.stopthewarslate.org.

—Larry Hales



Korea: What to do

For those who are internationalists, especially those who believe that Lenin made a vital contribution to understanding the nature of imperialism, there is no escaping the seriousness of the threats against the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the danger of a new war against the DPRK. The very existence of one of the remaining socialist states is at risk. Our comrades are under attack. The question, then, is what to do about it.

The first step is to prepare those organizations and individuals who already are aware of the oppressive role of the U.S. imperialist government—prepare them ideologically, politically and, if possible, organizationally—to expose and confront Washington's lies and threats. An important part of this process is to publicly express solidarity with the people and the government of the DPRK, who are under enormous economic, diplomatic and military pressure from imperialism.

Bear in mind that the current goal of U.S. diplomacy is to isolate the DPRK. Statements, public meetings and public protests against the aggressive U.S. policy and in solidarity with the DPRK are on the order of the day.

The second step is to prepare the working-class movement, the anti-war movement and, as much as possible, the population for the possibility that this

new crisis can give Japan the excuse to further militarize, and even to the possibility of imperialist military aggression against the DPRK. Some may argue that the great sacrifices of the Iraqi resistance fighters have complicated the war plans of the Bush administration and made any new military adventures extremely risky. True. But these increased risks have not changed the nature of imperialism as an aggressive and unstable system that drives the imperialist states to war.

Even if some consider war unlikely, it cannot be ignored by those who want to prepare the forces that will combat aggression. They should be very clear that the imperialists are causing the war and that the workers and oppressed should be on the side of the DPRK.

Such steps, outlined above, are the responsibility of the workers' and communist movement worldwide and should be supported by all those wanting to avert new aggressive moves from Washington and its allies against North Korea. That movement is encouraged by seeing the strong statements of solidarity from the Communist Party of the Philippines, the Socialist Unity Center of India, Workers World Party in the U.S., and other communist and workers' parties as well as anti-imperialist groups that are in solidarity with the DPRK's attempt to defend its sovereignty and its socialist system. □

Antiwar slate runs grassroots campaign

Continued from page 3

and full legal rights for all immigrants. And both candidates repeated the failed 'trickle down economics' calling for tax breaks for big business to protect jobs. I call for an immediate moratorium on all plant closings and layoffs and a public works program to rebuild our cities, a shorter work week, a \$15 hour minimum wage and elimination of corporate bankruptcy laws which allow companies to use bankruptcy to eliminate workers' pensions."

The campaign and supporters will protest on Oct. 18 outside a candidates' debate for Stabenow and Bouchard sponsored by the Detroit Economic Club, where Sole is again fighting exclusion.

The complicity of the corporate media in ignoring candidates besides Democrats and Republicans has been exposed by the Stop the War Slate. Interviews are granted grudgingly, and campaign activists have to search hard to find evidence that they occurred.

Breakthroughs in alternative media

However, the Michigan Citizen, a progressive African-American community weekly newspaper, printed a front-page article and photo on Sole's antiwar campaign in its latest issue. The Metro Times, a free weekly, interviewed Sole after his campaign manager called to complain that a story on progressive candidates ignored the Green Party.

Sole appeared on the talk radio show "Fighting for Justice" and is scheduled for an interview with WDET, Detroit's public radio station. At Michigan State University, the student paper interviewed Sole when he campaigned with MSU stu-

dent and Board of Trustees candidate Lauren Spencer.

Sole recently received an e-mail from an active-duty technician in the U.S. Navy stationed in Virginia Beach, Va. The message read in part, "I just filled out my Michigan absentee ballot, and I want to let you know that you received my vote for the Senate race. I am a small minority in this conservative military town, and the people I know from back home in Michigan are likewise very conservative, so it is relieving to find a candidate who shares my strong antiwar views. Good luck with your campaign, and I hope you are able to make an impact on people's minds."

Sole recently taped a telephone message to U.S. soldiers, their families and U.S. citizens outside the country—a potential 6 million voters—for the Department of Defense Voting Information Center. By calling 800-438-8683 and following the many prompts, GIs can hear a message from Sole: "I am the only candidate for U.S. Senate who calls for the immediate withdrawal of U.S. troops from Iraq, who says that no more lives should be lost on behalf of the oil companies and giant contracting corporations."

Other exciting news for the Stop the War Slate was the endorsement of Lauren Spencer for MSU Trustee from Between the Lines, Michigan's weekly newspaper for the lesbian, gay, bi and trans communities.

For more information on Stop the War Slate and Green Party candidates, visit www.stopthewarslate.org, www.migreens.org, or e-mail campaign@stopthewarslate.org. Donations can be made to Sole for Senate Campaign, 5922 Second Ave., Detroit, MI 48202. □

NEPAL

Revolutionaries stronger, demand end to monarchy

By David Hoskins

The fourth meeting in a series of summit talks ended in a stalemate between the revolutionaries led by the Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist) and the ruling seven-party alliance. The two sides were unable to reach agreement on the question of arms management and the future of Nepal's monarchy.

Further talks were postponed indefinitely as a CPN(M) negotiating team leader, Dev Gurung, stated that agreement could not be reached because the seven parties were still under the influence of "pro-palace and foreign elements."

The CPN(M) has fought a popular revolution since 1996 to end Nepal's autocratic monarchy and establish a democratic people's republic. Popular protests led by an alliance of the CPN(M) and the seven parties ended the absolute rule of Nepal's King Gyanendra in April of this year.

The seven parties now appear ready to compromise on this vital issue despite popular sentiment against the king.

The CPN(M) reaffirmed its approach toward negotiations at a recent central committee meeting that called for the abolishment of the monarchy and an immediate declaration of a republic. The central committee also proposed that the current parliament be dissolved and replaced with a new system made up of forces from the people's movement.

On the issue of arms management the committee reiterated its stance that both the Nepal Army and People's Army be confined to their respective barracks and their arms monitored as the political process moves forward.

The revolutionaries have pointed out that they can not unilaterally give up their arms while the reactionary state remains armed with royalist elements in key positions inside the Nepal Army.

Additionally, small royalist parties such as the Nepal Janatantrik Party have threatened to arm vigilante groups to carry out a "sabotage programme from mid-December to mid-February" in support of the king.

Revolutionaries win popular support

The fact that the revolutionaries are well-organized and greatly respected by the masses can hardly be denied. Even some in the capitalist-controlled press have conceded that no other political organization in Nepal enjoys the level of organization and broad support as the CPN(M).

A recent article in The Economist details how the parallel government established by the revolutionaries is growing stronger while the old state seems paralyzed and unable to provide even basic services.

People's Courts administer justice in part by resolving property disputes and taking action against men who take multiple wives. Polygamy is deeply rooted in Nepal's feudal system and often involves forcing young women to marry older men against their will.

People have little faith in the old government courts as these are riddled with corruption and justice is often delayed several years if obtained at all.

CPN(M) Chairman Prachanda has been described as the most popular politician in the country. This designation makes sense, especially since the revolutionaries collect taxes from businesses and wealthy landowners and use these funds to administer relief to victims of flooding and provide healthcare for the masses.

Meanwhile the politicians associated with the ruling seven-party alliance have spent much time sidetracked with infighting and are unable or uninterested in lifting the standard of living for Nepal's workers and peasants. □

MUNDO OBRERO

La planta Smithfield

Continúa a página 12

accidentes ocurrieron en la casa o fuera del trabajo.

Smithfield trata de dividir a l@s trabajador@s

Carolina del Norte ha visto el incremento más dramático en el número de trabajador@s inmigrantes que ningún otro estado. En el año 2000, las cifras aumentaron un 274%, de 115.000 a 430.000; hoy son más de 500.000. Se estima que la mitad de la fuerza laboral de la planta es latina y un 40% africano-americana.

Los cambios demográficos, por supuesto, no han sido desaprovechados por los patronos de Smithfield. Ellos han estado llevando a cabo una campaña de racismo para dividir a l@s obrer@s. Ed Morrison, un trabajador africano-americano dijo: "Ellos tratan de dividir a la gente por razas. Amenazan a l@s inmigrantes y tratan de poner a l@s african@s-american@s en contra de l@s mexican@s. Todo para evitar que la gente se una para luchar por sus derechos."

Según testimonios ante la Junta Nacional de Relaciones Laborales, la Smithfield Packing sostuvo reuniones especiales con cada un@ de l@s trabajador@s mexican@s durante un intento anterior de sin-

dicalizar la compañía. Los representantes de la compañía dieron a entender que l@s trabajador@s inmigrantes serían despedid@s o deportad@s.

La compañía formó su propia agencia policial especial, la cual bajo la ley de Carolina del Norte, puede arrestar tanto dentro como fuera de los predios de la compañía. L@s trabajador@s african@s-american@s fueron amenazad@s, golpead@s y arrestad@s. Un gerente de la compañía dijo a un representante del sindicato "Yo quiero asegurarme que estés allí para (recibir) una buena paliza. Te vamos a dar una paliza... y tenemos algo especial para ti." (www.smithfieldjustice.com)

El sindicato UFCW y l@s trabajador@s están desafiando todo esto. Una campaña se está llevando a cabo para lograr un sindicato y terminar todo este abuso. Tod@s l@s trabajador@s debieran defender a l@s trabajador@s de la Smithfield, porque "Un ataque contra un@ es un ataque contra tod@s."

Sharon Black es una ex trabajadora en la industria de empaque y procesamiento de alimentos. Fue elegida como representante de la UFCW por 26 años y también fue parte de la Amalgamated Meatcutter Association antes de unirse a la UFCW.

Telesur interview

'The Al-Jazeera of South America'

By Eric Struch
Chicago

Telesur is a new, independent South American cable news network. It has been called "the Al-Jazeera of South America" by both its allies and enemies. The comparison is apt. It arose under the pressure of similar conditions in the media in South America.

Telesur is part of the project of Bolivarian regional integration. The president of Telesur, Andres Izarra, who is also the Venezuelan communications minister, said, "We're launching Telesur as an initiative to integrate through communication the different countries of the region. It's a window, so we can get to know each other better." (BBC online)

Telesur's vice president and general director, Uruguayan journalist Aram Aharonian, who was in Chicago for the Global Fusion media conference Sept. 28-30, described Telesur as "the first counter-hegemonic telecommunications project known in South America."

Telesur has been in the works for four years. Its first transmission was on July 25, 2005. By the end of this September, Telesur had more than 40 journalists working out of its home base in Caracas and in worldwide bureaus. Telesur is a joint venture of the Venezuelan, Bolivian and Argentinean governments.

According to Aharonian, the guidelines for the editorial content of the programming are to include "nothing (that is) against regional integration or the struggle against neoliberal globalization."

Telesur reaches between 3 million to 12 million viewers per day. In Aharonian's words, "Telesur is an alternative to the hegemonic television of the north. Telesur is not the goal; it is the tool that shows that something like this is possible, that in a decade we can have 10 or 15 Telesurs, that we can have a democratization of the media."

Workers World participated in an interview with Aharonian.

Workers World: On behalf of Workers World Party, I wanted to congratulate you and everybody else involved with Telesur on your success with the station. I know that you have a monthly magazine that's published in Caracas called "Question."

Aram Aharonian: We publish in Caracas and Buenos Aires, two editions of the same magazine. And we are trying to have a third edition in Europe and Spain now with "Question," our monthly magazine. We had a weekly economic magazine. It was a real good experience because we were talking about the new economy, not the traditional economy; the economy of the people; the solidarity economy.

What is your opinion of the role of the media in the wars the U.S. has waged recently? What sort of impact do you see Telesur having on the U.S.'s plans for both Venezuela and Colombia?

We know they needed a dictatorship to

impose their economic and political project, their imperialist project. Nowadays, they want to substitute, to change their military dictatorships for a media dictatorship. You have to remember that, back in 1991, Peter Arnett transmitted live in what we thought was the first Gulf war.

The media have been the most important missiles of the United States. In the case of Colombia and Venezuela, at this point, I don't believe there is a real possibility of confrontation, open confrontation. We insist that we are a TV station that assists in the process of the integration of Latin America.

We rescue the common ideals, our common values of all the countries of the continent, our shared reality. The national TV in Colombia, and most international TV, too, hides the reality, the reality of internal conflict in Colombia. We can show what happens with the campesino communities, with Indigenous communities there.

We are going to keep showing the reality, what really happens there. I don't believe there will be open, armed confrontation at this point, between the U.S. and Latin America. Of course, there are so many people who want it, the oligarchies and the foreign interests.

On the Telesur board, there are a lot of people who are very well known, people like Tariq Ali, Ernesto Cardenal ...

This is the advisory board, not the directors' board.

Danny Glover is also on the advisory board, and he made a comment, I think it might have been last year. He said, "I do not see any Afro-descendants from this region on this advisory body, nor Indigenous people, and very few women. It is critical that we keep in mind who we are talking to." To this President Chávez said, "Danny, I am with you." Has Telesur started to address this problem in any way?

AA: We know that the people exist, Indigenous people, Afro-descendants, whites, people of mixed heritage. Latin America is a mix of diversity. One thing that Telesur has put a lot of effort into is the non-discrimination policy against anyone. Perhaps at some point, we will show more documentaries on these minority issues, but we just don't get them; people don't send them.

We do not make documentaries. We receive documentaries from independent producers. For us it is so important to pay attention to Haiti. They had the first independent state in Latin America. It's so important for us that as the Republic of Colombo in Brazil, as the struggles now of the community of Buenaventura port in Ecuador, there are separate communities of Afro-Americans—in all the ports of America.

When he [Danny Glover] came to our first advisors' committee, he was working with us three days, three complete days, at the table, working, really working, with ideas, with experience. We had a great time. □

MUNDO OBRERO

Lucha de clases en Oaxaca, México

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didadas suman más de los \$300 millones.

Crisis para el estado

Esta increíble situación insostenible para el gobierno mexicano ocurre en medio de uno de los mayores escándalos políticos. Las elecciones presidenciales de julio estuvieron manchadas por el fraude y la corrupción. Todo indica que le robaron la elección para la presidencia al candidato popular Andrés Manuel López Obrador.

Pero el no fue a esconderse en los pasillos de los edificios gubernamentales. En cambio, se unió al movimiento de las masas. Desde julio millones de mexican@s han ocupado la Plaza Zócalo en el Distrito Federal y han llamado a un gobierno paralelo encabezado por López Obrador, el verdadero presidente del pueblo.

La militarización de Oaxaca

La situación en Oaxaca está muy tensa. Cada día la posibilidad de que las tropas federales puedan estar llamadas a romper el movimiento, se hace más real. La APPO se negó a ir a reuniones en la Ciudad de México el 4 de octubre, convocadas por el saliente presidente Vicente Fox. Ha habido tres intentos fallidos de negociación entre la APPO y el gobierno en los tres meses pasados.

Fox ha declarado que la crisis se acabará antes de que el nuevo presidente sea inaugurado el primero de diciembre.

El primero de octubre Prensa Latina comenzó a reportar que una fuerte concentración de tropas y provisiones militares estaba acercándose a la ciudad de Oaxaca. Unos aviones sobrevolaron la capital de Oaxaca y por lo menos 10 helicópteros Puma y dos vehículos aéreos de

transporte del Ejército Mexicano estaban estacionados en el helipuerto naval Salina Cruz en el aeropuerto internacional.

Según noticias emitidas por medios de difusión local, un número indeterminado de vehículos blindados, tanques y vehículos de cuatro tracciones han sido vistos, además de la Marina. La APPO considera que el movimiento de las tropas es prelude a la intervención federal.

El movimiento de tropas tiene lugar en un país cuya historia está llena de sangrientas represiones. La gente que está ocupando la plaza de Oaxaca sabe que sus vidas están en peligro.

"Compañeros, no queremos que nadie muera pero estamos listos para aceptar bajas si es así como lo quiere el gobierno," dijo un portavoz del movimiento en radio La Ley, la cual ha estado bajo el control de la APPO desde junio.

Por la Radio 710AM una voz agradable sale diciendo que todos deben mantenerse en calma, que hay 3.000 personas en cada barricada, que las tropas tienen más miedo que nosotr@s, que estamos en nuestra propia tierra y que ellos son los extranjeros aquí.

Los helicópteros están haciendo vuelos de reconocimiento y ciertamente están tratando de aterrorizar a l@s huelguistas. Una rueda de prensa a las 6:30 en el zócalo llamada por la APPO dijo virtualmente lo mismo: Estamos list@s. Manténganse calmad@s, no se dejen provocar.

Cuando aterrizaron los helicópteros la gente, armada con palos y tubos, gritó "¡Bienvenidos, cabrones!" "¡Bajen, aquí los esperamos!"

A las nueve de la noche del sábado 7 de octubre, la APPO cerró la zona histórica del centro, diciéndoles a las personas que

iban camino a sus casas que pasaran lo más rápido posible a través de las barricadas. La APPO tenía la firme intención de luchar contra cualquier ataque, pidiendo que la gente apoyara y, a la vez avisando a l@s de afuera de la ciudad y en el estado que organizaran su defensa.

El 3 de octubre, la APPO había publicado un comunicado de parte del Campamento por la Dignidad y Contra la Represión en Oaxaca. Leía en parte: "Los miembros de las organizaciones sociales y la Asamblea Popular del Pueblo de Oaxaca (APPO) abajo firmantes, hacen un llamado urgente al pueblo de Oaxaca, de México, y del mundo para que vengan y formen un 'Campamento por la Dignidad y Contra la Represión en Oaxaca'; que salgan y defiendan al pueblo oaxaqueño y se evite un derramamiento de sangre debido a la falta de visión de nuestros políticos.

"No podemos permitir que la represión sea la solución. Participemos en el campamento por la dignidad y contra la represión vestidos de blanco, como una señal clara que estamos a favor de un movimiento pacífico y de una resolución política y digna. Salgamos también a las calles con pañuelos de varios colores para mandar la señal de que somos un movimiento de muchos actores diversos que tienen la voluntad de proteger a nuestras compañeras y compañeros."

El subcomandante Marcos del Ejército Zapatista de Liberación Nacional dijo, "Oaxaca no es solo una emergencia, es también un ejemplo a seguir."

L@s líderes del movimiento nacional de López Obrador prometieron movilizar a sus seguidores, e ir a Oaxaca para actuar como "escudos humanos" si ocurre una intervención militar.

El 10 de octubre miles de oaxaqueñ@s entraron en la Ciudad de México luego de marchar por días para llevar su lucha a la capital. Marcharon cerca de 300 millas pero no fueron disuadid@s. Por los menos cinco de sus compatriotas han sido asesinados desde que empezó la huelga.

Los EEUU en ascuas

No hay ningún suceso económico, político o social en México que Washington no sólo le preste atención sino que también interviene para hacer que cada resultado sea a beneficio del imperialismo.

Por eso debe ser que con gran perturbación la administración de Bush y toda la clase dominante estadounidense vigilan la situación actual en México.

Toda historia es la historia de la lucha de clases. Ahora mismo, el pueblo mexicano está escribiendo una página en la historia que está poniendo en riesgo todas esas relaciones complicadas financieras, de agricultura, de transporte y de otros asuntos capitalistas que Estados Unidos ha afinado tanto en México.

A pesar del TLCA y de la habilidad de los Estados Unidos para manipular un desfile constante de líderes mexicanos que "comprenden la necesidad de unas relaciones amigables", ahora mismo es la lucha de l@s trabajador@s la que ha tomado el rol principal.

Una vez más la historia muestra que los imperialistas pueden escribir sus planes para obtener superganancias, pero cuando las masas se levantan, esos acuerdos pueden ser tirados al basurero de la historia, allí donde deben estar.

Apoyemos al pueblo oaxaqueño y a todo México. □

Lucha de clases en Oaxaca, México, surge poder popular

Por Teresa Gutiérrez

Los procesos revolucionarios o los políticos y sociales de carácter popular en México son posiblemente una de las señales más importantes de que el imperialismo está en crisis. Una pregunta siempre en la mente de la clase dominante imperialista de los Estados Unidos es si puede frenar y controlar la lucha de clases allá, si puede prevenir que irrumpa en un levantamiento revolucionario que inevitablemente pasaría más allá de la frontera, cambiando para siempre la geografía política en este país.

Por eso es que l@s progresistas y revolucionari@s siguen con gran interés los dramáticos eventos que han sacudido a México últimamente. Una sublevación masiva en la Ciudad de México después de las elecciones fraudulentas y el advenimiento de poder popular en Oaxaca son dos indicadores de que México está en víspera de un levantamiento masivo.

Cómo va a terminar, nadie sabe. Pero los eventos en desarrollo están generando gran entusiasmo y optimismo.

Poder popular en Oaxaca

Algunas fuentes de comunicación alternativa están llamando a la ocupación popular de Oaxaca comenzada el 22 de mayo, "la Comuna de Oaxaca". Ellas destacan que la ocupación de Oaxaca ha durado dos veces más que lo que duró la Comuna de París de 1871.

El movimiento contra la opresión y la explotación en este estado mexicano ha alcanzado tal nivel que algun@s están diciendo que ya existe un poder paralelo

en Oaxaca. Las masas han ocupado el centro gubernamental y están en control de gran parte de la capital. El gobernador del estado, Ulises Ruiz Ortiz, que es el blanco principal de las protestas, en palabras del periódico británico Financial Times, se ha encontrado forzado a vivir con maleta en mano. La administración de Ruiz está operando ahora en la clandestinidad.

El Financial Times dice que Oaxaca ha permanecido en un estado de "anarquía" por varios meses.

Detrás de la crisis en Oaxaca

Oaxaca es uno de los tres estados más pobres de México. Los otros dos son Chiapas en el sur y Guerrero en la costa atlántica. La población de Oaxaca es de casi 3,5 millones. Tiene la cifra más grande de personas de ascendencia indígena, alrededor de dos terceras partes de la población. Oaxaca es el estado más indígena, con 17 diferentes culturas.

Según una red mexicana de organizaciones de derechos humanos, el 10% más rico de los hogares recibe 13 veces el ingreso del 10% más pobre.

L@s 70.000 maestr@s que iniciaron la lucha con su huelga no son el sector más pobre. De hecho, ell@s pueden ser considerad@s parte de la llamada clase media. Pertenecen al Sindicato Nacional de Trabajadores Educativos (SNTE), un sindicato grande y poderoso pero en realidad un sindicato patronal, comprometido históricamente con el gobierno capitalista.

Pero en Oaxaca, l@s maestr@s son miembr@s de la Sección 22 del SNTE, que tiene una historia mucho más militante y radical. Su huelga afecta 14.000 escuelas.

Fue provocada por Ruiz, quien se volvió gobernador en 2004 en unas elecciones que se acusa de haber sido fraudulentas. Él está acusado de corrupción y de abuso de los derechos humanos, reprimiendo brutalmente las protestas e incitando a la policía para que forme grupos paramilitares para abatir la oposición.

El movimiento acusa a Ruiz de ejercer el poder con terror, de organizar secuestros y de encarcelar a la gente sin justificación alguna. Las acusaciones incluyen tortura, asesinatos e impunidad para todos los que han cometido esas atrocidades.

Por 25 años, l@s maestr@s han salido en huelga todos los años en el mes de mayo. Pero este año fue distinto. Las demandas de l@s huelguistas resonaron en una gran parte de la población y sirvió de chispa para encender un movimiento popular.

Según un artículo por George Salzman, entre el 15 de mayo y el 17 de junio las manifestaciones aumentaron de 50.000 participantes a 400.000. Cuando las negociaciones entre el sindicato y el gobierno se estancaron, l@s huelguistas y sus partidari@s comenzaron a ocupar el centro de la ciudad. (Counterpunch, del 30 de agosto)

L@s huelguistas y sus familiares, incluyendo a sus niñ@s junto a much@s partidari@s, comenzaron a acampar. La vida cotidiana se trastornó completamente.

El movimiento se consolidó hasta el punto de formar una asamblea popular masiva a nivel estatal. Se organizó una convención. De ésta nació la Asamblea Popular del Pueblo de Oaxaca (APPO).

Reportes independientes dicen que l@s manifestantes, agrupad@s en más de 350 organizaciones sociales, y que habían

acampado en los parques y en las calles por más de cuatro meses, están ahora gobernando por medio de asambleas populares. Han tomado radioemisoras y han expulsado a los oficiales civiles de sus puestos de gobierno local. Much@s manifestantes se han armado con palos y hondas. L@s residentes locales vigilan detrás de barricadas de sacos de arena, rocas, desechos metálicos, y autobuses quemados.

Se han requisado autobuses comerciales, de la policía y del gobierno para bloquear carreteras.

"Si las tropas federales intentan por fuerza tomar el control de esta capital sureña, enfrentarán veintenas de avenidas como la Calle Almendros, que es ahora una carrera con obstáculos diseñada para reducir el avance de las autoridades. L@s huelguistas han preparado un segmento de 200 yardas extendiendo alambradas a nivel del cuello, tobillo y cintura, colocando piedras gigantes una al lado de la otra y estacionando un autobús requisado de lado para bloquear el tráfico en ambos sentidos. Como muchas otras calles, ha sido fortalecida con pequeños refugios hechos de sacos de arena y llenos de decenas de botellas para hacer bombas Molotov. Cientos de piedras fueron apiladas para ser lanzadas". (San Antonio Express News, 4 de octubre)

Otra señal del poder popular fue que mientras la TV Azteca estaba entrevistando a dos legisladores en un hotel, fueron conducidos de prisa por una puerta trasera, y su carro apedreado. Los disturbios han ahuyentado a los turistas. Los representantes de negocios estiman que las pér-

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Trabajador@s en empacadora de carne luchan por justicia

La unidad es clave para organizar en la planta Smithfield

Por Sharon Black

Quien crea que las condiciones de explotación en el trabajo al estilo maquiladora sólo pasan en las "zonas francas" de los países pobres y no en los Estados Unidos, está sumamente equivocad@. Las condiciones brutales, los salarios de pobreza y los accidentes que incapacitan a l@s trabajador@s en la planta empacadora de carne Smithfield en Tar Heel en Carolina del Norte, borran rápidamente este mito.

El sindicato de alimentos UFCW y l@s trabajador@s de la planta de Tar Heel vinieron el 30 de septiembre a Nueva York para protestar frente a las oficinas corporativas de la Smithfield en la calle 49 y Park Avenue. Unas 500 personas representando a otras miles que se unieron por el Internet para ser parte de una "marcha virtual", lanzaron una campaña para demandar que Smithfield ponga fin

a la injusticia y permita que l@s trabajador@s se unan en sindicato.

La Empacadora Smithfield emplea cerca de 6.000 trabajador@s y sacrifica más de 8 millones de cerdos al año en el pequeño pueblo de Tar Heel. Es la planta elaboradora de carne de cerdo más grande del mundo. En 1998, Carolina del Norte se convirtió en el segundo productor de cerdos más grande de los Estados Unidos. Smithfield domina casi el 25% del mercado de esta carne nacionalmente.

En el área donde el tabaco y las batatas eran en un tiempo las cosechas y las industrias más importantes, ahora domina la crianza de cerdos. En la planta de Smithfield l@s trabajador@s cortan, empacan y envían más de 25.000 cerdos al día.

Las condiciones en esta planta son tan horribles como las descritas por Upton Sinclair

en su novela "La Jungla" en el 1906.

Cualquiera que haya trabajado en una línea de ensamblaje sabe de primera mano como la constantemente rápida línea de producción destruye el cuerpo y aturde la mente. El lema de los patronos es siempre, "Más rápido, más rápido, saquen el producto rápido."

Quienes trabajan en las plantas de empaque y procesamiento de alimentos también tienen que soportar temperaturas de congelación. Las heridas, las amputaciones, las enfermedades de la piel y el daño permanente de hombros y brazos son cosa de todos los días. La muerte siempre está cercana.

En la mañana del 20 de noviembre del año 2003, el joven de 25 años Glen Birdsong estaba trabajando solo limpiando un tanque de almacenaje cerca de un muelle de carga en la planta Smithfield.

El tanque contenía una sustancia mezclada con bisulfato de sodio que se utilizaría como medicina coagulante.

La manguera que Birdsong estaba usando se atoró en el tanque. El bajó por una escalera para destruirla. Los compañeros de trabajo lo encontraron al pie de la escalera, muerto.

"Ellos no le dijeron sobre los peligros ni tampoco le dieron un cinturón de seguridad para poderse salir en caso de que se cayera en el tanque", dijeron unos compañeros de trabajo a la organización Observadora de Derechos Humanos, Human Rights Watch.)

L@s trabajador@s que sufren accidentes son frecuentemente amenazad@s con ser despedid@s cuando reportan los accidentes, así que much@s dicen que los

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