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# COMMUNITIES DEMAND: 'Stop racist killer cops'

## Killings of 23-year-old unarmed groom, 92-year-old woman are not isolated acts

By LeiLani Dowell and Dianne Mathiowetz  
New York and Atlanta

Sean Bell was killed on what was supposed to be the morning of his wedding, Nov. 25, when police unloaded more than 50 bullets into the car he and two friends—all African American and all unarmed—were in. The three were leaving Bell's bachelor party in Queens, N.Y.

Bell's friend Joseph Guzman is in critical condition after being hit at least 11 times. The other, Trent Benefield, was hit three times. A report from New York in the Sydney Morning Herald said the two had been shackled to their hospital beds. (Nov. 28)

One white officer alone, Detective Mike Oliver, emptied a full magazine of bullets, reloaded and then emptied a second magazine—a total of 31 bullets. New York Police Department policy on shooting at moving vehicles clearly states that police cannot fire at a moving vehicle "unless deadly force is being used ... by means other than a moving vehicle." (AP, Nov. 26) The officers involved were placed on administrative leave, yet are still being paid.

### Not just 'bad apples'

Authorities are scrambling to come up with excuses for Bell's death. The police claim that one of Bell's friends made reference to a gun. "Experts" discuss the problem of "contagious shooting"—which was amplified in 1993 when the NYPD switched from revolvers to semiautomatic weapons. The media is quick to point out that a multinational group of officers were involved in the incident—two white, two Black and one Latino—to downplay the racism in the killings. However, to reiterate, all the victims are Black.

But despite any excuses and "bad apple" theories, police violence and terror in communities of color is systemic, not individual. The police act as an indiscriminate, armed occupying force, with the mentality that the poor and people of color are disposable. Brutality against these communities is a daily occurrence.

As if to prove this point, the next day in the Bronx police attacked and then arrested Juanita Young, an activist against police brutality and the mother of Malcolm Ferguson, who had been killed by the NYPD in March 2000. According to a press release by the October 22nd Coalition, as many as eight cops

participated in the attack, kicking her in the chest and back.

In addition, the group TransJustice has called for a press conference and rally on Nov. 29 to denounce the Nov. 1 beating and arrest of two African American men beaten by cops in the West Village of New York City. When a white male police officer pushed a young African-American woman without provocation, 23-year-old African-American college student Shakur Trammel requested his badge number. In response, the officer punched Trammel in the face and chest, threw him onto the police van and choked him with his nightstick. Eyewitnesses report that between four to six mostly white cops then kicked and punched Trammel and another African-American man who was being very vocal about his outrage at Trammel's beating.

### State violence grows with class tensions

Frederick Engels, Karl Marx's closest collaborator and co-founder of scientific socialism, described the state as a public power that "consists not merely of armed men but also of material adjuncts, prisons and institutions of coercion of all kinds." Engels continues to explain, "It [the public power] grows stronger ... in proportion as class antagonisms within the state become more acute." (Engels, "The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State," 1884)

Anger in poor communities and communities of color is growing over the lack of jobs, affordable housing, healthcare and social services, the number of soldiers coming home dead or maimed from a war for big business, the news that the rich are getting even richer while the poor are still getting poorer. As during the Vietnam War, the ruling class fears organization and rebellion in the communities. The police apparatus is stepped up to keep these communities in line, to remind them of their "place."

But this kind of repression inevitably leads to resistance. At a rally held the day after Bell's killing, New York City Councilperson Charles Barron told the crowd, "I am fed up. I am not asking my people to do anything passive anymore. ... Don't ask us to ask our people to be peaceful while they are being murdered. We are not the only ones that can bleed."

A rally against the police state is planned for Dec. 6, 4:30 p.m., at One Police Plaza in downtown New York City. A state-

*Continued on page 3*



## HARLEM SUMMIT: Unite against wars at home, abroad

6-7

Anti-war, community, labor activists meet in "Little Senegal" in Harlem, New York Nov.18.

WW PHOTO: G. DUNKEL

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Science and religion

A Marxist critique of the La Jolla conference

By Deirdre Griswold

The headlines were intriguing. “A Free-for-All on Science and Religion,” wrote the New York Times. “Losing Our Religion: A gathering of scientists and atheists explores whether faith in science can ever substitute for belief in God,” was Newsweek’s version. New Scientist magazine called its article “Beyond Belief—In Place of God: Can secular science ever oust religious belief—and should it even try?”

The reports summarized the highlights of a conference, held Nov. 5-7 at the Salk Institute in La Jolla, Calif., that attracted a large number of very prominent scientists, mostly from the United States and Britain, for a discussion called “Beyond Belief: Science, Religion, Reason and Survival.”

Richard Dawkins was there, an evolutionary biologist from Britain who wrote “The God Delusion,” currently a best seller.

Sam Harris, a doctoral student in neuroscience, also spoke. He is author of “Letter to a Christian Nation,” another recent best seller, as well as an earlier book, “The End of Faith: Religion, Terror and the Future of Reason.”

Physicist and Nobel laureate Steven Weinberg also spoke, as did Neil deGrasse Tyson, director of the Hayden Planetarium in New York. Carolyn Porco of the Space Science Institute in Boulder, Colo., seemed to be one of the very few women speakers in a conference dominated by white men.

The published accounts mentioned above emphasize that the overwhelming majority of the conferees identified themselves as atheists or non-believers and the speakers posed the issue as a conflict between reason and dogma. But they sharply debated one another on what scientists’ attitude should be toward religion.

If anyone at the conference took a historical materialist view of this question—that is, a Marxist view—the mass media did not report it.

That alone is worthy of note, because for many years a conference in the U.S. that promoted atheism would have been branded “communist” by much of the commercial media. That certainly was the case during the years of the Reagan administration, when the influence of the religious right in politics was very consciously promoted at the same time that a major assault was being made on social programs benefiting the working class.

It was considered a noteworthy break with these political and ideological forces when Nancy Reagan later disagreed publicly with the religious right over the issue of stem-cell research, after her spouse was diagnosed with Alzheimer’s disease.

But since the collapse of the USSR, the debate over science and religion has taken a new turn. The prominent speakers at this conference could not be considered leftists by any stretch of the imagination.

What Marx said about religion

When Karl Marx wrote about religion in the mid-19th century, at a time when much of the new ruling bourgeois class in Europe still identified with the Enlightenment as against medieval dogma, he was able to say about the German intellectual establishment that, “[T]he criticism of religion has been essentially completed.”

But he went on to explain why religion continued to have a strong influence among the masses.

“Religious suffering is, at one and the same time, the expression of real suffering and a protest against real suffering. Religion is the sigh of the oppressed creature, the heart of a heartless world, and the soul of soulless conditions. It is the opium of the people.

“The abolition of religion as the illusory happiness of the people is the demand for their real happiness. ... The criticism of religion is, therefore, in embryo, the criticism of that vale of tears of which religion is the halo.” (Karl Marx, “A Contribution to the Critique of Hegel’s Philosophy of Right,” 1844)

Marx’s term “the opium of the people” is often quoted out of context, as though it were nothing but a slur against religion. But here it is obvious that he was referring quite eloquently to how people turn to religion to dull their pain over unbearable social conditions that need to be abolished.

Marxism goes to the heart of the problem. The new capitalist class needed rationalism as against dogma in order to lay the basis for the tremendous scientific-technological development that vastly expanded its means of production and commerce. But capitalism brought with it new horrors for the masses—the conversion of much of the peasantry into wage laborers working 12 to 14 hours a day in the hellish mines and factories.

Thus this new system, which needed rationalism and science in order to grow, at the same time propagated the social conditions that ensured a continued place for religion among the masses. Even today, after several centuries of scientific discoveries that have transformed the way in which every daily task is done—and have brought immense fortunes to those in the ruling class—a large percentage of the people cling to religion as “the heart of a heartless world,” to use Marx’s phrase.

Did the conference in La Jolla look at religion in this social context? Not if the published accounts correctly represent it.

What, then, spurred on scientists to organize such a gathering at this time?

One would certainly expect that much of the energy for it came from the need to respond to the increasing efforts by the religious right and certain corporate interests to impose anti-scientific views on society. The attempts to legislate the teaching of “creationism” as opposed to evolution, the opposition to stem-cell research by churches claiming to defend the “unborn,” the denial of global warming by scientists funded by energy companies—all this cries out for a counter-attack by scientists. Undoubtedly, many of the attendees at the conference came because of this political climate.

But there was another and more disturbing motivation, and it was pushed by some of the most prominent speakers.

The Web site edge.org is devoted to scientific discussion. According to a critique of the conference written for Edge by participant Scott Atran, “We first heard from Steven Weinberg, and then from every other second speaker, about the history of Islam, about why Muslim science went into decline after the 13th or 14th centuries, and about why suicide bombers, the most fanatically religious of all would-be mass murderers, are an outgrowth of Islam. *Continued on page 3*



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# Charges dropped against woman brutalized by cops

By Larry Hales  
Denver

On Nov. 27, a motions hearing was held for Loree McCormick-Rice, the 51-year-old disabled woman who was beaten, along with her 12-year-old daughter Cassidy Rice, by an Aurora, Colo., police officer moonlighting in a King Soopers grocery store parking lot. Pictures of the bruises sustained by the mother and daughter were submitted as evidence.

The court room was packed with family, friends and supporters. There was only room to stand, as nearly 40 people sat in the pews and nearly half a dozen more stood. The audience in the court was visibly upset and some cried along with McCormick-Rice, while others gasped as she bravely recalled the night in a nearly hour-long testimony and the showing of the videotaped attack.

Her lawyer, David Lane, moved for a motion to dismiss. No one expected that the city would agree. However, after asking only a few questions the city moved to



Cassidy Rice with her mother Loree McCormick-Rice.

drop all charges against McCormick-Rice and Cassidy Rice. The audience applauded the decision, and the family hugged and thanked everyone present.

“This is only the beginning,” McCormick-Rice stated. She remarked that she and the family are prepared to continue until Sgt. Charles DeShazer, the cop who brutalized her and her daughter, and the King Soopers security guards are fired from their jobs. □

## DENVER STATEMENT

# Communities United Against Police Brutality

The civil rights movement made needed gains, but 40 years later, the social conditions of racist repression persist. Although the U.S. is one of the richest countries in the world, many people of color live in dire poverty, lacking the basic human rights of health care, education and housing. Despite being the “bastion” of freedom in the world, 35 percent of the world’s prison population lives in the U.S. Among those imprisoned, people of color are the majority and women of color are the fastest growing segment of the prison population.

People of color have been maneuvered into fighting one another over what we have been convinced are scarce resources. Though there may exist some uniqueness in each of our struggles, whatever differences there are, we have more in common than not. The system that has been put into place to oppress not only us, but poor whites as well, is what we should

unite against. This system has been effective in putting our communities at odds because of the fear of our building a united movement.

As the conditions of the society pit us against each other, they have also led us to the conclusion that our struggles are linked. The fight must be moved forward together. Therefore, activists from the Black, Mexican, Latin@, Asian and Arab communities have come together to move the age old fight of liberation into the future, first, by reclaiming our history and using its lessons to shape our struggle, and then, by once again taking hold of our future with the optimism and courage that will forever change the world. For neither history nor the future belongs to a book or a leader or a classroom. It belongs to the people. So, just as the people have reclaimed history today, so we will reclaim our future.

In commemoration of Martin Luther King Jr., and the civil rights movement of the 1960s, we ask all people of color to stay true to the values of all our fallen heroes. Year after year, the MLK parade passes, reminding us all of the potential of people of color to change their conditions. Our histories speak repeatedly of those who challenged the roles defined for them by their oppressor, those who refused to become tools for the oppressor, and those who died for the liberation of humankind. In uniting with our oppressed brothers and sisters, in believing in the people’s power to effect change, we are applying the values taught to us by these histories.

Therefore, this Jan. 15, on what would have been the 79<sup>th</sup> birthday of Martin Luther King Jr, we are calling for a separate rally and feeder march organized and led by people from the communities above to build a united front against racism, oppression, occupation and war.

The first community forum/town hall meeting will be on Monday, Dec. 11th from 6:30-9:00 pm at the Denver Inner City Parish, 1212 Mariposa Denver, Colorado.

—Communities United  
Against Police Brutality

# Stop racist killer cops

*Continued from page 1*

ment by the December 12th Movement, organizers of the event, reads, “The issues on the agenda include the police profiling of Black youth; NYPD/Homeland Security occupation of the Black community; police aggression, harassment and overkill, as well as President Bush’s assault on Habeas Corpus; the erosion of civil rights; and Iraq war for oil.”

### Atlanta cops kill 92-year-old woman

Police brutality of course is not unique to New York City. In Atlanta, 92-year-old Kathryn Johnston was killed Nov. 21 when an Atlanta drug squad executed a “no-knock” search warrant at her home.

Johnston’s neighborhood is close to an area known for drug trafficking and crime. According to her family, she was very concerned about being victimized and so had bars on her windows and doors and a permit for a pistol.

When Atlanta police pried the bars off the front door and broke it down, Johnston fired her rusty gun in self-defense, wounding three of the cops. They responded with a barrage of bullets.

Initially, the police claimed an undercover agent had purchased drugs at her home. Then the story changed: an informant had purchased crack cocaine with city-supplied funds at the address.

This informant allegedly told police that there were surveillance cameras at the house—an element which increased the likelihood of a “no-knock” warrant being granted. On Nov. 21 around 6 p.m., a Fulton County magistrate issued that warrant, based on an affidavit with these details submitted by narcotics investigator Jason R. Smith.

Barely more than an hour later, Atlanta police smashed through the front door of Johnston’s home.

Outraged neighbors and family insist that she lived alone. No one recognizes the description of the drug suspect, “Sam,” named in the warrant.

Johnston’s long-time neighbor Curtis Mitchell said, “I think that’s just something they made up.” Her niece, Sarah C. Dozier, agreed, saying, “As far as I am concerned, they shot her down like a dog.”

That suspicion was verified six days after Johnston’s death, when the infor-

mant publicly stated that he provided no such information to the police. He says that shortly after the shooting occurred, police called him, telling him to back up their story. According to the Atlanta Journal-Constitution, he has told internal affairs investigators and local media that the police fabricated the whole thing and told him to lie about his role in it. (Nov. 28)

Johnston’s killing came on the same day that the district attorney in adjacent DeKalb County announced that she will ask a grand jury to review a string of deadly police shootings there to determine whether criminal charges should be filed. Organized pressure forced this move by local officials, though it is only a modest response to community demands for police accountability and civilian review.

Since January 2006, DeKalb police have shot and killed 12 people and admit that several officers violated standard procedures. A 13th person died in custody after being hit with a baton and pepper-sprayed.

# Critique of the La Jolla conference

*Continued from page 2*

Missing at ‘Beyond Belief’ was erudition and deep understanding of Islamic history other than the usual summaries of names and achievements. ...

“We heard from Sam Harris that Muslims represent less than 10 percent of the population in Western European countries such as France, but over 50 percent of the prison population. The obvious inference expected from the audience is that Islam encourages criminal behavior. ...

“Richard Dawkins tells us that Islam oppresses women.”

The New York Times article of Nov. 21 confirmed that Islam-bashing was a strong component of this conference. “By shying away from questioning people’s deeply felt beliefs, even the skeptics, Mr. [Sam] Harris said, are providing safe harbor for ideas that are at best mistaken and at worst dangerous. ‘I don’t know how many more engineers and architects need to fly planes into our buildings before we realize that this is not merely a matter of lack of education or economic despair,’ he said.”

In Harris’s book “Letter to a Christian Nation,” he tries to ingratiate himself with

Christians in the United States by saying, “Nonbelievers like myself stand beside you dumbstruck by the Muslim hordes who chant death to whole nations of the living. But we stand dumbstruck by you as well—by your denial of tangible reality, by the suffering you create in service to your religious myths, and by your attachment to an imaginary God.”

Harris says he started writing the book the day after 9/11.

Clearly, the time has not yet come when scientists in the imperialist countries can be expected to organize a truly scientific discussion on religion. That would require an honest, dispassionate view of the world today as it is: divided between the rich and the poor, the oppressor and the oppressed, the imperialist countries and those fighting against efforts to re-colonize them.

Islamic fundamentalism is flourishing among the oppressed as U.S. and British imperialists inflict unspeakable atrocities on the peoples of the Middle East. It cannot be equated with Christian fundamentalism in Western imperialist countries.

What is needed to counteract dogma is not just atheism but a Marxist-Leninist

world view that understands religion and all social phenomena in their real context and can apply this to the current period in human history, which is characterized above all by the capitalist division of society into opposing social classes and a world system in which a few imperialist countries super-exploit the majority of the human race. The triumph of “reason” will come when the masses of people overturn this unjust, antiquated social system. □



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JAPAN

# ILWU, Million Worker March activists attend rally

Special to Workers World  
Tokyo, Japan

A delegation of U.S. trade unionists led by International Longshore Workers Union (ILWU) and Million Worker March activists participated in a National Workers' Rally in Tokyo's Hibiya Amphitheatre which 4,900 trade union workers and other activists attended on Nov. 5.

This was the fourth consecutive rally held. This rally and march was organized by Kan-Nama/Solidarity Union of Japan, Minato-Godo/Metal and Machinery Workers' Union in Osaka, and DORA-CHIBA (National Railway Motive Power Union of Chiba).

The purpose of the rally was to build solidarity among Japanese trade unionists to fight against privatization, union busting, war and a Japanese Constitution revision.

A statement issued by rally organizers explains that, "A large number of workers have been deprived of their right to organize, fired from jobs, and been made irregular (part-time) workers."

The rate of poverty in Japan, second only to the United States, is growing, as workforces are being downsized, wages lowered and working families forced to work harder while earning less.

According to Hiroyuki Yamamoto, the Secretary-Treasurer of the DORA-CHIBA International Labor Solidarity Committee, "Each year this rally has succeeded in forging solidarity of the working class and has contributed to the workers' movement of each participating country."

### International delegation

The international delegation attending the rally and march on Nov. 5



National Workers' Rally in Tokyo's Hibiya Amphitheatre, Nov. 5.

PHOTO: DORA-CHIBA

militant, democratic, an advocate of international solidarity and a fighter for social justice causes.

Its leadership has been in the vanguard of trade union activism. Its founder, Hiroshi Nakano, has been called the Harry Bridges of the DORA-CHIBA. (Bridges was a founder of the ILWU.) Like Bridges, Nakano understands the nature of class struggle and led his union in breaking away from its original affiliate, the Dora National Leadership, to establish an independent progressive union.

The ILWU had its origin as part of the International Longshore Association (ILA) in 1934. In 1937, it broke away and formed the ILWU, a more militant and democratic union independent of the ILA and representing all dockworkers on the West Coast. DORA-CHIBA led the railway struggle against privatization of the Japan National Railways (JNR).

In July 2000, DORA-CHIBA executive board member Kawasaki Masahiro came to San Francisco to develop a friendly relationship with U.S. trade union militants when more than 40 workers of the DORA-CHIBA were dismissed for waging strikes to stop jet fuel transportation to the Narita airport and also to oppose the division and privatization of the JNR. It was at the invitation of Labor Fest that ILWU Local 10 became acquainted with DORA-CHIBA.

The DORA-CHIBA rail workers sent a large delegation to the Million Worker March Mobilization in Washington, D.C. at the Lincoln Memorial on Oct. 17, 2004. The DORA-CHIBA union has embraced the Million Worker March Movement in a big way and has been inviting ILWU and Million Worker March organizers to Japan since 2004. Hundreds of Japanese workers wear the classic blue Million Worker March tee shirt at rallies and marches sponsored by DORA-CHIBA.

### International labor discussion

On Nov. 6, there was a briefing/discussion involving Yasuhiro Tanoka, president of the host organization DORA-CHIBA; Hiroyuki Yamamoto, secretary-treasurer of the DORA-CHIBA International Labor Solidarity Committee; Kim Chang-Sedo, vice president of the Korean Confederation of Trade Unions (KCTU) Seoul Regime Council; Han Hyuk director of Foreign Cooperation Seoul Regional Council (KCTU); and U.S. delegates Joe Prisco and Clarence Thomas. The discussion focused on the building of international labor solidarity between Japan and the U.S.

The Korean workers are fighting against massive repression. The Korean government is seeking to destroy the Korean Government Employees Union (KGEU) and the Korean Confederation of Construction Industry Trade Union. There will be actions worldwide to demand justice for Korean workers. At the Korean Consulate in San Francisco, a solidarity picket and rally was held on Nov. 15 as part of an international solidarity action.

ILWU activists Michael Hoard from Local 52, John Griffin from Local 19 and Todd Weeks from Local 19 participated in a four-hour warning strike in downtown Seoul, Korea, on Nov. 12. A full-fledged general strike is planned for Nov. 22. □

included representatives from the Korean Confederation of Trade Unions (KCTU) of the Seoul Regional Council; Aircraft Mechanics Fraternal Association (AMFA) Locals 9 and 33; International Longshore and Warehouse Union (ILWU) Locals 10, 19, 34, 52 and the Inland Boatman's Union; and Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen (BLE&T), an affiliate of the Teamsters.

There were several African-American trade union activists representing the ILWU and the Million Worker March Movement that went to Japan and have visited that country several times since the Million Worker March in 2004.

ILWU delegates included Clarence Thomas, Local 10 past secretary-treasurer and co-chair of the MWMM; Local 34 member Juan Del Poso and board member Keith Shanklin; Local 19 members John Griffin and Todd R. Weeks; Michael Hoard, Local 52 and member of the African

American Longshore Coalition and the Million Worker March Movement; and Joel Schor, member of Inland Boatmen's Union.

AMFA delegates included Joseph Prisco, president Local 9; Ted Ludwig, president Local 33; Douglas Butz, national treasurer and Paul Jensen, member of BLE&T.

Clarence Thomas led the 16-member U.S. delegation.

The following U.S. trade unionists spoke at the rally: Joseph Prisco, president AMFA Local 9; Ted Ludwig, president AMFA Local 33; Keith Shanklin, executive board member ILWU Local 34; and Clarence Thomas, ILWU Local 10.

### DORA-CHIBA Rail Workers & U.S. labor connections

The DORA-CHIBA (National Railway Motive Union of Chiba) invited the U.S. delegation to Japan. It has a history and tradition much like the ILWU of being

## Longshore worker at Tokyo rally:

# 'An injury to one is an injury to all'

The following excerpted remarks were made by U.S. trade union leader, Clarence Thomas, at the National Workers' Rally in Tokyo, Japan, on Nov. 5.

I bring you greetings and solidarity on behalf of the International Longshore and Warehouse Union, Local 10, in San Francisco and the Million Worker March Movement.

One of our recent labor struggles is the destruction of the American Gulf Coast. Hurricane Katrina was a 21st century snapshot of the genocidal direction of the U.S. government. It exposed the reality of conditions faced by working class African Americans and peoples of color under U.S.-style democracy.

It also creates a new sense of urgency to mobilize power internationally to challenge racist and repressive legislation.

Today, the upsurge by Latin@ workers throughout the U.S. against criminalization and repression should be viewed as very important in building a rank-and-file workers' fight-back movement.

The Immigrant Rights Mobilization and Boycott on May Day, 2006, represented one of the most successful general strikes in recent U.S. history. This was accomplished by workers that do not belong to unions, have no benefits, and without the support of organized labor.

Ninety percent of the cargo shipment at the Port of Los Angeles and Long Beach was halted as the result of immigrant truck drivers not going to work. Several large businesses shut down their plants for the day.



Clarence Thomas, second from right waiting to address the National Workers' Rally in Tokyo, Japan

PHOTO: DORA-CHIBA

file formations to unite Yellow, Red, Black, Brown and White workers into a militant international force for progress on behalf of the working class.

Workers today must be able to follow their work as it traverses the globe. Workers must be able to take their collective bargaining agreements and their unions and move to any country to which their work has been relocated.

Like the immigrant struggle, international workers must hit the streets and demand full protection for all eligible workers. We must have an international progressive program tied in to a workers' agenda.

ILWU dock workers, trade unionists, workers, and anti-war and social justice activists from around the world, including Dora Chiba workers, gathered at the steps of the Lincoln Memorial on October 17, 2004, at the Million Worker March.

Thousands stood demanding an end to the war at home, the war abroad, international workers rights and an end to privatization.

It is occasions such as this that make it possible for workers to build real international rank-and-file unity. □

On Sept. 25, at the Port of San Francisco, Alcatraz Cruises took over the contract to run the Alcatraz ferry service using no union crews for the first time since the service began in the early 1970s.

This operation is within close proximity of longshore workers who work passenger ships in San Francisco. San Francisco is a union town, and this is a threat to our jurisdiction. Eight picketers have been arrested.

The ILWU-IBU and other unions have been negotiating in good faith with the owner for several weeks. Picketing goes on everyday. Negotiations have been unsuccessful.

If this threat isn't stopped by maritime unions NOW, nonunion operations will spread throughout the maritime industry.

Workers today need to build a real rank-and-file global fight-back movement. The labor movement must embrace grassroots rank-and-



# Struggle continues as Katrina survivors face eviction

By Larry Hales

One hundred residents of the Woodlands apartment complex in New Orleans face eviction by a double-dealing landlord and the property management group to which he sold the complex.

The complex was being managed by the Common Ground Collective. The collective's stated mission is to provide short-term relief for victims of hurricane disasters in the Gulf Coast region, and long-term support in rebuilding the affected communities in the New Orleans area.

Common Ground is a community-initiated volunteer organization offering assistance, mutual aid and support. The work gives hope to communities by working with them, providing for their immediate needs. The emphasis is on people working together to rebuild their lives in sustainable ways.

Common Ground Collective had taken over managing the apartment complex known as the Woodlands. The collective wanted to provide affordable housing, and its long-term goal was to purchase the property to create cooperative housing, small-business cooperatives, social programs and human-services offices. Common Ground would maintain rents that were the lowest in the city.

Common Ground had rehabilitated more than 100 housing units in the Woodlands complex and provided for 100 residents who signed leases with the group.

The owner of the complex, Anthony Regenelli, who had entered into an agreement with Common Ground to purchase the complex, sold the Woodlands out from under the collective to the Johnson Property Group, LLC. Both Reginelli and the new owners are trying to evict 100 residents during this holiday season.

The collective—begun after Hurricane Katrina had passed over, and its after-effects and the criminal neglect of the poor and Black residents were being felt—stands in the way of those who want to gentrify the whole city.

After Hurricane Katrina, rents in New Orleans skyrocketed—all part of a process to push out the poor and mostly Black residents to reinvent New Orleans as a play destination for the rich.

Before Katrina, the average rent for a one-bedroom apartment was \$578 a month. After the storm the average rent shot up to \$803 a month. The city has also slated 5,000 public housing units for demolition.

Developers, landlords and bankers in the area salivated at the prospects, and even conspired to try to oust a

mayor they had once helped to elect because he is Black and remarked on keeping New Orleans a “chocolate city.”

The people of New Orleans, though dispersed throughout the country, have vociferously expressed their desire to keep their city—by marching, protesting and re-electing Mayor Ray Nagin. Though Nagin represents the aims of the New Orleans ruling elite, the re-election campaign had become a matter of self-determination for the city that was nearly 70 percent Black before the storm.

The residents of the Woodlands are ready to fight, once again showing that the people of New Orleans—a city where the culture was forged during slavery and the racist repression that followed the end of chattel slavery—will not simply let their city be taken from them.

The residents will be in court to fight the eviction orders at 9 a.m. on Nov. 28, at the Second City Court at the Historic Algiers Courthouse. They have initiated a letter-writing campaign and will be calling news conferences and protests.

Sample letters can be found at: [www.commongroundrelief.org/files/woodlands1.pdf](http://www.commongroundrelief.org/files/woodlands1.pdf).

The group can be contacted via e-mail at [nolaevictiondefense@gmail.com](mailto:nolaevictiondefense@gmail.com). □

## From death row Mumia Abu-Jamal

### Some who feel no reason for Thanksgiving

*From an audio message played at the 37th annual National Day of Mourning rally in Plymouth, Mass., Nov. 23. Go to [prisonradio.org](http://prisonradio.org) to hear Abu-Jamal's political columns.*



To this day, I can hardly bear to think of that quintessentially American holiday—Thanksgiving.

When I do, however, I do not dwell on Pilgrims with wide black hats sitting to sup with red men, their long hair adorned with eagle feathers. I think not of turkeys or of cranberries, foods now traditional for the day of feast.

Unlike millions, I don't even think of the day's football game. And not thinking of it, I don't watch it.

I think of the people we have habitually called “Indians,” the Indigenous people of the Americas; those millions who are no more.

I think of those precious few who remain, and wonder, what do they think of this day; this national myth of sweet brotherhood that masks what can only be called genocide?

Several years ago, I read a thin text that was pregnant with poignancy. It was a collection of Native remarks from the first tribes who encountered whites in New England, and down through several hundred years. Throughout it all, the same vibration could be felt, no matter what the clan or tribe—a profound sense of betrayal and wrong from people who were treated like brethren when they first arrived.

In New England, the name Powhatan (ca. 1547-1618) is still recalled (even if that wasn't his name, but what the English called him). Known as Wahunsonacock by his people, he headed a confederacy of 32 tribes and governed an area of hundreds of miles. He was the father of Pocahontas, the young Indian maiden who saved the life of Capt. John Smith. A year after sparing Smith's life, the white captain threatened the great chief. This is some of his response given in 1609:

“Why should you take by force that from us which you can have by love? Why should you destroy us, who have provided you with food? We can hide our provisions, and fly into the woods; and then you must consequently famish by wronging your friends. What is the cause of your jealousy? You see us unarmed, and willing to supply your wants, if you come in a friendly manner, and not with swords and guns, as to invade an enemy. I am not so simple, as not to know it is better to eat good meat, lie well, and sleep quietly with my women and children; to laugh and be merry with the English; and, being their friend, to have copper, hatchets, and whatever else I want, than to fly from all, to lie cold in the woods, feed upon acorns, roots, and such trash, and to be so hunted, that I cannot rest, eat, or sleep. In such circumstances, my men must watch, and if a twig should but break, all would cry out, ‘Here comes Capt. Smith; and in this miserable manner, to end my miserable life; and, Capt. Smith, this ‘might’ be soon your fate too, through your rashness and unadvisedness. I therefore, exhort you to peaceable councils; and, above all, I insist that the guns and swords, the cause of all our jealousy and uneasiness, be removed and sent away.” (Blaisdell, Bob, ed., Great Speeches by Native Americans. Mineola, N.Y.: Dover Press, 2000, p.4.)

That great chief's sentiments would be echoed for over hundreds of years, but injustice would just be piled on injustice. Genocide would be the white answer to red life.

Centuries later, what can Thanksgiving Day mean to Native peoples?

Thank you for stealing our land? Thank you for wiping out our people?

Thank you for placing a remnant of our once great numbers on rural ghettos called reservations?

Thank you for abolishing most of the ancient traditions?

Thank you for poisoning what little Indian lands remain with uranium?

Thank you for poisoning the lands now inhabited by the whites?

Thank you for letting Indians fight in American wars against other people?

Thanks.  
The real tragedy is that millions of Americans don't know, and don't want to know about Indian history and traditions.

Today, the names of rivers, lakes and landmarks bear indigenous markers of another age.

The people, except for an occasional movie, are mostly forgotten, out of mind, the easier to replace with false images of happy meals and turkey dinners. Happy Thanksgiving. □

## Honoring Indigenous rights



WW PHOTO: MONICA MOOREHEAD

Annawon Weeden, left, doing honor song with his father, Tall Oak, at Day of Mourning rally.

Several hundred people of many nationalities braved torrential rain to take part in the 37th National Day of Mourning in Plymouth, Mass., on Nov 23. The annual event, organized by United American Indians of New England, is a day when Native people and their supporters gather on the U.S. “thanksgiving” day to speak the truth about history and to talk about current conditions and struggles of Native peoples.

This year's theme was: “Who's the Illegal Alien, Pilgrim?” The rally's participants were Indigenous people from throughout the Americas, several of whom pointed out the hypocrisy of the current U.S. government's attacks against immigrants and spoke of the importance of unity among all Indigenous peoples.

The highlight of this year's National Day of Mourning was when Toni Zeidan, co-director of the Leonard Peltier Defense Committee, gave an update on Leonard's case and health. During her talk, Peltier, who is at Lewisburg Federal Penitentiary, called Zeidan's cell phone and was able to hear the gathered crowd shouting, “Free Leonard Peltier now!” at the tops of their lungs.

—WW Boston bureau

### WW on Hungary: ‘Breath of fresh air’

Finally!!! I read something online that doesn't give the usual BS about the '56 revolution in Hungary. The USSR made mistakes in the past and it didn't help when the revolt started, but the right wing always uses events such as this to advance that communism is bad and the only alternative is the dog-eat-dog mentality of the capitalist system. The article mentioned the positive achievements of socialism after the liberation of 1945 when the Nazis were defeated. It was a breath of fresh air to say the least. I have donated to you folks a few times and I think I made a wise decision every time. Hope to do so again.

—Galen Carland

### Stop the execution!

I am writing in response to the article found at [www.workers.org/2006/us/austin-1109/](http://www.workers.org/2006/us/austin-1109/) which has to do with the problems with the Texas executions.

I have a friend named CHARLES ANTHONY NEALY who is scheduled to be put to death in Texas on November 16th for something he did not do, unless his execution is stopped. According to his Web site [www.anthonynealy.org](http://www.anthonynealy.org), there has been evidence of prosecutorial misconduct, yet the execution still has not been halted. Please, please, if there is anything you can do, please let us know. As members of his network of friends, we have done all we can do to help Charles. We can only pray now.

—Valerie

### Stand with UAW Local 1268

Brothers and Sisters, I am a member of UAW Local 1268 in Belvidere, Illinois. I am sending you this email so that you can be informed of what is happening to other brothers and sisters of your UAW. I was kicked out of MY union by Chrysler, not Mr. Littlejohn

our president, due to my social security date and hire date!! I am not quite sure if you have heard about the enhanced, two-structured pay scale, or the dishonest hire-under-false-pretenses that Chrysler has put UAW members through, but you need to be informed.

Go to [www.enhancedfight.com](http://www.enhancedfight.com) and to the yahoo group. Put your voices on there so that the brothers and sisters of local 1268 know that you are out there for them. We all need to stand together on this! And we need your help!!!!

Local 1268 President Littlejohn needs your help in this fight!!! Please go to this site, read what is happening to our brothers and sisters, the solidarity, our Local. I am just one person, but, I will not allow for MY UNION to be torn apart by this large corporation. Pass this on so that others in UAW both locally and internationally are informed of us.

—Kathy Hungness  
Belvidere Chrysler





# Summit maps out strategy oppo

By Monica Moorehead  
Harlem, N.Y.

A significant anti-war summit meeting took place Nov. 18 in the heart of “Little Senegal” in Harlem. The Troops Out Now Coalition (TONC) sponsored the event at the spacious Africa Kine Restaurant located on 116th Street near Frederick Douglass Blvd.

The turnout was standing room only. An estimated 150 organizers and activists—representing more than 50 different antiwar, community, immigrant and labor organizations from around the region—were in attendance.

Some of the key activists at the summit included Comrade Shahid, Pakistan U.S.A. Freedom Forum; Charlotte Kates, New Jersey Solidarity/Activists for the Liberation of Palestine; Ardeshir Ommani, American-Iranian Friendship Committee; members of FIST—Fight Imperialism, Stand Together—student and youth group; Pam Africa, International Concerned Family and Friends of Mumia Abu-Jamal; former Pennsylvania death-row inmate Harold Wilson; Mexican activist Brian Barraza; and a delegation of Latino immigrant workers representing the Freeport, Long Island Day Laborers. Elena Everett from Raleigh FIST spoke about the inspiring two-day wildcat strike carried out by a majority of Latin@ workers at the Smithfield, N.C., hog processing plant on Nov. 17 and 18.

Following a delicious Senegalese buffet/lunch, the meeting included opening and closing remarks from key activists, and then broke into smaller discussion groups. Fallou Gueye from the Union of African Workers-Senegal gave welcoming remarks. The four-hour meeting was co-chaired by Larry Holmes and Sharon Black from TONC and Sara Flounders from the International Action Center.

The group discussions on solidarity with liberation movements and countries fighting the empire were summarized by Ellie Ommani; on community, labor and anti-racist organizing by Philadelphia IAC activist Betsey Piette; on students, youth and counter-recruitment activism by Raleigh FIST organizer Dante Strobino; and on immigrant workers’ rights by Teresa Gutierrez.

The following are some of the major issues that were agreed upon unanimously at the summit: The need to organize mass and militant actions in the streets to stop the wars abroad and at home now that the Nov. 7 elections are over. The importance of linking the fight against racism and national oppression to the anti-war struggle in order to build a strong, multi-national movement for social change. And the urgency of forging unity between all the anti-war formations to organize a national mobilization in Washington, D.C., on March 17, the fourth anniversary of the Iraq war.

In a preliminary report on the Nov. 18 meeting, a TONC statement read, “Participants in the meeting felt very strongly that notwithstanding important political differences within the broader anti-war movement, including past difficulties in working together, that it was most critical at this time when the mass struggle in the streets against the war needs to be revived, that all coalitions reject fragmentation, unnecessary divisiveness and competition around protest dates and national protest, and instead pull together so that the movement in the U.S. can do what the world is waiting for it to do and shut down the war machine.”

To help build for the March 17 mobilization, nationally coordinated days of action linking the anti-war, anti-racist and pro-worker movements will be called for Jan. 15—the Martin Luther King, Jr., holiday. The follow-up TONC meeting will be held in New York on Dec. 5 at Solidarity Center. For more information, call 212-633-6646 or go to [www.troopsoutnow.org](http://www.troopsoutnow.org)

E-mail: [mmoorehead@workers.org](mailto:mmoorehead@workers.org)

## Sharon Black

The energy at the anti-war summit in Harlem was incredible. Not only was there a resounding call for unity of the anti-war movement to descend on Washington on March 17. The gathering itself was an expression of unity. To bring representatives of both the class struggle at home against racism and for immigrant rights, and the anti-war and anti-imperialist movements abroad, points in the direction that the anti-war movement must go—this fact, along with many others including the political content of the meeting, made the Troops Out Now Coalition summit unique and important.



## Fallou Gueye

Hospitality is a big word in our culture. To have you in little Senegal is very important because we feel that you are just like us. We don’t have borders. We are fighting for the same noble cause—to defeat imperialism which is the cause of war. People who are living here are deeply, deeply victimized and negatively impacted by that war. We are fighting against the war, we are fighting against IMF, World Bank. International corporations are dominating us daily and impacting negatively on our lives.



## Lourdes Vela Alberto Lovera Bolivarian Circle

Please help us educate the immigrant communities about [Hugo] Chávez and the Bolivarian Revolution because we have not been allowed in that door in spite a lot of the work you all have done. Chávez is someone that we need not only in the U.S. but all over the world.



## NY City Councilperson Charles Barron

What should Bush’s sentencing be after so many Iraqis and soldiers are dead? If you have some elected officials who have problems with Hugo Chávez saying that Bush is a devil, well, if you act devilish, it makes you a devil. You can’t murder people all over the world and not be the devil incarnated; you can’t be playing golf, while people are dying in New Orleans and not be the devil. Right on to Chávez; I think he did the right thing and

is doing the right thing in our communities. I don’t know if this is something that you want to brag about but you are the reason why the Democrats are in office now because it is the anti-war movement that is the only movement in this country that was against the Iraqi war; the Democrats voted for war. We have one party, the Republicrats. The Democrats voted for Bush to have the right to go to war; Democrats voted for him to finance the war and when [John] Murtha said you have a way out, I want to put forth a resolution for a phased withdrawal, none of the Democrats voted for it. Now you have to keep marching so that the shift in positions means a shift in policy. We have to continue to go forward to revolutionize this country; America needs a revolution; we need a radical change in America and I believe it can happen; we shouldn’t compromise our principles, compromise our position. Free Mumia, free all political prisoners, and pay us our reparations. Forward ever, backward never.



## Sara Flounders

What kind of a movement is being built? Connections must be made between Iraq, Palestine, Lebanon, Syria, Sudan, and North Korea. We have to look at the struggle

globally; we can’t allow the imperialists to criminalize and demonize the liberation movements. We must oppose the massive raids and detentions of our immigrant sisters and brothers and endless war and no money for education, day care, healthcare, etc. We are stronger when we are united, when we embrace these issues.



## Chuck Mohan Guyanese Workers Association

The immigrant movement is not about one group of people but about everyone. We need to come together as one. I have no illusions about the new Congress. We can’t struggle in a vacuum. Our struggle is linked to other struggles that were here before we came—Native American, African American, Latin@, women and other struggles present in the U.S.



## Dr. Asha Samad-Matias SAFRAD-Somali Association

Repression is continuing; City College is not what it is not what it use to be; we have to bring the struggle to the students who are workers; that refugees, whether they are so-called refugees from New Orleans or those seeking political asylum who are struggling, imprisoned, having their homes raided, having their homes washed away purposely, just like Harlem is being re-gentrified for Black and Latin@s, all of this should show that this is one struggle.



# osing U.S. wars at home, abroad



**Teresa Gutierrez**  
**May 1 Coalition**

**W**e have to recognize the power that each and every one of us in the room represents because these are the same people who quickly shifted to support the rise of one of the most oppressed sectors of our class, immigrants, and came out on May 1 and supported workers marching around the country; when you consider the support that this sector of the anti-war movement has for one of the most oppressed sectors, you have to know how extremely powerful this support is. What TONC can do is everything possible to bring out the anti-war movement for May Day. The workers know what the heck they are doing like in Smithfield, No. Carolina. What a contribution the anti-war movement is making to the people of Iraq, Palestine and everywhere by making this kind of this connection.



**Larry Hamm**  
**People's Organization for Progress**

**A**frican Americans, from the beginning, have consistently opposed the war in Iraq and oppose the policies of the Bush administration but a lot of times when we go to the peace activities we really don't see the numbers of African Americans that reflect that opposition to the war. Every time there is a poll, 95 percent of the African American community is opposed to the war but this opposition has not been made manifest in the streets; and it's in the streets where it really counts. On the wave of anti-war sentiment, the Democrats got control of the House and Senate; Democrats are backpedaling on the issue of the war; troops are hostages of the Bush administration. Veterans Administration had funds cut. There are a bunch of liars at the White House. We need to take many buses to the White House to make a citizens' arrest of Bush for crimes against humanity, for war crimes; impeachment is just a process, it's not a conviction. It is pressure from the masses of people who will end this war, not electing politicians. The people's movement ended the Vietnam War. POP is calling for a People's Peace Conference at Rutgers Law School on Jan.20. We are going after groups who have not come out against the war—ministers, unions, street gangs, politicians. This conference has a particular objective—when white folks come to the conference, bring some Black folks with you; we don't want the conference to be another conference of the left; we want the conference to be dominated by masses of the people. We want to get people who may not be politically active. A millions for peace march in New Jersey is needed.



**Larry Holmes**

**T**he top Democratic Party politicians were not against the war in principle. They are not against wars of colonial conquests; they want to recolonize the Middle East. Their problem against the [Iraq] war is that it was done badly, incompetently. Their program now is how to fix it. They don't have an anti-colonial difference, or anti-exploitation difference or anti-racist difference [with Republicans]. It's just a tactical difference of people who have the same interests. The [Nov. 7] anti-war referendum took place because the Iraqi people are refusing to be occupied. The Iraqi people are doing what is expected of them. The question is what the hell are we doing? We have to challenge ourselves to carry out more militant tactics; campuses must be shut down. We are not speaking to just one racial demographic grouping. We have to reach out to immigrant communities. The Palestinian liberation movement is central to Arab liberation. The Israeli Army acts as if it is a detachment of the U.S. armed forces. All wars are connected. It isn't just an issue of having a bad president—wars are systemic. The road to unity is to adopt an anti-imperialist world view.



**Pam Africa**

**T**hese monsters have been trying to pull every trick to divide us off but we have to be strong; it is nothing new; we know the game, we know the tricks; we must continue to teach and bring unity. This government is at war with every form of life and we must unite with every movement to bring this monster down. Onamove!

**Brenda Stokely**  
**Labor, community leader**

**R**egarding Katrina survivors, the same forces that dismantled people and their lives are still alive and well. Demonstrations took place on Nov. 18 in New Orleans and Baton Rouge confronting Gov. Kathleen Blanco who has set up a blue ribbon commission stacked with wealthy people, developers, financiers, real estate barons to solidify control in that region including Mississippi. Who is missing are people of color; those adversely affected particularly African Americans, people who work and people who were not homeowners. Fifty-seven percent of the people before the hurricane were renters. Blanco's proposal has nothing to do with renters. Public housing folks are not being allowed to go back home and nothing is wrong with the housing. The people are not being welcomed back; inner displaced persons have been created in Mississippi, Alabama and Louisiana which is a violation of UN Human Rights Charter for Displaced Persons; the U.S. does not carry about human rights.



**Gary Labao**  
**BAYAN USA**

**W**e stand here in solidarity with immigrants, the workers' struggle and the anti-war movement. Whether it is the struggle for liberation in the Philippines, Iran, Iraq, North Korea; whether it's the workers, the immigrants or the soldiers in Iraq right now, our common enemy is U.S. imperialism. Down with U.S. imperialism.



**Panama Vicente Alba**  
**Puerto Rican activist, immigrant rights organizer**

**W**e need to think globally and act globally. We need to take responsibility for what goes on in this country because it affects the rest of the world. This is the empire and this empire is out of control. The environmentalist movement has been telling us for the past 30 years that the world is on the way to destruction; now you got Chomsky, Chavez saying it;

we are not listening, we don't act; we need to take every step against the empire and globalization; we must engage in the Katrina front, anti-war front; immigrant rights movement; we are going to win not because the Democratic Congress is anything different from the Republican Congress. We're gonna win because we take it to the streets. We need to learn to collectively transfer the power of the people into the streets into legislation that gives all of the legalization necessary for 12 million human beings; not only the workers but their children, their grandmothers, grandfathers; we don't have the time or the luxury not to come together in a principled way.



IRAQ

# Bush in Jordan as Iraq regime disintegrates

By John Catalinotto

President George W. Bush is heading for a NATO summit meeting in Riga, Latvia, to be followed by a meeting with puppet Iraqi President Nuri al-Maliki in Amman, Jordan. Jordan's King Abdullah will host the Nov. 29 meeting with al-Maliki. Abdullah had just warned of the possibility of three civil wars in the next year—in Lebanon, Palestine and Iraq.

The imperialist occupation of Iraq itself has brought a nightmare of daily existence to the population, including violent deaths of at least 4,000 civilians a month, many of them in the capital.

Bush, who has remained publicly enthusiastic about what is obviously the complete collapse of the U.S. criminal seizure of Iraq, now says the Iraq occupation is entering a “new phase.” As he travels, different groupings in U.S. leading circles are debating U.S. tactics regarding Iraq.

The most important of these debates is going on in the Iraq Study Group, which Congress set up last March to examine alternate policies for limiting damage to U.S. imperialist interests in the Middle East and worldwide.

These debates bring with them a new flow of misleading propaganda from both defenders and detractors of the Bush administration regarding U.S. aims for the region.

### Back to basics

The United States did not invade Iraq to bring “freedom” and “democracy” or to destroy weapons of mass destruction. The United States invaded in order to gain control of the supply of oil, for both its strategic importance and direct profit.

The Bush administration almost single-handedly flaunted Pentagon power, riding over the objections of Washington's usual cronies in Western Europe and Japan, with only the Blair regime in Britain as a serious junior partner.

To justify this aggression, Bush systematically lied to the world, especially to the U.S. population. Bush and Blair linked Saddam Hussein to Osama bin Laden and 9/11, and they made up entire scenarios about “weapons of mass destruction.”

The U.S.-led invasion and occupation has been responsible for killing hundreds of thousands of Iraqis. As the occupying power, the United States is responsible for the continued slaughter of Iraqis, no matter who directly pulls the trigger or sets the bomb.

The Bush administration is also guilty of sending U.S. troops, under a false pretext, to kill Iraqis and in turn to be targets of a completely justified Iraqi resistance movement.

### Iraq Study Group

The Iraq Study Group consists of five

Democrats and five Republicans, all of whom have a reputation in Washington of being guardians of U.S. interests. James Baker, a close advisor to President George H.W. Bush and his secretary of state from 1989 to 1992, is considered the ISG's key player.

An article in the Nov. 26 Washington Post described the ISG as “a panel outside the government trying to bail the United States out of a prolonged and messy war.” According to the Post, “the panel was deliberately skewed toward a centrist course for Iraq.”

But “centrist” doesn't mean the ISG is any closer than Bush to ending the war. On Sept. 18, after hearing the testimony and reports of various “experts,” the ISG took an ad-hoc vote between two positions.

The “Stability First” position really means sending even more U.S. troops to Baghdad. This stance won by a large margin on Sept. 18 and by a much smaller margin during a second vote in October.

The second position, “Redeploy and Contain,” means trying to gradually pull back troop positions while maintaining the occupation.

While the ISG debates expansion of the occupation, the Italian, Polish and even the British government—a co-conspirator for the initial March 2003 invasion—have announced plans to withdraw troops in 2007.

In Baghdad itself, thousands of Iraqi civilians are being killed each month. On Nov. 23, over 200 people died in coordinated car-bombings in Sadr City. Both the Bush administration and its critics in the U.S. establishment describe the fighting in Baghdad as “sectarian violence,” that is, between Sunni and Shiite-led parties or their militias.

Sunni and Shiite Iraqis agree, however, that the U.S. occupation has made everything worse. In a September poll taken by World Public Opinion, some 74 percent of Shiites and 91 percent of Sunnis want the United States out within a year at most. As of last January, some 61 percent of Iraqis in general supported attacks on U.S. forces. (Editor and Publisher, Nov. 21)

Exiled Iraqi Sami Ramadani wrote regarding “sectarian conflict” in Iraq: “The historical reality is that such differences never descended into communal killing and destruction. ... Most Iraqis ... perceive the violence gripping the land as a product of the occupation and think that it could be drastically reduced and brought under control only after the occupying forces depart.” (The Times of London Higher Education Supplement, Nov. 24)

Whatever the results of this next round of diplomacy and debate in U.S. ruling circles, it won't in and of itself end the war and occupation.

*E-mail: jcat@workers.org*

## Cracks at the NATO summit as

# U.S., UK push for more troops to Afghanistan

By Robert Dobrow

Afghanistan is far from the cold waters of the North Atlantic. A land-locked country in central Asia, it is thousands of miles from Europe or North America. But as the North Atlantic Treaty Organization gathers for its biennial summit meeting this week, Afghanistan is the main topic on the agenda.

U.S.-NATO forces in Afghanistan are facing some of the fiercest resistance since the 2001 invasion. Insurgent attacks, particularly in the southern region, have increased fourfold this year.

The stark reality facing the NATO imperialists is that after five years of intervention against one of the poorest countries in the world, their combined military might has been unable to subdue the country. Rather, the occupation has devastated the economy, restored to power a ruling clique of landlords and their private armies, and wreaked havoc on the countryside.

“For us, the number one issue is Afghanistan,” said R. Nicholas Burns, U.S. Under Secretary for Political Affairs, in a news briefing before the NATO summit. Burns' comments came as part of coordinated efforts by U.S. and British officials that portend an escalation of the war.

On the same day as Burns's statement, the top U.S. general in Afghanistan, Lt. Gen. Karl Eikenberry, told reporters that Washington should increase the amount of military equipment—helicopters, Humvees, fighter aircraft—it sends to Afghanistan.

While Eikenberry was talking at the Pentagon, NATO's Supreme Allied Commander James Jones was trying to drum up support for more troops. “I continue to insist we need an additional 15 percent,” he said.

There are currently 32,000 NATO

troops in Afghanistan, 20,000 of them from the U.S.

The fourth horseman of the apocalypse was British Prime Minister Tony Blair, who descended on the Afghan capital for a “surprise visit” to rally the troops. Often ridiculed in the British press as “Bush's poodle,” Blair lived up to expectations by announcing that Britain would “stay the course” in Afghanistan. He offered a future of decades of military intervention. “I think we are wiser now to the fact that this is a generation-long struggle,” Blair said. “Here is where the future of world security in the early 21st century is going to be played out.”

The “security” he has in mind was seen two days later when NATO troops attacked four locations in southern Afghanistan, leaving at least 12 civilians dead.

Afghanistan has seen a huge number of civilian deaths due, in part, to the massive U.S.-NATO air war there. According to the Nov. 17 New York Times, “The 2,095 attacks by American aircraft since June is many times greater than the number of air strikes in Iraq. ... The increase in total munitions dropped has also been substantial. This year in Afghanistan, American aircraft have dropped 987 bombs and fired more than 146,000 cannon rounds and bullets in strafing runs, more than was expended in both categories from the beginning of the American-led invasion in 2001 through 2004.”

Just this year, the AP wire service reported the following: Between 30 and 80 civilians were killed during NATO air strikes in Panjwayi in the midst of a religious holiday (Oct. 25). At least 13 people died when NATO helicopters incinerated three dried-mud homes in Ashogho (Oct. 18). More than 16 civilians were killed when U.S. warplanes bombed a religious school and mud-brick homes in Azizi vil-

lage (May 21). Seven died after an air strike in eastern Kunar (April 15).

The air war, however, is a universe away from Kabul City Center, the newly built shopping mall in the Afghan capital. Here the rich can shop for silk shirts, \$200 shoes and a Big Mac with fries in a nine-story, marble and glass, heavily guarded luxury enclave. Most of the foreign “reconstruction” money flowing into Afghanistan is going to such projects, which benefit the rich.

“Many of Afghanistan's wealthy few,” reports the Nov. 27 Washington Post, “are citizens who returned from abroad after the U.S.-led invasion, eager to invest. ... Some have grown rich on corruption or the illegal trade in opium, which some estimates say accounts for 60 percent of Afghanistan's gross domestic product.”

A few miles from the shopping mall, Afghanis live in shocking poverty. Most city residents receive about 14 hours of electricity a week. Over 70 percent of the people live on less than \$2 a day.

Such is the “freedom” that imperialism is bringing to Afghanistan.

### No smooth sailing for war plans

The fierce resistance inside Afghanistan to foreign occupation is starting to expose significant cracks in the NATO war alliance.

On the eve of the NATO summit, Belgian Defense Minister Andre Flahaut called for NATO to “reflect on an exit strategy” from Afghanistan. In an interview with Le Vif-L'Express magazine, reported in the Nov. 27 Independent, Flahaut said, “The situation is deteriorating and, over time, NATO forces risk appearing like an army of occupation.”

The Independent notes that the minister's comments “will alarm senior figures at the alliance's headquarters where there is

already concern that France is getting cold feet about its role in Afghanistan. ... NATO sources are concerned about the possibility of an eventual French withdrawal.”

Even Pakistani President Pervez Musharraf, one of Washington's most important allies in the Muslim world and a brutal military dictator, cannot afford being seen as merely accepting the dictates of Washington and London.

Speaking at a joint news conference with Tony Blair before the latter's Afghanistan visit, Musharraf said that Afghanistan “was in deep turmoil” and thus NATO “could not rely solely on military might but also had to make political settlements.” He called for a “Marshall Plan” for development in southern Afghanistan.

The Marshall Plan was enacted under President Harry S. Truman after World War II. Under the Marshall Plan, the U.S. poured \$20 billion—a huge sum in those days—into Europe to rebuild the economies, revive European capitalism and avoid workers' revolutions. The plan also enriched U.S. corporations, since the money was used to buy U.S. goods that had to be shipped across the Atlantic on U.S. merchant vessels.

What drives U.S. imperialism and its junior partners in Afghanistan is not the vision of building a thriving independent economy and raising the living standards of the masses. Their sights are set on the vast oil and gas reserves of Central Asia and the Middle East. Afghanistan for them is an outpost, a military base, a filling station for their hallucinatory dream of global empire.

Such a dream, however, is crashing against the daily reality of widespread, stubborn and increasing resistance, both in Afghanistan and Iraq, against foreign occupation and aggression. □



LEBANON

# U.S. provokes crisis to widen Middle East war

By Bill Cecil  
Beirut, Lebanon

The same forces behind the Iraq war are at it again. Bush, Cheney and company are coordinating an international hate campaign against Syria, Iran and the Lebanese political party Hezbollah.

The Bush regime seeks to blame the three for the Nov. 21 assassination of Lebanon’s ultra-right-wing industry minister, Pierre Gemayel. His was the latest in a string of political assassinations in Lebanon. The U.S., Britain, France and Lebanon’s governing March 14 coalition are setting up a Western-controlled “international court” to “investigate” the killings.

Gemayel was the leader of the openly fascist Falange party, which takes its name from Francisco Franco’s party in Spain. With Israeli army help, it murdered thousands of Palestinian children, women and men in the Sabra and Shatila refugee camps in September 1982.

Many Lebanese, especially the poor and working class, don’t believe the “official story” on Gemayel’s killing. They suspect the U.S. or Israel was involved. They see a U.S. plan to block democratic change in Lebanon and set the stage for a wider war in the region.

The U.S. and Israel have a long and bloody history of intervention in Lebanon, and they certainly want to block a national unity government in which Hezbollah and the nationalist March 8 alliance would play a leading role. Hezbollah is based among Shia Muslims, Lebanon’s largest and poorest community.

Washington proclaims outrage over the death of a fascist. But it provided Israel with the bombs and missiles it used to kill nearly 1,300 Lebanese civilians this summer. Children in South Lebanon are still being killed and maimed by U.S.-made cluster bombs that litter the region. The U.S. demands an investigation of the Gemayel assassination, but it vetoed U.N. condemnation of Israel’s murderous assault.

When Israel attacked Lebanon in July, the government did nothing. The people’s resistance, led by Hezbollah, repelled the U.S.-funded assault. Hundreds of Hezbollah fighters held off 40,000 Israeli troops. That victory gained the party support in all Lebanese communities.

It is Hezbollah—not the government—that is now rebuilding the war-torn villages of South Lebanon. A Hezbollah measure for emergency payments to workers made jobless by the war was blocked by Prime Minister Fuad Siniora.

### Assassination saved pro-U.S. regime

Had Gemayel not been assassinated, Lebanon’s U.S.-backed neoliberal Siniora regime may have fallen. It has been illegal since Shiite ministers resigned from the cabinet after national unity talks broke down. Lebanon’s National Pact requires that all the country’s major communities be represented in government.

March 8 leaders charge that negotiations failed after the U.S. Embassy urged the governing March 14 coalition to take an intransigent position. Shortly after the talks broke down, U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice warned of more assassinations in Lebanon.

Gemayel’s death mobilized the right wing and created an atmosphere of fear and crisis. Pro-U.S. mobs roamed the streets, attacking Syrian workers and the offices of opposition parties. The March 8 alliance postponed plans for mass protests aimed at forcing the government to resign.

But a general strike called by the U.S.-backed March 14 alliance fizzled. It is likely, however, that mass protests by the March 8 alliance will go ahead. On Nov. 26 Hezbollah deputy leader Sheikh Naim Qassem promised to “surprise” the regime with “street protests, civil disobedience, sit-ins and union actions.”

### Hezbollah and allies fight for democracy

The United States and its allies paint a picture of a “democratic” Lebanon under siege by Syria and Iran. U.S.-backed Lebanese politicians Samir Geagea, Saad Hariri and Walid Jumblatt accuse Hezbollah of trying to forcibly create a Shiite state.

In fact, the March 8 alliance includes not only Hezbollah but the Free Patriotic Movement, which is largely Christian, the Shiite party Amal and the Lebanese Communist Party. It is fighting for a government that is more representative of Lebanon’s people and oriented to the Arab world, not the U.S. or France. It unites the oppressed Shia with progressives and democrats in Sunni, Christian, Druze and Armenian communities.

In a speech Nov. 19, Hezbollah leader Syed Hassan Nasrallah said, “I am asking that all various political factions in Lebanon—including secular, patriotic, communist, socialist, leftist and Nasserite parties—be part of the proposed government of national unity. ...

We are also asking for other Sunni Muslim groups that have previously played major roles in the Lebanese arena to participate in the proposed government of national unity. This includes some former presidents and prime ministers who still enjoy a lot of public

and national support. ... We are demanding our right to a national unity government. This is a just Lebanese, constitutional, political, moral and democratic demand. This is a way to save the country.”

### United States supports sectarian rule

The U.S.-backed March 14 coalition came to power in the so-called “Cedar Revolution” of 2005. It unites Hariri’s Future Movement and Jumblatt’s so-called Progressive Socialist Party with the openly fascist, Christian supremacist Lebanese Forces and Falange parties. Lebanese Forces boss Samir Geagea served 11 years for the assassination of nationalist Lebanese Prime Minister Rashid Karamah.

Under Lebanon’s “confessional” system, the president must be from the wealthy Maronite Christian minority; the prime minister must be a Sunni Muslim. Seats in parliament are allotted based on religion.

Shia Muslims are underrepresented in this system, which is based on census figures from 1932. Palestinians, who have lived here since they were expelled from their homeland by the illegitimate state of Israel in 1948, are completely excluded and disenfranchised. So are more than 200,000 Syrian workers in Lebanon.

### Decades of U.S.-Israeli intervention

This system, created under French colonialism, has

Hezbollah sign on bombed Lebanese homes reads “The New Middle Beast”  
WW PHOTO: LEILANI DOWELL



## Eyewitness Lebanon

# People in South say, ‘We are Hezbollah!’

One thing you soon learn in South Lebanon is that the people don’t just support Hezbollah.

“We are Hezbollah,” says Nur, a 22-year-old artist in the town of Nabatiyeh. Her studio was destroyed by Israeli bombs. She lost 60 of her paintings but was able to repair a dozen others. “It is not two societies. Hezbollah is the people, and the people are Hezbollah.”

Almost the same words were used by Ahmad, a shoe seller in Bint Jbail. It is a village of 6,000 where shoemaking is the main industry. “Here the people are 100 percent Hezbollah. Hezbollah is the people, and the people are Hezbollah,” he tells us.

It is the people of South Lebanon that Israel sought to annihilate. That is clear in village after village reduced to rubble by U.S.-made Israeli bombs, missiles and artillery shells, fired from U.S.-made planes, helicopters and cannons. If you want to judge the hypocrisy of U.S. “outrage” over assassinations in Lebanon, look at the ruined villages of the South.

“They destroyed the town center. They wanted to destroy the life, our economic resources,” says Lubna, a young English

teacher whose home was destroyed. Much of Bint Jbail lies in rubble. But resistance fighters stopped Israeli troops from entering the town.

Ahmed’s son’s house was completely demolished, as was a store his family operated. He and his family spent nearly three weeks sleeping in the mountains to avoid the bombing.

“The minute the bombing stopped we immediately returned,” he tells us. “Fifteen townspeople were killed, and many more injured by bombs and missiles, helicopters and artillery. But Israeli soldiers never got past the town’s outskirts.”

“Hezbollah was heroic,” he continues. “Eighteen fighters stopped them. For 33 days they held off the powerful Israeli army. The government did not defend us, we defended ourselves.”

Lubna and her husband guide us through street after street of ruins where people once lived. Amid the shattered cinderblocks and twisted reinforcing rods, we see broken furniture, a scorched children’s book, a teddy bear.

“Our houses are destroyed, but that’s not the most important thing. We are surviving with our principles, and we believe

been kept in place by U.S. and Israeli guns. U.S. Marines landed in Lebanon to crush a popular insurrection in 1958. Israel has bombed and invaded Lebanon, especially the largely Shiite South, repeatedly over the last 40 years.

Throughout the 1970s Israel armed Christian-supremacist militias to wage war on Muslims, Palestinians and the left. In 1982 Israel’s U.S.-armed war machine flattened West Beirut’s Muslim neighborhoods and installed Gemayel’s uncle, Bashir Gemayel, as president.

After Bashir Gemayel was assassinated, the Israeli army helped his Falangists and Lebanese Forces massacre Palestinians in Sabra and Shatila.

Ronald Reagan then sent U.S. Marines to occupy Beirut while Israeli troops withdrew to the South. The U.S. Sixth Fleet randomly blasted Lebanese villages in order to crush popular resistance. It failed. The resistance movement drove out the Marines in 1984 and Israel in 2000.

The corporate regime in Washington certainly wants to control Lebanon. It is the banking center of the Arab world and was once an export route for Iraqi oil.

But there is a more sinister agenda: a wider war in West Asia. The U.S. has deliberately orchestrated Shiite-Sunni civil strife in Iraq. It now appears to be extending that strategy to the entire region, with the ultimate aim of war against Syria and Iran. Such an adventure would boost the profits of big oil firms and arms manufacturers.

An international conference in solidarity with the resistance brought hundreds of delegates from around the world to Beirut Nov. 16 through 19. Participants heard Hezbollah deputy general secretary Naim Qassem, Lebanese Communist Party leader Khaled Hadadeh and former prime minister Selim Hoss call for the unity of Islamic and secular nationalist and left forces in the struggle against the U.S. and Israel. The conference’s final declaration called for an international front in solidarity with the Lebanese, Palestinian and Iraqi resistance. □

the resistance was right to do what it did. We will support them all our lives because of what they did for us.”

Hezbollah, the Islamic resistance, led the fight against Israel’s U.S.-paid army. But others came as well. The Lebanese Communist Party sent over 100 fighters, 15 of whom were martyred.

The area of Aital Shaab was a particular target of Israeli fury. That was where the resistance intercepted an Israeli raiding party, killing three soldiers and capturing two. Israel claimed the action happened on the soil of occupied Palestine, allegedly justifying the war. But locals tell us Israeli troops often raid South Lebanon, sometimes kidnapping young men for interrogation.

The Israelis lost over 30 soldiers and 12 armored vehicles trying to capture Aital Shaab. Then they airlifted in bulldozers to destroy as much as they could.

The current crisis in Lebanon has raised the specter of renewed Israeli attack. A resistance fighter tells us, “If they come again, we are ready. This summer’s war made us stronger, and if they attack again we will get stronger still. We will win like the people of Vietnam.”

—Bill Cecil, Lebanon





# Not just a slip of the tongue

After his white supremacist attack on two Black audience members was captured on cell video and aired on the Web—tmz.com—and national television, disgraced performer Michael Richards appeared on numerous talk shows and radio programs and expressed scripted surprise about his racist rage, as though he didn’t have an inkling of where it had come from.

Where did it come from? Not from thin air. Richards had pointed at the Black men and shouted, no less than seven times, the “n” slur—a central weapon in the arsenal of white supremacist epithets. He taunted them with a description of how they would have been lynched in this country five decades ago—the hallmark of Klan terror. He concluded that they deserved all this for “interrupting a white man”—invoking the apartheid hierarchy of state-enforced segregation.

All of this was not part of Richards’s “act.” However, he also has a history of racism in performance. In 1986, Richards appeared in black makeup and a wig in an odious portrayal of a blind African American. A clip of that vicious role is posted at defamer.com. That performance is rooted in more than a century of racist minstrel shows that date back to the antebellum South.

Michael Richards was awarded several Emmys for playing the character “Kramer” in the 1990s television sitcom “Seinfeld.” Many critics characterized the show as racist, anti-immigrant, xenophobic, anti-woman, anti-disabled and anti-lesbian and gay. Corporate backers, in turn, armored themselves against charges of racism by arguing that the program ridiculed many groups.

In 1998, the May 7 episode was so egregiously anti-Puerto Rican that it sparked mass protests from New York City to Miami, San Francisco to Philadelphia. In that episode Michael Richards “accidentally” sets the national flag of Puerto Rico on fire, throws it on the ground and stomps on it as the Puerto Rican Day Parade passes. When enraged Puerto Rican marchers rock a car in response, “Kramer” concludes that “It’s like this every day in Puerto Rico.”

This desecration of the Puerto Rican flag was aired during the 100th anniversary of the U.S. imperialist invasion and colonization of this island nation.

That program was no accident. NBC network executives refused input from Puerto Rican community activists who heard the announced title of the upcoming segment a month before it aired.

Who owns NBC? General Electric, the capitalist mega-monopoly that produces nuclear bombs, spy satellites and war planes for the Pentagon.

From GE to NBC, finance capital is at war—on the domestic front, as well as the international front.

Any country that demands its right to self-determination and sovereignty faces military might and racist imperialist propaganda that attempts to dehumanize those in the crosshairs.

Here in the U.S., whole nations are held as virtual domestic colonies—Black, Latin@, Native, Arab and Asian. As police gun down people of color in occupied oppressed communities, white supremacist ideology—spewed from every venue of the dominant capitalist culture—cloaks itself as “free speech.”

The war abroad and the war on the domestic front must be fought in tandem, united shoulder to shoulder against a common enemy—the barons of capitalist industry and banking—who rely on a system of divide and conquer oppression in order to continue to grow rich from exploitation of the laboring peoples here and around the world.

Unity against racism, and every manifestation of bigotry, is the only glue that can cement the anti-capitalist struggle. One immediate act of solidarity is to support any protests and ban against racist performers like Richards. □

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## Workers World Party 1971-1972

# Internal education on gay liberation

By Leslie Feinberg

Workers World Party’s youth group, Youth Against War & Fascism (YAWF), formed an internal Gay Caucus in 1971—which soon after became the Lesbian and Gay Caucus. Bob McCubbin, who played a key role in its political and organizational formation and development, recalls what led up to and followed the establishment of the caucus.

McCubbin writes that he had been doing gay liberation work and Workers World Party (WWP) organizing on the West Coast. He had told leading members of the Buffalo branch he was gay when he moved to San Francisco, where there was no branch, six months after the Stonewall Rebellion.

And he remembered that one of the founders of the party, Vince Copeland, “had actually used the presence in New York of a large gay community as one of his incentives to get me to move to New York City” to work in the party center.

However, not until 1971 did McCubbin ever take the floor at a party meeting to speak from the political perspective of a gay man. “In the late summer of 1971, I left San Francisco for New York City and a few weeks later, at a party meeting, I took the floor to defend the party during a minor factional struggle. One of the charges being leveled was that the party had no position on the gay liberation movement.”

McCubbin stood up and said, “Well, I’m gay, and I’ve always understood that the party supports the struggles of all oppressed people.” There were a few seconds of absolute silence and then strong applause, recalls McCubbin.

McCubbin explains, “What followed the branch meeting where I came out were several months of preliminary discussions with leading comrades in New York, in particular with Vince and Dottie [Dorothy Ballan, a founder of WWP], and with a few lesbian and gay comrades in party branches.

“At the end of 1971 or the beginning of 1972, the party held a winter conference, and I asked Deirdre [Griswold] if an announcement could be read at the Saturday plenum to the effect that a meeting of lesbian and gay comrades and friends would be held in the evening. Deirdre assured me that would be no problem.

“Well, about 50 people showed up!” Not all of them were LGBT, McCubbin recalls. “It was a wonderful expression of solidarity on the part of many heterosexually oriented comrades, but the 12 or 15 of us who were lesbian and gay had to schedule a further meeting the following morning to get some work done after the evening meeting full of praise for us and solidarity statements.

“This conference,” McCubbin concludes, “marked the beginning of a party-wide effort to educate ourselves and our class on this issue.”

### Sam Marcy vs. gay oppression

Workers World Party founder Sam Marcy made a tremendous contribution to the development of the party as a revolutionary communist organization, and to the historic struggle for sexual liberation, when he oriented the party about the gay struggle politically, theoretically and historically in a significant part of a 1972 internal document he wrote as orientation for the party conference.

Marcy said of the oppression of nationalities, women, youth and gay people: “The degeneration of monopoly capitalism into state monopoly capitalism carries to an extreme all the forms of oppression which the capitalist system, in the previous epoch, had engendered and developed. As the crisis of the social system becomes more and more apparent, the need of the ruling class to unload its burden on the most oppressed sections of society becomes more evident. Only by dividing, only by fragmenting and continually pitting different elements of the oppressed masses against each other, can the capitalist establishment maintain its sway over all society, and hope to survive.”

This same sharpening of the persecution and oppression, however, creates the impetus for a genuinely progressive militancy and resurgence of Black and Latin@ peoples, women, youth and gay people.

Marcy characterized the lack of widespread support for the gay struggle in the progressive movement at that time as a legacy of the deep-seated prejudice that emanated from the religious bigotry of the Middle Ages and its reinforcement throughout the entire course of capitalist development.

“It is particularly significant,” he wrote, “that the public change in attitude—such as it is—comes on the heels of a very formidable wave of struggle by gay people, a veritable ‘coming out’ in a most demonstrative way. Gay Pride took a cue from Black Pride. ...

“Without the struggle launched by gay people,” Marcy stressed, “the prejudices which have been ground into the consciousness of the masses by indoctrination would not even have been challenged, let alone shaken to their foundations.

“All this shows how intimate is the connection between the ideas of a particular time—even progressive ideas—and the conditions of the time, in this case, the state of the struggle.”

### ‘Influence of October Revolution’

Marcy continued, “An important influence in the progressive movement insofar as the gay struggle is concerned, dates back to the victory of the October Revolution in Russia. In early 1917, the Soviet government annulled all laws which restricted the rights of homosexuals. It also, of course, annulled all the reactionary laws pertaining to divorce as well as the feudal-bourgeois family relations.

“What is important about this,” he emphasized, “is that for the first time in history, a workers’ government established equality in law—and to a measurable degree also in fact—between men and women, for heterosexuals and homosexuals.”

Marcy noted that, “Unfortunately this period of very progressive development was short-lived, and was succeeded by a period of reaction with the rise of Stalin to power.” The 1934 move by the bureaucratic grouping at the helm of the workers’ state to reinstate laws against homosexuality, Marcy explained, had a profoundly negative ideological impact on communist parties around the world that looked to the Soviet Union for political leadership.

“Our party,” Marcy stated, “which bases itself on Marxism-Leninism, looks to the early model of the Soviet Union as the embodiment of what our own political position should be in relation to the struggle of gay people.

“Our first, most elementary and fundamental duty as well as objective on this question is to completely eliminate and abolish all forms of persecution and oppression of gay people. It must also fight against all ideological, political and social manifestations of gay oppression which may be reflected in our own ranks.”

Marcy wrote that the demand to end all sexual oppression and persecution “is really an elementary democratic demand which a bourgeois democracy should be able to grant along with all other democratic demands. But imperialist democracy tends to restrict the elementary rights of all people—not only gay, women, youth, Brown and Black. It is only the struggle that can wrest concessions. In the long run, only the abolition of the capitalist system can produce a lasting, free and equal treatment of all peoples.”

Marcy concluded that although regression in the Soviet Union had bequeathed a backward ideological legacy on the question of homosexuality, “The socialist revolution is a permanent revolution, one of continuous change. Along with many other changes that need to be made in the socialist countries, the gay question is surely one of them.

“In the meantime, we ought to concentrate on preparing our own revolution, of which the struggle for the liberation of all oppressed people, including gay people, is an indispensable condition for victory of the revolution.”

*Next: Workers World Party—activism, not opportunism.*  
*E-mail: [lfeinberg@workers.org](mailto:lfeinberg@workers.org)*



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



COLOMBIA

# Moral victory for Simon Trinidad

By Berta Joubert-Ceci

A mistrial was declared on Nov. 21 in the case of the U.S. government against Simon Trinidad after jurors for a third time handed a note to the judge stating that they could not reach a unanimous decision. Trinidad had served as a peace negotiator for the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC).

During the more than four weeks that Trinidad was being tried in federal court in Washington, D.C., the prosecution presented 21 witnesses and much audio-visual evidence. Chief Judge Thomas Hogan did not allow the defense to present expert witnesses who could explain the history and nature of the FARC and the role of the United States in Colombia, both issues crucial to the case, stating that would “confuse the jury and extend the hearing.”

The main witness for the defense was Trinidad himself, who testified for several days.

Trinidad was initially accused of kidnapping, terrorism and drug trafficking, this last charge to be heard at a separate trial in the near future. The five charges in the current trial were all related to the kidnapping accusation, which stems from a February 2003 incident in which a small surveillance plane flown by U.S. military contractors crash-landed in territory controlled by the insurgents in Caquetá, in the south of Colombia. The agents—Thomas Howes, Keith Stansell and Marc Gonsalves—have since been held captive by the FARC.

Even though Trinidad was not involved in the act—in fact, he was not even in the area—the prosecution tried in every way possible to show his association to the event and thus his “conspiracy” in the matter.

From the very opening of the trial, Judge Hogan clearly showed a bias towards the prosecution, giving the impression that he was presiding over a trial that could have only one outcome, the condemnation of Trinidad.

However, on Nov. 17, after hours of deliberation, the jury handed a note to Hogan that read in part, “We believe our differences to be sincerely based on deep

thought and irresolvable.” Hogan refused to accept the outcome and instructed the jurors to continue arguing until they could return a unanimous verdict.

A second note was delivered to the judge on Nov. 20 declaring another deadlock. Instead of declaring a mistrial then, the judge pressured the jury to reach a consensus so that they could be “free” to return home for the “Thanksgiving” holiday. He had told the lawyers that in the case the jury deadlocked a second time, he would give them what in legal parlance is called the “dynamite charge” and ask those in the minority to reconsider their position. Eight members of the jury are African Americans.

Because the jury’s decision has to be unanimous, the judge had to declare a mistrial after the third impasse. Now two options are possible: to dismiss the case, or to try it again from the beginning.

Regardless of the final outcome, this is a moral victory for Simon Trinidad and the FARC. In spite of all the horrendous attempts to convince the jury of the “terrorist” nature of Trinidad and his organization—labeled as such by the U.S. government—a unanimous condemnation was not reached.

This trial was the first time that a Colombian insurgent, extradited from his country, had been tried in the United States. It marked a new road in Washington’s “antiterrorism” war.

It happened at the same time that “some types” of torture had been ruled legal by the U.S. Congress and when U.S. “secret” prisons hold an unknown number of people throughout the world, away from public scrutiny. By bringing Trinidad to the U.S. for trial, it also attempted to bypass the peoples’ movement for justice not only in Colombia, but in Latin America and the Middle East.

## Uribe visits U.S.

This is a critical time in Colombia, where the government is facing a real shake-up that, if furthered, could implicate its own president.

On the week of Nov. 13, Colombian President Álvaro Uribe rushed to the

United States after the midterm elections here gave the Democrats control of Congress. Uribe wanted to make sure that the Democrats would continue the current U.S. policies of Plan Colombia and the U.S.-Colombia Free Trade Agreement. Since it was Democratic President Bill Clinton who initiated Plan Colombia, which has given Uribe over \$3 billion in aid for the “war on drugs,” it is likely the policy will stay the same.

During the latest of his numerous visits to Washington, Uribe was very quick to comment on Trinidad’s case, saying that his conviction would in the end “bring peace.” FARC, on the other hand, has issued an open letter to intellectuals, artists and the people of the United States asking them to call on the Bush administration to help reach a prisoner exchange that would include the three U.S. agents and Trinidad.

But in Colombia, Uribe had to be pressed, even by representatives of the oligarchy, before he would comment on the current governmental scandal.

## Paramilitaries in Congress

In a dramatic turn of events, the Colombian Supreme Court has issued an arrest warrant against three legislators: Senators Álvaro García and Jairo Enrique Merlano and representative of the lower chamber Erik Julio Morris. Both García and Morris have surrendered to the

authorities. They are charged with ties to the right-wing death squads, or paramilitaries—which the public has known for a long time.

The paramilitaries are responsible for drug trafficking and bloody massacres throughout the country. They all belong to the political party that nominated and elected Uribe, who by necessity will be implicated in the case. The investigation, which the progressive movement finds too slow, continues and more indictments are expected.

Uribe is not foreign to these accusations; in fact, he was number 82—Pablo Escobar was number 79—on former President George H.W. Bush’s list of members and associates of the Medellín cartel.

His inclusion on the list reads: “82. Álvaro Uribe Velez—a Colombian politician and senator dedicated to collaboration with the Medellín cartel at high government levels. Uribe was linked to a business involved in narcotics activities in the U.S. His father was murdered in Colombia for his connection with the narcotic traffickers. Uribe has worked for the Medellín cartel and is a close personal friend of Pablo Escobar Gaviria. He has participated in Escobar’s political campaign to win the position of Assistant Parliamentarian to Jorge (Ortega). Uribe has been one of the politicians from the senate who has attacked all forms of the extradition treaty.” (anncol.org, Nov. 15) □

## Latin America briefs

### Chávez: ‘More power to the people!’

One week before the Dec. 3 presidential election in Venezuela, hundreds of thousands of supporters of President Hugo Chávez, wearing red T-shirts and waving red banners, rallied in downtown Caracas.

It is time, Chávez told the crowd, to give more power to the people.

More power, he said, should be given to “communities, the poor, the people who cry, work and study.”

The Venezuelan leader spoke in solidarity with the Cuban Revolution, noting that the election takes place on the 50th anniversary of Fidel Castro’s arrival in Cuba with other armed rebels aboard the vessel *Granma* to launch the guerrilla war that eventually brought the revolution to power.

“Fidel,” said Chávez to the roars of his

supporters, “applause from Venezuela! Long live revolutionary Cuba!”

The pro-Chávez rally came one day after a large demonstration in support of the U.S.-backed, anti-communist opposition leader Manual Rosales.

Independent polls have given Chávez a 20-point lead over Rosales in the presidential election. But the opposition is already preparing to declare “election fraud” on Dec. 4, and mobilizing its supporters around the slogan “defend the vote.”

The U.S. government has funneled millions of dollars to opposition groups inside Venezuela through organizations like the National Endowment for Democracy and the U.S. Agency for International Development.

—Robert Dobrow

## Latin America briefs

### Federal police attack Oaxaca movement

Oaxaca, Mexico, Gov. Ulises Ruíz Ortiz has ordered that the federal police (PFP) attack the teachers and other popular organizations that have been struggling since May to depose the governor. After battles throughout the day of Nov. 25—the popular organizations fought back—140 people were wounded, 100 arrested and three killed, according to the Mexican daily La Jornada. (Nov. 26)

The battles broke out after the seventh “megamarch” of thousands of people on the south of Oaxaca City ended, and some of the marchers attempted to surround the PFP with a circle of demonstrators. Police, who have been occupying the central square since they drove out popular organizations, attacked with tear gas and thrown stones. In some places they fired bullets at protesters, who fought back as best they could with homemade weapons and shields, some liberated from the PFP earlier.

The struggle began with a teachers’ strike last spring and grew into a general demand that the governor resign. In the course of the summer, the Popular Assembly of the People of Oaxaca (APPO)—made up of hundreds of local, community

and Indigenous groups with the teachers’ union at its core—began to act as an alternative government of the state. APPO not only had more popular loyalty in Oaxaca than Gov. Ruíz, it drew support from progressives all over Mexico and throughout the world. Some of the megamarches drew hundreds of thousands of participants. Oaxaca is one of Mexico’s poorest states and has the highest proportion of Indigenous peoples in its population.

Though the governor had lost popular support, Ruíz was still in control of the armed police and had the right-wing federal government—which narrowly won an election through fraud in July—to back him up. On Nov. 26, Ruíz paraded through Oaxaca City surrounded by armed police and boasted that he had won the battle with APPO.

Dozens of APPO activists have been arrested since Nov. 25. Late reports were that the PFP was threatening an attack on the Benito Juárez University, where some APPO activists had taken refuge. (Prensa Latina, Nov. 28) There was no sign however, that the people had conceded victory to Ruíz. The struggle continues.

—John Catalinotto

### Ecuador elects Correa president

With over 85 percent of the votes counted by Nov. 28, Rafael Correa was leading in the second round of the election for president of Ecuador. His opponent, billionaire banana magnate and Washington’s favorite Alvaro Noboa, had less than 42 percent of the vote, compared to Correa’s 58 percent. While Noboa still refused to concede defeat, world leaders were already congratulating Correa on his victory.

The first calls came in from the anti-imperialist Venezuelan President Hugo Chávez and from Brazilian President Luis Ignacio “Lula” da Silva. While the U.S. State Department did not contest the fairness of the elections, it did not congratulate Correa.

During the election campaign, Correa promised to cancel the agreement allowing the United States to use the military base at Manta, located 20 minutes from the borders of Colombia, where there is a revolutionary struggle—both armed and unarmed—against an ultra-right regime. Manta was to be “the main hub for U.S. surveillance flights over” Latin America.

(Washington Post, Jan. 25, 2001)

Correa also promised to avoid restarting negotiations for a “Free Trade” Agreement with the United States and to develop friendly relations with Chávez and other progressive Latin American leaders. Correa also said Ecuador could rejoin the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries.

With a population of over 13 million people, Ecuador is the biggest producer of bananas on the continent and possesses the fourth-biggest supply of petroleum. In April 2005 a mass uprising deposed President Lucio Gutiérrez, who had betrayed his campaign promises by suddenly announcing he was “the best ally of Bush in Latin America.” A year later a mass uprising of peasants and Indigenous peoples threw out Gutiérrez’s successor, Alfredo Palacios.

Now the people of Ecuador have joined those of Venezuela, Uruguay, Brazil and Argentina by electing a declared opponent of Washington’s neoliberal program as its head of government.

—John Catalinotto



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## Trabajador@s inmigrantes lideran huelga La solidaridad es la clave para reinstalar a los obreros despedidos

Por el colectivo de FIST  
(Luchemos Contra el Imperialismo)  
Tar Heel, NC

Quinientos trabajador@s dejaron sus puestos de trabajo aquí en la planta empacadora Smithfield el 16 de noviembre en respuesta a los recientes despidos de 75 trabajador@s inmigrantes, much@s de l@s cuales apoyan los esfuerzos de sindicalizar la planta. Al siguiente día, la planta fue nuevamente cerrada cuando 1.000 trabajador@s incluyendo a much@s africano-american@s se unieron a la huelga.

Después de dos días de huelga, los patronos de la planta Smithfield Packing aceptaron las demandas para detener los despidos masivos y reconsiderar la implementación en la planta de sus políticas sobre inmigración. Por primera vez la compañía aceptó reunirse con un grupo de trabajador@s elegid@s por l@s mism@s trabajador@s para continuar las negociaciones sobre los asuntos de la planta y las preocupaciones de l@s emplead@s. La reunión tendrá lugar el 21 de noviembre.

L@s trabajador@s han estado luchando por 12 años para sindicalizar la planta procesadora de carne de cerdo más grande del mundo, la cual está situada en una región rural pobre del este de Carolina del Norte.

El estado de Carolina del Norte es un estado con “derecho al trabajo”—lo que quiere decir que es oficialmente un estado en contra de los sindicatos. La fuerza laboral es la segunda de menor organización sindical en todo el país. Hay ahora una gran población latina de rápido crecimiento.

Aún así, la planta Smithfield Packing ha utilizado millones de dólares en una campaña para intimidar a l@s trabajador@s y evitar la entrada del sindicato.

Cuando el sindicato United Food and Commercial Workers inició una campaña organizativa en Smithfield en 1994, la fuerza laboral era en su mayoría africana-americana. Ahora es por lo menos un 65% latina, cerca del 30% africana-americana y el resto es blanca o indígena.

La compañía ha usado el racismo y otras tácticas para atemorizar e intimi-

dar y así evitar la entrada del sindicato. En las elecciones de 1997, a Smithfield se le encontró culpable de violar más de 40 leyes laborales. Pero los empresarios obstruyeron con apelaciones la decisión de la corte durante ocho años.

Como fuera explicado en un reporte de la organización en pro de los derechos humanos, Human Rights Watch en el 2005 titulado “Sangre, Sudor y Lágrimas,” l@s trabajador@s de la Smithfield han resultado mutilad@s, herid@s y hasta perdido sus vidas por las condiciones de trabajo en la planta. Simpatizantes y organizador@s del sindicato han sido golpead@s y encarcelad@s injustamente por la fuerza policial privada de Smithfield.

En los últimos meses, el apoyo al sindicato ha crecido. Esto, combinado con la pérdida de la última apelación por la compañía del fallo de la Junta Nacional de Relaciones Laborales, ha alentado a l@s trabajador@s quienes dicen que se sienten cerca de ganar un contrato y una victoria histórica.

En las semanas antes del paro, la compañía despidió a 75 trabajador@s latin@s

con el pretexto de que no se podían verificar sus documentos del Seguro Social. Algun@s de ell@s habían trabajado en la planta por dos o tres años. En una entrevista en Smithfield, un trabajador dijo que l@s trabajador@s creían que la empresa estaba utilizando el pretexto de los documentos para deshacerse de l@s que apoyaban al sindicato.

L@s trabajador@s recién inmigrantes se están dando cuenta de su poder. El Primero de Mayo de 2006, miles de trabajador@s de la Smithfield y sus familiares se unieron por la lucha para los derechos de l@s inmigrantes. Las manifestaciones del Primero de Mayo alrededor del país demostraron que esta comunidad tiene poder y que la unidad acerca de la lucha por los derechos de l@s inmigrantes y la lucha por la justicia para l@s trabajador@s puede adelantar la causa de la clase trabajadora en general.

La campaña por la Justicia en Smithfield continúa. No va a terminar hasta que l@s trabajador@s ganen un contrato y el reconocimiento sindical. □

## En el aniversario de la Revolución Mexicana Movimiento popular mexicano juramenta su propio presidente

Por Leilani Dowell

El 20 de noviembre, en el 96to aniversario de la Revolución Mexicana de 1910, el presidente de México Vicente Fox, decidió cancelar el desfile tradicional que iba a llevarse a cabo ese día. Sin embargo, el pueblo mexicano, inspirándose en el espíritu de resistencia que se conmemora en esa fecha, siguió su lucha contra la opresión.

En la Ciudad de México, una inauguración popular fue celebrada para juramentar a Andrés Manuel López Obrador como el legítimo presidente de México. Esto fue un rechazo masivo al derechista partidario de los EEUU, Felipe Calderón, que se espera juramente a la presidencia el primero de diciembre a pesar de la protesta masiva contra la elección corrupta y fraudulenta del 2 de julio. Prensa Asociada reporta que miles se fueron concentrando en la mañana del 20 de noviembre para participar en la inauguración de López Obrador.

La PA citó a López Obrador diciendo, “Nadie quiere violencia en nuestro país, pero hay personas que proporcionan justificaciones para la violencia. Hay muchas personas que dicen que después del 2 de julio, la vía electoral ya no sirve”. (20 de noviembre)

El boletín del Internet Narco News reporta que en Chiapas, miles de residentes indígenas exitosamente bloquearon todas las carreteras principales en el estado, el 20 de noviembre al permanecer de pie en formaciones silenciosas a través de las carreteras, en solidaridad con la lucha del pueblo de Oaxaca. Los bloqueos y otros paros en favor a la huelga dejaron

las calles “inusitadamente tranquilas” en un día feriado nacional que de ordinario produce mucho tráfico hacia los lugares turísticos en la zona. (20 de noviembre)

Las manifestaciones siguen en Oaxaca para demandar la renuncia de Ulises Ruiz y la retirada de la Policía Federal Preventiva (PFP), la cual ha ocupando la plaza central de la ciudad de Oaxaca tratando brutalmente a l@s manifestantes.

Por lo menos 30 manifestantes “han desaparecido” desde la llegada de la policía federal. El Universal reporta el caso de René Trujillo Martínez, un presentador de programas para Radio Universidad — la estación radial de la Asamblea Popular de los Pueblos de Oaxaca (APPO) que es la organización que ha encabezado la lucha contra la represión en Oaxaca desde mayo pasado.

El 7 de noviembre Trujillo y dos amigos más fueron secuestrados de la casa de Trujillo, manteniéndolos cautivos en un almacén, interrogados y torturados con choques eléctricos, pinchándolos con agujas por debajo de las uñas, estrangulándolos y dándole palizas durante tres días. Luego les forzaron a fotografiarse con



pistolas, llevándolos a la oficina del fiscal general en Oaxaca acusados de poseer armas ilegales. (20 de noviembre)

Las manifestaciones más recientes se han enfocado en las violaciones y el acosamiento sexual de las mujeres de Oaxaca por miembros de la PFP. Nancy Davies reporta que el 19 de noviembre más de doscientas personas rodearon a la PFP, llevando espejos “para que pudieran verse tal y como verdaderamente son.” (narconews.com, 20 de nov) El 20 de noviembre una manifestación de la Coordinadora de Mujeres de Oaxaca fue reprimida por fuerzas policíacas quienes les echaron agua mezclada con chile picante en las caras de las manifestantes. (Prensa Latina, 20 de noviembre)

Un Congreso Constitutivo de la Asamblea



Popular de los Pueblos de Oaxaca ha sido formado reuniéndose durante el fin de semana del 10-12 de noviembre para definir su propia constitución, y elegir un Consejo de Estado. El Congreso anunció, “A pesar del clima de represión que reina alrededor del movimiento de los pueblos de Oaxaca, es necesario no detenernos sino seguir hacia adelante para lograr nuestros objetivos y lograr una solución para las demandas de los pueblos de Oaxaca.” El Consejo de Estado anunció sus próximos eventos, incluyendo un Foro Estatal Indígena el 28 y 29 de noviembre, y la participación en el movimiento nacional contra la inauguración de Felipe Calderón el 1 de diciembre. (narconews.com) □