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DEC. 21, 2006

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50¢

DEC. 16: 'NO BUSINESS AS USUAL'  
Stop racist police brutality  
DEC. 21: 'DAY OF OUTRAGE, SHUT DOWN WALL STREET!'

By LeiLani Dowell  
New York

Mass anger towards the racist police state continues to be displayed following the deaths by police bullets of 23-year-old Sean Bell in New York and 92-year-old Kathryn Johnston in Atlanta.

Thousands rallied at New York Police Department headquarters on Dec. 6 in a militant and defiant rally that ended in a non-permitted march.

New York City Councilperson Charles Barron told attendees: "Every time they come into our community and disrespect our Black youth, disrespect our families, we are saying we have had enough. ... We need to let this system know that they need to fear us." (allhiphop.com, Dec. 7)

On Dec. 9, two marches—one organized by the NAACP, another by the New Black Panther Party—were held in Jamaica, Queens, the area where the killing of Bell took place. A candlelight vigil was held on Dec. 11 in Harlem.

Brutality continues across the country

Yet the outrage about police terror hasn't yet stopped cops across the country from "doing their



WW PHOTO: LAL ROOHK

job"—criminalization and repression of the poor and people of color in the most brutal ways.

Rather than address the issue of racist profiling that led to Bell's death, New York police have since engaged in more profiling in an attempt to cover their tracks. After a week of reports that said that only three men were in the car that cops riddled with 50 bullets—killing Bell and wounding Trent Benefield and Joseph Guzman—police suddenly changed their story to state that there was a fourth man, and that this man may have had a gun.

What followed was a dragnet that rounded up Black

men throughout southeast Queens. According to Juan González of the Daily News: "In the week after the tragic incident, Queens cops conducted raids and arrests of several of Bell's friends, all on unrelated charges. They also detained for questioning several men who attended the bachelor party for Bell that night at the club. In each case, police grilled the men about Bell and the alleged fourth man." (Dec. 12)

In a preliminary police department report obtained by the New York Times, witnesses, including Benefield and Guzman, made no mention of a fourth man. In addition, no mention is made of

a police search for the "fourth man" immediately after the shooting. (Associated Press, Dec. 11)

In Los Angeles, civil rights groups are again calling for the installation of surveillance cameras in all police stations and patrol cars after an officer was caught on videotape applying a chokehold to a handcuffed 16-year-old Latino man inside a police station.

The officer—who was unaware that hidden cameras had been set up in the room—then uncuffed the teenager and challenged him to fight. The young man, who is

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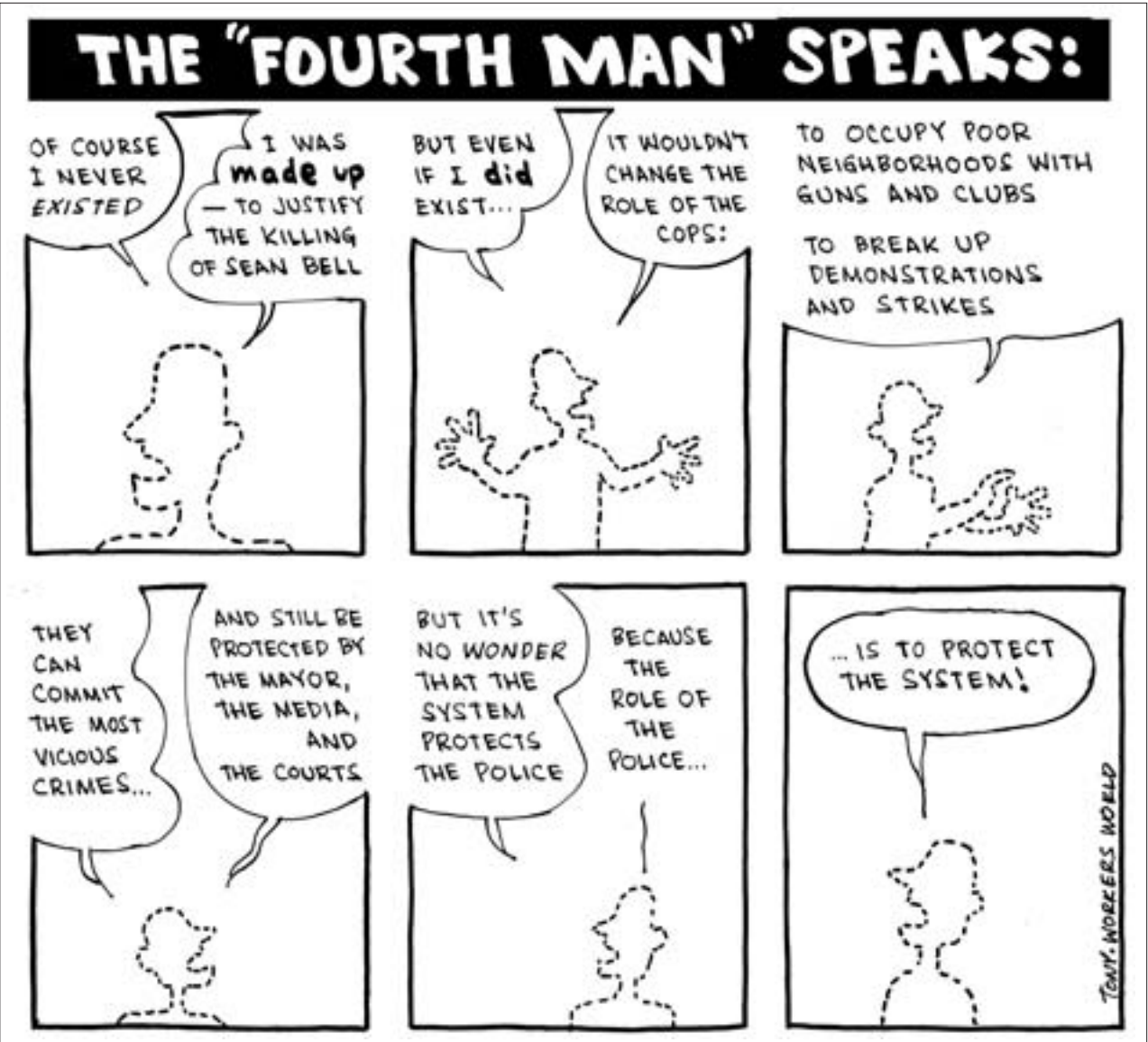
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THREATS TO HEALTH CARE:

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Applying Marxist method in early 1970s

WWP searched for roots of lesbian/gay oppression

By Leslie Feinberg

In educating the party as a whole on the importance of supporting gay liberation, Workers World Party (WWP) founder Sam Marcy noted in 1972 that, when it came to the origins and development of this oppression, “No special Marxist study or theory has been advanced as far as we know.”

Marcy stressed, “Marxists, of course, should reject any variety of bourgeois psychological theories. Most of these psychological approaches are in reality extensions of the general bourgeois ideology.

“Marxists on the other hand are historical and dialectical materialists who seek the basic causes of all social phenomena from material conditions, of which psychology is a mere reflection. Marxists deal with social phenomena and the struggle of classes.”

He referred to the contributions that the revolutionary Marxist movement had made to the “national question.” He was referring to the Marxist examination and articulation of the origins of racism, white supremacist ideology, oppressor nation jingoism and xenophobia, the oppression of whole nations in the capitalist era, the super-oppression of peoples around the world in the colonial and imperialist epochs, and therefore the right to national self-determination.

Marcy also mentioned Marxist contributions to a materialist understanding of women’s oppression—the “woman question.” Karl Marx’s lifelong collaborator, Frederick Engels, wrote a foundational historical and theoretical contribution in 1884, “The Origin of the Family, Private Property, and the State.” Revolutionary Marxists since then have continued to develop historical, theoretical and ideological clarity as a contribution to the struggle of women for liberation from the additional burdens imposed on them in patriarchal, class-divided society.

It may jar some readers today to hear their oppression or other struggles referred to as a “question”: the national question, the woman question, the gay question. For more than a century, however, this formulation has been used to emphasize the theoretical importance that revolutionary Marxists place on bringing battles against oppression to the left-wing political agenda. Locating the earliest tendrils of oppression in the development of class-divided societies is a profound contribution to eventually uprooting it.

Therefore, Marxists study when oppression arose and who profits from it in order to deepen solidarity and support for liberation struggles and strengthen the revolutionary movement to overturn capitalism. Such an analysis also lays the basis for understanding how a socialist economic system can create the material basis for ultimately winning economic and social liberation from exploitation and oppression, and the extrication of humanity from millennia of divide-and-rule ideology justifying these conditions.

Marcy noted, “We know of no theory which explains the gay question from the point of view of the historical class struggle.”

He concluded, “If such a theory is developed, we will study it. For the time being, however, we are not advancing any special theory regarding the gay question.”

Sam Marcy was not ending the subject, he was opening it.

‘Months of discussion followed’

Months of party dialogue followed. Bob McCubbin—a WWP leader who a year earlier had founded the lesbian and gay caucus of the party youth organization, Youth Against War & Fascism (YAWF)—recalls that the continuing party discussion focused on four goals.

The first was how to concretely demonstrate support for, and solidarity with, the autonomous gay liberation movement, of which WWP lesbian, gay and trans members were also a part.

“Second,” McCubbin writes, “we wanted to deepen the party’s understanding of the issues being raised by the gay liberation movement and, if possible, provide a Marxist analysis of lesbian and gay oppression.

“Third, we felt a serious responsibility to bring the issues that this movement was raising to the general progressive movement, which often amounted to challenging homophobia within the movement.

“Fourth, we wanted to make the issue of gay liberation a working-class issue. This was a formidable challenge in a period of relative labor quiescence.”

Many heterosexual party leaders took up these tasks together with their lesbian, gay, bi and trans comrades—no one with

more vigor than WWP founding leader Dorothy Ballan, affectionately addressed as “Dottie” by her comrades. Ballan left her own communist imprint on the struggle for women’s liberation with the party’s publication in January 1971 of her pamphlet “Feminism & Marxism.”

McCubbin remembers, “I had felt the need for a theoretical analysis of lesbian and gay oppression from the time I read Engels’ ‘Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State.’ I remember very clearly reading [it] at this time, being very excited by this historically based explanation of the oppression of women, and feeling that there must be a parallel, historically based explanation for the oppression of homosexuals.”

After the 1972 conference, McCubbin states, many of his heterosexual comrades offered help. Dorothy Ballan in particular, he notes, assigned herself the task of helping to lay the basis for such an analysis.

“As I mentioned above,” McCubbin writes, “one of the goals the party set for itself was the education of the party membership and of our class on this issue. So, in addition to informal discussions, Dottie produced a series of educational programs based on Engels’ work, but also on our general view of oppressed people and their struggles as part of the overall struggle of our class. These educationals were made available party-wide and were extremely helpful to me in my effort to grapple theoretically with the issue.” In those educationals, Ballan developed the view that there was a connection between women’s and lesbian/gay oppression.

McCubbin reminds today’s readers, “When I enter LGBT bookstores these days, the wealth of material now available makes me dizzy. In those days, even though I worked in one of the great academic libraries of the U.S. and spent many hours—when I was supposed to

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



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# City workers' victories help build union

By Dante Strobino  
Raleigh, N.C.

Under pressure, Raleigh City Council members voted six to two on Dec. 5 to authorize payroll deduction for the Raleigh City Workers Union-UE Local 150. This vote reflects the power being gained by city workers, first exercised in their mid-September strike.

Pushed even further by the workers' power, the council also voted five to three to waive the \$1,000 administrative fee to process the union membership forms.

The Raleigh City Workers Union now has both payroll deduction and meet-and-confer status. It has also won a number of other significant gains through unity and struggle. These include all overtime being paid at time and a half—previously workers were only getting compensatory time and often getting nothing; 15 percent to 20 percent pay increases for entry-level positions citywide; reduced forced overtime; temporary workers made permanent citywide; sick leave policy improvements; some of the worst management forced out and unfair suspensions reversed.

In addition to sanitation department workers, other city workers in Raleigh—from the parks and recreation department, public works and public utilities—are

beginning to join the union and attend Raleigh City Workers Union meetings.

Beyond Raleigh, the momentum from these tremendous gains is being felt across the entire state of North Carolina.

More than 60 workers from nine cities across North Carolina attended the Dec. 9 Statewide City Workers Summit. UE Local 150 has established City Worker chapters in Durham, Charlotte, Chapel Hill and Rocky Mount. Recently UE began reaching out to city workers in Wilson, Greenville, Goldsboro and Greensboro, whose leadership attended the summit. At the summit workers spoke out and received important training to build the union.

Durham city workers also staged a several hour work stoppage the morning of Nov. 27 to bring attention to their issues.

The struggle in the South—and North Carolina in particular—is intensifying as



City workers summit, Raleigh, N.C

PHOTO: ANDREW DINKELAKER

workers across the state continue to walk out of their jobs in organized resistance.

From the Fayetteville Goodyear workers striking with the Steel Workers union, from the Smithfield Hog Plant with mostly immigrant workers striking, to all job actions carried out by city workers, the atmosphere is changing.

As Saladin Muhammad, organizer with UE Local 150 and chair of Black Workers for Justice, explains in "Raleigh City Workers Exercise Power and Build Their Union," his recently released pamphlet: "The anti-union Taft Hartley Act enacted in 1947 during the period of legal segregation established a section (14 b.),

allowing states to establish additional laws to complement their racist state laws. The racist oppression of African Americans in the South and the division of Black and white workers was and continues to be the basis for dividing the Southern and larger U.S. working class and maintaining the South as a region of cheap labor."

Workers are organizing against the brutal anti-worker, anti-woman, racist laws, and a movement has been developing to repeal N.C. General Statute 95-98, which prohibits public-sector collective bargaining.

It is a challenge to the left as a whole to support the demands of Raleigh and other city workers as they struggle for justice. □

## GOODYEAR STRIKERS

# 'Hang tough' for 11 weeks

By Martha Grevatt  
Cleveland

With the winter holidays coming up, most people have taken their Halloween decorations down. An exception is on the picket line outside Goodyear World Headquarters in Akron, Ohio, where a skeleton still hangs—to make the point that Goodyear is "picking us [workers] to the bone."

Since the last time Workers World was at the line the strikers added a portable toilet with a sign reading, "Mahogany Think Tank." This is a reference to the "Mahogany Room" where the top executives strategize behind closed doors.

Clearly the strikers have kept their sense of humor despite the hardships they face. They also have kept up their spirit of solidarity. "We're hanging tough," according to Mark, a striker braving below-freezing temperatures Dec. 8.

Labor history in Akron is defined by the United Rubber Workers' struggle to unionize the tire plants. Now most of the plants have closed. The only Goodyear plant still open makes specialized tires for NASCAR races and employs fewer than 500 union workers. Three have crossed the line, a sad sign of the economic times, but they have almost no friends in this town and their example is not likely to be repeated. No member of the rubber union, now merged with the United Steelworkers, had crossed a picket line since 1935.

The strike has almost universal community support. Mark reported regular donations of food, coffee and much-needed firewood.

This is a more-than-nationwide strike, hitting 12 plants in the United States and four in Canada. The issues are plant closings, pay cuts, and cuts in pensions and retiree health benefits, all of which the union considers nonnegotiable.

The Steel Workers union has called for a boycott of Goodyear products. The

Canadian Labour Congress has already endorsed the boycott.

Supporters are building the boycott with mass leaflet distributions in many cities, although many Goodyear shops are running out of tires to boycott. Mark shared some inside information from a typical salaried employee now attempting to do the job of an hourly production worker. Normally a patent lawyer, she said no new models are being designed because all the inventors are building tires. The union questions the safety of scab tires, especially after serious injuries occurred during testing in preparation for a NASCAR race in Arizona.

Akron is not the only city where union spirit is strong. An electronic message to members from the leadership of Steel Workers Local 307 in Topeka, Kan., reads:

"The temporary workers (scabs) are producing an insignificant amount of production. Goodyear is bringing in these scab workers into our local community and paying for their food and lodging at the Holiday Inn Holidome and the Ramada Inn, and also paying these scabs Union-negotiated wages. The scabs are spending most of their time in the plant doing nothing or painting guard rails and mopping floors, a lot of wasted time and money!

"It's time that Goodyear came to its senses, agrees to meet its obligations, rids our communities of the human scum they've brought in to do our jobs and work with us to negotiate an honorable settlement. The Company should not underestimate the unity of the USW across the U.S. and Canada and our determination to make Goodyear 'Do the Right Thing' in spite of themselves!"

A national day of solidarity has been called for Dec. 16, with actions at Goodyear stores in at least 100 cities. To find a demonstration in your town, go to [www.gkdsolidarityexpress.org](http://www.gkdsolidarityexpress.org). □

## Three killed, 44 injured in plant explosion

# Was corporation at fault?

By Bryan G. Pfeifer  
Milwaukee

Minutes before an explosion that blew up an annex storage building at the Falk Corp. in Milwaukee on Dec. 6, skilled machinist David L. Mays smelled gas. He and co-worker Clyde Lee investigated and found the valve on a 30,000-gallon liquid propane tank hissing. Both workers saw the illuminated warning light. ([www.jsonline.com](http://www.jsonline.com))

At this point a supervisor arrived with maintenance workers, one of whom closed the valve. The pump to run the tank was turned off and doors and windows were opened for ventilation, but Mays was skeptical. Although the supervisor ordered everyone back to work, Mays, a 39-year worker at the plant, said he told everyone they should clear out.

There is still a dispute as to whether company officials put in motion an evacuation plan in other areas of the plant's sprawling complex. About 700 workers make large heavy gears at Falk, mostly for mining.

Two workers who stayed behind to help with the propane tank—Thomas LeTendre and Daniel T. Kuster—were killed in the blast, which completely destroyed the annex building, damaged nearby buildings and could be heard and felt miles away. Curtis J. Lane was also killed in the blast and at least 44 workers were injured.

Mays, a Vietnam veteran, said the blast reminded him of incoming mortar shells. He said of his co-workers—women and men—"We've all been there for over 20 years. We are all like a family."

The Falk Corp. is owned by the transnational corporation Rexnord Corp. It is one of the oldest industrial manufacturing plants in Milwaukee. Investigations by OSHA and other local, state and federal agencies continue. The Rexnord Corp. has deposited a mere \$100,000 in a fund for the families of those killed and is intent on having the community contribute to this.

A massive outpouring of emotional and material support from fellow workers and community members city and statewide is ongoing for the workers killed and injured.

Workers and others are directing many questions at the Rexnord bosses, including: Is the corporation compensating the families of those killed and injured for the long term? Are they paying workers idled by this explosion their full wages and benefits and providing for their needs, including compensation for their vehicles damaged in the explosion?

What provisions and safety measures are being put in place so another, maybe worse, explosion doesn't happen before production resumes?

And why are local and state government officials like Democratic Milwaukee Mayor Tom Barrett and Democratic Gov. Jim Doyle saying that they stand ready to help provide Rexnord with possibly millions of dollars in outright state "aid" or tax "incentives" before a full investigation has even been completed? If Rexnord is found culpable for the explosion and therefore the deaths and injuries of workers, why should state and federal taxpayers pay for what are this corporation's responsibilities or rebuild its facilities? □



# Gov't puts immigrants' babies at risk

By Kathy Durkin

Imagine that your three-week-old baby is running a high fever or has a bad cough or isn't gaining weight. But you are too frightened to take her to a doctor to be examined and treated.

This is the reality for many families living in this country. If the parents are immigrants, the fears are well-founded.

The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services issued an arbitrary and malicious ruling in July, aimed directly at immigrant families. The CMS ordered all states to end automatic Medicaid coverage for newborn babies of documented immigrant parents who had been in United States for under five years, as well as for babies of undocumented parents.

The CMS is part of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. This agency, which should be promoting health care for all, declared that these immigrant parents must apply for Medicaid for each newborn. They must provide documents proving the infant's citizenship and identity, even though the baby is automatically deemed a U.S. citizen if he or she was born here, and even when the birth expenses were

covered by "emergency" Medicaid.

The parents must also provide income and other eligibility information. Until all documents are submitted and the application approved, the infant will go without Medicaid. In some states, obtaining a birth certificate or other proof of the baby's citizenship, or waiting for approval for Medicaid eligibility, may take weeks or months. For many, care will be delayed and/or denied.

The CMS cited the Deficit Reduction Act that President George W. Bush signed in February 2006. This law requires that everyone provide proof of citizenship and identity when applying for or renewing Medicaid coverage. Although this was clearly an anti-immigrant regulation, it could also be used to deny Medicaid to other oppressed people who may not have passports or birth certificates. The elderly and people born in rural areas are especially at risk.

Before the July ruling, Medicaid automatically covered infants born in the United States to low-income families until the child's first birthday, especially when Medicaid covered the birth expenses.

Sarah deLone, reporting for the Center

on Budget and Policy Priorities, writes that there is nothing in the DRA that ends automatic Medicaid for babies in their first year of life.

By basing the denial of Medicaid coverage for infants on their mothers' immigration status, the CMS has set up a discriminatory policy that denies health care to infants. This policy clearly reflects the anti-immigrant bias and racism of many in the U.S. government. It is an act of sheer harassment and terror aimed against immigrant workers and their families.

### Attempt to intimidate

Forcing parents to file applications for Medicaid for their infants at government offices where they could be turned in to immigration authorities is outright intimidation. Understandably, some parents might be too afraid of harassment or deportation to go through the application or documentation process.

Now the federal government is stepping up pressure on the states to implement these vicious regulations.

Rosita Romero, executive director of the Dominican Women's Development Center, told Workers World: "This is an

outrageous and cruel policy. It says that we do not care about the most vulnerable. How can a government deny a baby medical coverage? This denies one of the most basic rights of human beings because of the lack of legal documents. This is just not acceptable."

Regular medical care is crucial in the first year of life. Setting up obstacles to obtaining Medicaid coverage could harm many infants, especially those who need health care the most. Given its high cost today, many parents who desperately care about their children's health simply cannot afford to seek medical treatment for them.

Health care providers and advocacy groups are concerned that many babies will go without necessary medical care such as immunizations, well-baby care and preventive care, and that problems such as low birth weight and birth defects may be left without medical attention. Or acute or chronic problems could worsen without immediate care. Many are asking states to maintain infants' automatic Medicaid coverage.

Nurse-midwife Ellen Catalinotto explained: "The first months of life are critical. Infant mortality is at its highest in the first 28 days of life. Babies must be examined at two weeks of age, with several follow-up visits within the first year of life, and well-baby care shows if an infant is thriving and putting on weight." She stressed that these new regulations could hamper a baby receiving medical treatment if a problem arises during this most vulnerable time.

Medicaid covers 25 million U.S. children, including 60 percent of low-income children and infants under age 1. This is a crucial program for poor families in the United States who need it in order to obtain health care for their infants; automatic enrollment makes it much more accessible.

To deny this care to the tens of thousands of newborns born to undocumented parents in the United States every year is unconscionable. In this, the richest country in the world, health care should be guaranteed and provided for all children. It should be a right conferred by their very birth. □

## Pickers protest Dobbs' immigrant-bashing

CNN's Lou Dobbs was confronted by picketers from the Buffalo/Western New York International Action Center when he broadcast live from Buffalo, N.Y., on Dec. 6. Dobbs has turned his nightly "news" program into an orgy of immigrant-bashing. Opponents of his racist campaign handed out fliers to the "town hall" audience, which read, "No media personality has done more to generate a hateful, lie-filled anti-immigrant climate than Lou Dobbs." The flier explained that Dobbs' message of hatred is meant to divide working people, to get those who think of themselves as "middle class" to blame immigrants and the poor for job losses, instead of correctly blaming corporate greed and U.S. imperialism.

—Ellie Dorrittie

WW PHOTO



## Arrest of Pakistan woman immigrant activist protested

By Heather Cottin  
New York

Immigrant rights and women's rights supporters from New York's May 1 Coalition gathered outside of the Federal Immigration Court in New York in the early morning drizzle Dec. 13 to support

Pakistani women's rights activist Baza Roohi at her bail hearing.

At the hearing, Judge Alan Payne, who has refused five out of every six requests for asylum, set bail at \$35,000, which must be put up in cash. This is considered punitive bail.

Immigration authorities arrested

Roohi, who lives in Brooklyn, N.Y., on Nov. 15. She has a "green card," but was jailed on a technical visa violation, and held in a detention center in New Jersey.

Since Sept. 11, 2001, thousands of Pakistani women and men have been rounded up and deported by U.S. immigration authorities. Roohi organized support for their bereft partners and parents. That, said Pakistan-USA Freedom Forum (PakUSAFF) President Mohammed Shaffiq, is why the immigration authorities arrested her. She dared to organize.

Her case, said PakUSAFF organizer

Comrade Shahid, "represents thousands of immigrants facing the tyranny of the Department of Homeland Security's Immigration and Custom Enforcement policies." He added that her case would be the first in a campaign to begin Jan. 1, 2007, which will demand that the new Congress pass laws to grant legal recognition to all immigrants.

Vicente Alba of the May 1 Coalition, expressing his solidarity with Roohi, said, "This could be the start of a national campaign to stop this racist campaign that is terrorizing immigrant communities." □

### Packed courtroom supports Luis Barrios

About 100 activists, supporters and allies of social justice packed a New York courtroom Dec. 11 in solidarity with the Rev. Luis Barrios.

Police unjustly arrested Barrios, a longtime Puerto Rican pro-independence and social-justice activist, and 15 other activists outside the United Nations on Sept. 19. The activists were protesting the presence of war criminal President George W. Bush and challenging the "protest-free" zone.

In an act of silent and organized protest, all of those present at the court stood up when Barrios' name was called. The judge and the district attorney postponed his case until Jan. 23 at 9 a.m., at 100 Centre Street, room 206 (part C).

Geoff Millard, a member of Iraq Veterans Against the War and one of the activists arrested with Barrios, attended the hearing. Millard and Barrios are the only two out of the "UN 16" who have charges pending against them. Millard's court date is Jan. 16.

For more information call 212-926-5757 or e-mail UN16Defense@yahoo.com.

—Arturo J. Pérez-Saad



May 1 Coalition protests arrest of Baza Roohi at the federal immigration court in New York .

WWPHOTO



## Hospital closings, mergers, layoffs

# Corporate model axes health care

By Beverly Hiestand, R.N.  
Buffalo, N.Y.

It sounds like such good news. The New York State Commission on Health Care Facilities in the 21st Century, created by Gov. George Pataki and the state legislature, titled its final report, issued Nov. 28, “A Plan to Stabilize and Strengthen New York’s Health Care System.”

What does the commission suggest? Does it recommend affordable health care insurance for all, regardless of employment? Does it urge hiring tens of thousands more health care workers, at living wages with benefits, in all areas of health care—especially to meet the huge increase in elderly patients seeking care?

Does the report call for reining in the pharmaceutical and medical equipment companies that are making exorbitant profits and driving up the costs of health care?

Does the commission argue for the need to open many more primary-care practices or clinics so that people no longer have to go to emergency rooms to find basic care? Does the report stress the urgency of opening up more beds in acute and long-term care to offer longer stays for patients whose families are caring for them after they were pushed out of hospitals? Does it demand round-the-clock home nursing care?

What about racist disparities, which exist in every type of health care delivery, and denial of health services to undocumented immigrant workers? Does this report address the significant new resources necessary to address these life-and-death obstacles to care?

The report had no proposals for any of these critical issues.

### Commission: Shut-downs, mergers, lay offs

In fact, all the commission’s recommendations are premised on the proposition that there is too much “capacity” in the system. The report claims there are too many beds open in health care facilities. There is duplication of services at too many sites.

Therefore, the report argues, what’s needed is to cut back. Close beds, close hospitals and nursing homes, merge facilities, lay off thousands of health care workers and cut back.

The commission proposes to close nine New York state hospitals now. Plans include restructuring another 50, which would eventually eliminate 20 or more hospitals.

This would result in the loss of 4,200 hospital beds. Nursing homes are also to be “downsized,” eliminating 3,000 beds.

Hospitals and nursing homes marked for outright closings employ 7,000 people statewide. A similar number of jobs could be lost in future recommended mergers and consolidations, mostly in upstate New York, an area already devastated by plant closings and high unemployment.

This is only the first stage, the report states. Large cuts in Medicaid reimbursements are next.

After the commission’s recommendations have been presented to and approved by Gov. Pataki, the legislature must accept or reject the entire proposal, without any changes in any aspect, before the end of this year.

The proposed restructuring all sounds very familiar to workers, impoverished and oppressed people who have watched businesses downsize and move out of their communities, taking with them the wealth the workers created. This has left many

workers jobless and their communities stripped of the riches accumulated though their labor.

### Bankers, CEOs and lawyers

Pataki, with the approval of the New York state legislature, appointed Stephen Berger, an investment banker, to chair the commission. Berger previously served as executive vice president of GE Capital from 1990 to 1993.

GE Healthcare markets a wide range of high-tech products used in health care, services equipment, trains professionals in management techniques to improve productivity and provides health care financing. GE Healthcare lends facilities large amounts of money to buy their products or to use for capital improvements. The firm creates “leadership teams” within the institutions and is then involved in many aspects of the organization. (www.ge.com)

During the height of New York City’s financial crisis in 1976 and 1977, Berger was the first director of the Financial Control Board. He pressured the city to carry out massive cutbacks in services and layoffs of workers.

For the New York State Commission on Health Care Facilities in the 21st Century, Berger set up a group of commissioners on the state level and regional advisory committees. Almost all the commissioners are bankers, CEOs, lawyers or others who would see the profitability of health care institutions as extremely important to their own businesses. This includes energy providers.

### Murky dealings

The commission promised the public that there would be complete openness in its 18-month-long process, encouraging broad consultation. It promised open meetings and public hearings.

However, during the New York State Assembly Public Hearing in Buffalo on Dec. 11, there were many complaints that the state commissioners’ meetings over the previous months were not open to the public as had been promised. There were also no practicing physicians or nurses on the commission.

One of the commission’s first acts is securing a large sum of money to carry out the process of restructuring, including closures and construction costs. This money would not be designated for direct

health care services.

The commission reports that \$2.5 billion in state and federal funds are available. A significant portion will most certainly be used to create a bloated bureaucracy made up of high-priced lawyers, financiers, vendors and administrators who are far too eager to be part of this stage of restructuring.

According to a Nov. 28 news release, all the commission’s recommendations must be accepted by the legislature and implemented in order to receive those funds. The collusion among the federal government, the state and the commission is already being denounced by opponents to the recommendations.

These billions of dollars could provide tens of thousands of uninsured and underinsured people access to health care.

### Capitalist restructuring

The commission’s next step is to carry out the restructuring. The total projected benefits—to Wall Street and corporate creditors—will be \$1.5 billion annually or \$15 billion over 10 years.

The impact on health care workers, the community and patients will be thousands of layoffs, hospital and nursing home closings, and major disruption to families and communities.

This restructuring of the New York state health care system, considered to be the most extreme in decades, occurs at a time when the capitalist economy is slowing down rapidly.

Plants continue to close, jobs are being lost and workers are either losing their health insurance, receiving less coverage or paying much more. For many it is just too expensive. There are 47 million uninsured people, and possibly as many underinsured. It is safe to say that most undocumented workers do not have health insurance.

There is a great increase in the rate at which workers and the oppressed are losing access to health care. Employers are maximizing profits by reducing benefits, including limiting insurance coverage.

This is a national crisis, but the effects are very evident in New York state. The next governor, Elliot Spitzer, will enter office Jan. 1 in a state with a totally inadequate health care system and a \$48.5 billion debt.

New sources of revenue must be secured

to meet the most basic yet critical human need for health care.

### Money for health care, not warfare

The money being spent on war should be used for social services instead. New estimates put the overall cost of the Pentagon war in Iraq and Afghanistan at somewhere between \$1 trillion and \$2 trillion. The higher amount would provide four times the amount needed to provide health insurance to uninsured people in the United States for the next decade.

The delivery of health care is a big business based on profit. The bottom line is minimizing costs and maximizing profits. Many not-for-profit or public hospitals are still at the mercy of high-profit-seeking pharmaceuticals, medical equipment suppliers and banks. The powerful lobby of pharmaceuticals continues to block efforts to use Medicare’s purchasing power to negotiate lower prescription prices for retirees.

Health care CEOs may talk about delivering the best possible care. However, this is not what is generating the call for restructuring. Their bottom line is profit.

The Commission on Health Care Facilities report is business restructuring in a capitalist economy. Restructuring has never made life better for anyone but the rich corporations and banks. It pits workers and other community health care agencies as competitors.

In testimony at the recent assembly hearing in Buffalo, representatives from Communication Workers Local 1168 Nurses United called for unity in the struggle to assure that all have high quality health care.

The organization of a fight back began immediately upon the release of the Berger Commission Report.

Civil Service Employees Union President Danny Donohue, who represents 265,000 active and retired public and private employees across New York state, testified on Dec. 1 at a State Senate Health Committee public hearing.

Donohue expressed his union’s view that the commission’s recommendations of significant privatization, mergers and cuts to many public hospitals and nursing homes where CSEA represents employees is “shortsighted, misinformed and potentially harmful.”

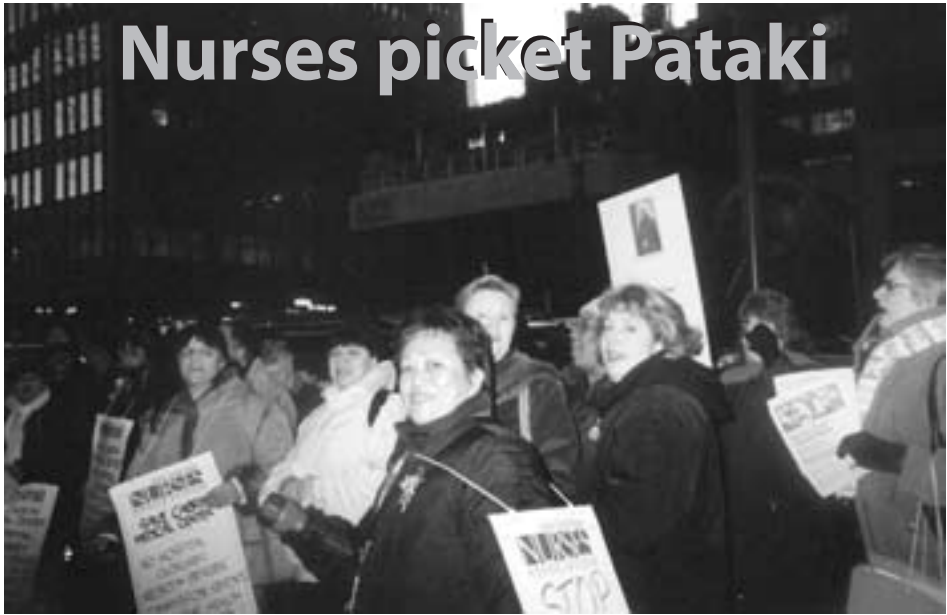
The executive board of New York state Public Employees Federation reallocated \$50,000 from the Go Public campaign to start the wheels in motion for a media blitz, rallies, lobbying efforts and whatever it takes to persuade the legislature to oppose the plan.

All these unions will rally in Albany on Dec. 13.

The Save our Safety Net Campaign has formed as a broad coalition of community organizations, labor unions, religious leaders and health care advocates. SOS-C is organized to address the potential health disaster that could result from implementing the Berger Commission Report. The coalition calls for justice in the process of designing a health care system for the 21st century that provides access to affordable, quality health care for all New Yorkers.

Together these growing alliances are a powerful force toward change.

*Hiestand worked as a clinical educator for 27 years in a large health care system in Buffalo, N.Y. She helped organize the first union for registered nurses and represented nurses as a chief steward.*



Nurses and other health care workers, many from Cabrini Medical Center, rallied outside New York Gov. George Pataki’s Manhattan office Dec. 5 to demand he stop the hospital closings around the state recently proposed by the Berger Commission. “Save our health care network, save Cabrini Medical Center, reject the Berger Commission report,” they said. The New York State Nurses Association coordinated the rally with other health care workers and supporters. This rally was one of a series of actions and protests around the state planned for December.

—Report and photo by Sharon Eolis, RN/NP





## A message from LEONARD PELTIER to MUMIA ABU-JAMAL

I sadly write from my prison cell. I am sad that you remain unjustly incarcerated on death row for 25 years. I have read that the court will be addressing further arguments on your case, and I pray that you will finally get the justice you deserve.

I know how frustrating it is for you, as it is for me, to continue to receive negative results in the face of the blatant injustices that have been recognized in our respective cases.

All we have is hope. Hope that finally the right thing will be done and justice will be done. An injustice against any one of



Free Leonard Peltier!

us is an injustice against us all, and it is essential that we reach the masses so they will force action before our society is swallowed by the evil forces amongst us.

I applaud those courageous people who have supported us, and, when I feel low and hopeless, I think of them and what they do for us, and refuse to surrender. So, I continue to encourage you to stay strong, and to

continue the fight until you are set free.

I want to thank all of you who have dedicated your lives to our freedom. Stay strong and keep Mumia strong. We must not let anyone forget the great injustices that Mumia has suffered.

We must keep strong. We must intensify the fight.

We cannot succumb to the forces in society who seek to keep us quiet and who seek to hide the blatant injustices which keep us penned like animals.

If we are able to unify the masses and stop the execution of Mumia Abu-Jamal, we are not only saving the life of the man who speaks for those who are not often heard and whose stories are rarely told, but you are saving all of us who remain unjustly behind bars, saving us from the depths of hopelessness.

Free Mumia Abu Jamal!

In the Spirit of Crazy Horse,  
Leonard Peltier

## WW interviews

# Father of police brutality victim

On Aug. 7, Chicago police shot 13-year-old Ellis Woodland Jr., an African American, three times while he was on his way to a baseball game after visiting his father in the Cabrini-Green public housing development.

This ruthless shooting of an unarmed child sparked a wave of anger in this near north side African-American community. This racist attempted homicide and the cops' attitude of arrogance and contempt led to a large community demonstration days later outside the police station in the heart of Cabrini.

Willie J.R. Fleming, chair of the Hip-Hop Congress of Cabrini-Green, was one of the march organizers.

The demonstration was violently attacked by the cops, but the protesters fought back. Seventeen-year-old Maurice Taylor was taunted by cops using racist epithets.

Taylor began arguing with a racist cop. Taylor received a brutal beating at the hands of members of the Chicago Police Department several days later that landed him in the hospital with serious injuries.

Cabrini, initially an Italian and now an African-American working-class neighborhood, has been gentrifying at a rapid pace.

Greedy real-estate and condominium developers want to get their hands on what is considered to be some of the most valuable land in Chicago outside the "Gold Coast," which Cabrini borders. These

developers benefit directly from cop terrorism directed at the African-American community in general and Black youth in particular.

Workers World Chicago reporter Eric Struch interviewed Ellis Woodland Jr.'s father, Ellis Woodland Sr.

**Workers World:** The media, after they covered, or barely covered, the shooting; and then had a little bit of coverage of that demonstration at the police station afterwards where Maurice Taylor got beat up, or where the cops targeted him and beat him up later—after that, there was just absolutely nothing in the press. People drive through here and they see the buildings getting torn down, but there's really nothing in the press from the viewpoint of anybody who lives here about what's going on.

**Ellis Woodland Sr.:** To be honest with you, it seems as if the press has, not intentionally, but has worked against us. I've been a victim of more harassment. My son, he's been harassed as well. Since that matter, it has got worse.

**WW:** I heard that before they stopped him for this bogus BB gun incident or whatever that they stopped him a couple days before and stole his house keys.

**EW:** Yeah, it was a situation where a group of kids were questioned about their names, and when his name was mentioned, and his name was the same as mine, they went a little further and took the keys out his pocket and were not giving them back to him.

**WW:** So when there was that demonstration in front of the police station, was that a spontaneous thing where everyone was kind of pissed and got together at the same time and went over there and did that, or was there a leadership of that people decided that this is what we have to do? How did that come together?

**EW:** The people all felt it wasn't justice, people felt it was unjust, as well as I did, so we tried to be heard. But that's been overshadowed by more police harassment. I don't know whether the answer is for the community to come out and get further harassed or let nature take its course.

**WW:** I want to talk for a minute about how people feel about the transition that's going on here, about the CHA [Chicago Housing Authority] deciding to knock down all the white buildings and all the red buildings. How is that affecting people over here?

**EW:** Basically, history is repeating itself. This place was taken from nationality after nationality. Now they're trying to take it again. Daley took it from the Italians. Why they want to take it from us? Father Daley, that is.

**WW:** Is there any sort of organization here that is getting people to fight back against this? I know there is this group, the Hip-Hop Congress.

**EW:** The Hip-Hop Congress has been the only people that have been speaking up on behalf of the community to the point where they can be heard. □

## Stop racist police brutality

Continued from page 1

suspected of being homeless, had been arrested on suspicion of a curfew violation. (Los Angeles Times, Dec. 8)

The use of a Taser on Houston Texans football star Fred Weary has exposed that in Houston, an alarming 63 percent of those shocked by police with high-voltage weapons over the last two years were Black. African-Americans make up 23 percent of the population in Houston, the fourth-largest city in the United States. (Los Angeles Times, Dec. 4)

The Washington, D.C.-based Police Complaint Center says that the number of police "misconduct" complaints it has received from across the country increased by 40 percent between 2005 and 2006. (Black Press of America, Dec. 11)

### Protests to target ruling class

In "The Wretched of the Earth," published in 1963, revolutionary author Frantz Fanon gives a description of the colonial world: "In the colonies it is the policemen and the soldier who are the official, instituted go-betweens, the spokesmen of the settler and his rule of oppression. ... The policeman and the soldier, by their immediate presence and their frequent and direct action maintain contact with the native and advise him by means of rifle butts and napalm not to budge.

"It is obvious here that the agents of government speak the language of pure force. The intermediary does not lighten the oppression, nor seek to hide the domination; he shows them up and puts them into practice with the clear conscience of an upholder of the peace; yet he is the bringer of violence into the home and into the mind of the native."

As the U.S. military machine attempts to

re-colonize the people of Iraq, Sudan, and more, the police state acts as an occupying force within U.S. borders, with the same viciousness and tactics that the military uses abroad.

Two upcoming marches in New York against police brutality will target the group that the police state is set up to protect—the capitalist ruling class.

A demonstration called "Shopping for Justice" will be held on Saturday, Dec. 16.

## Peltier's case in federal court

Leonard Peltier's lawyer argued in federal court in New York on Feb. 7 that under the Freedom of Information Act the Buffalo office of the FBI must release documents kept from the defense. Although these documents are over 30 years old, the government continues to block release of this information on the basis that disclosure would, among other things, hamper the "war on transnational terrorism" and reveal the identities of confidential sources.

The FBI refuses to even check if the informants named in those documents are still alive. Peltier has been imprisoned for over 30 years for

Participants will gather on 59th Street and Fifth Avenue at noon and march down ritzy Fifth Ave., home to some of New York's most high-end boutiques and shops. The rally is being organized by Al Sharpton's National Action Network, Local 1199 of the Service Employees International Union, and a number of Black and Latin@ elected officials, church and labor leaders. For more information, call 212-603-3704.

Attending Saturday's protest will be Abner Louima, survivor of severe physical and sexual torture at the hands of the NYPD in 1997, who will be traveling to New York

from Florida for the event. Louima told the Daily News his message to the cops: "We are not target practice." (Dec. 12)

The second rally in a series of protests against the police state, organized by the Black Men's Movement and the December 12th Movement, will be held on Thursday, Dec. 21. This day of outrage plans to shut down Wall Street in defiance of the "police policy on Black people—'shoot to kill'." The march will assemble at noon at Liberty Street and Nassau Street (One Chase Manhattan Plaza). For more information, call 718-398-1766. □



what his supporters, some shown here at the courthouse, consider a frame-up trial related to a 1975 shootout on the Pine

Ridge, N.D., reservation, in which two FBI agents were killed.  
—Report & photo by Ellen Catalinotto





Dec. 9 in Philadelphia.

WW PHOTO: LAL ROOHH

# On 25th anniversary of arrest

## Protesters demand ‘Free Mumia’

By Betsey Piette  
Philadelphia

Chanting, “No justice, no peace until Mumia Abu-Jamal’s released” and, “Brick by brick, wall by wall, we’re gonna free Mumia Abu-Jamal,” several hundred demonstrators gathered at Philadelphia City Hall and marched to the Friends (Quakers) Center for an indoor rally on Dec. 9. The march and rally marked the 25th anniversary of Abu-Jamal’s imprisonment following the shooting of a Philadelphia police officer on December 9, 1981.

The day’s events were sponsored by International Concerned Family and Friends of Mumia Abu-Jamal and other organizations.

The demonstration, in addition to marking a quarter-century of struggle to win freedom for the world-renowned revolutionary journalist and political prisoner, was geared toward raising public awareness of important legal developments in his case. Abu-Jamal’s lead counsel, Robert R. Bryan, has filed four federal appeals that could be heard

in court in the winter or spring of 2007. (Go to [www.millions4mumia.org](http://www.millions4mumia.org) to read legal updates.)

The protest drew participants from the Philadelphia area as well as New York, Boston, New Jersey, Denver, Norfolk, Va., and from as far away as Vancouver, Canada, and France. Mumia Abu-Jamal has been made an honorary citizen in Paris, and the immigrant city of St. Denis has named a street in his honor.

Members of Philadelphia’s Fraternal Order of Police tried to disrupt the rally and terrorize participants with a caravan of motorcycle cops loudly revving engines a block away from the indoor rally site. A Philadelphia Inquirer photo shows a police officer wearing a mask—a clear violation of a city ordinance that targets youthful demonstrators at anti-war rallies.

Speakers addressed a number of important developments during the rally. One was the reactionary resolution passed in the U.S. House of Representatives Dec. 6, which denounces St. Denis, France, for having named a street for Abu-Jamal in April. The second was the current campaign initiated by the New York Free

Mumia Coalition to have a street in Harlem named for him. (Go to [www.freemumia.com](http://www.freemumia.com) for more information.) Another important issue addressed was the wave of rampant police terror in New York, Atlanta, Philadelphia and elsewhere.

Rally speakers included Pam Africa, Ward Churchill, attorney Michael Coard, Nana Soul representing Lynne Stewart, Monica Moorehead, LeiLani Dowell, Zayid Muhammad, Esperanza Martell, Suzanne Ross, Johnnie Stevens, who read a solidarity statement from Indigenous political prisoner Leonard Peltier, former death row inmate Harold Wilson, and others.

The rally received considerable news coverage both before and after, including the front page and considerable inside coverage in the Dec. 8 Philadelphia Daily News. One reporter interviewed William Singletary, a former Philadelphia business executive who had witnessed the shooting of police officer Daniel Faulkner in 1981 and stated that another man, not Mumia Abu-Jamal, fired the shot. Singletary also stated that police had coerced him to change his testimony. □

### LYNNE STEWART AND FRIENDS ‘CELEBRATE’

Attorney Lynne Stewart, known for her defense of vilified prisoners, joined her supporters in a celebration Dec. 9 in Judson Memorial Church in New York. She had recently been found guilty, but she said she and her supporters did win: The government wanted a sentence of 30 years and the judge gave her less than two.

This was for spurious charges of “terrorism” that involved her energetic defense of Sheik Omar Abdel Rahman in a case growing out of the 1993 bombing of the World Trade Center.

Stewart and her supporters held a celebration with wine and food, music from the Raging Grannies, a wonderful poem on Katrina recited to music by Professor Louie, a monologue from comedian Irwin Corey and speeches by Stewart and Pam Africa.

Stewart not only thanked her supporters but also announced that she is going to appeal her conviction. Meanwhile the government is trying to appeal her sentence, which it considers too short.

In addition, Stewart firmly denounced the torture that the U.S. government used



Pam Africa speaks at Lynne Stewart event.

against Jose Padilla after he was accused of plotting to use a “dirty bomb.” She said it confirmed what her client told her about how badly he was treated. Padilla had been held for nearly two years in a South Carolina brig without access to a lawyer, family or friends after he was declared an “enemy combatant” in June 2002, and he

is still held virtually incommunicado and in shackles.

Pam Africa of the MOVE organization, who had come from a protest supporting Mumia Abu-Jamal in Philadelphia held earlier in the day, congratulated Stewart on her victory.

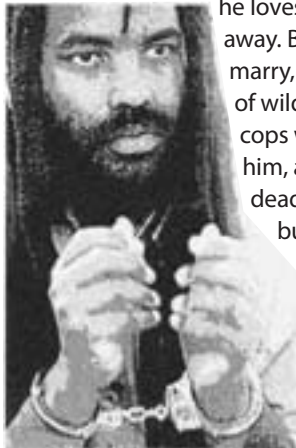
—Report and photo by G. Dunkel

By Mumia Abu-Jamal from death row

## No safe age

Go to [www.prisonradio.org](http://www.prisonradio.org) to hear Mumia’s audio commentaries including the following one dated Dec. 2.

It’s boys’ night out, and a group of brothas are having a bachelors’ party at a strip club. One of them is particularly thrilled because his marriage to the woman



Graphic of Mumia taken from leaflet for Dec. 9 demonstration in Paris.

he loves is just hours away. But he will never marry, because a pack of wild undercover cops will execute him, and unleash a deadly rain of 50 bullets on him and his friends.

The crime? Cruising while Black. Sean Bell, unarmed, is 23.

And the corporate media merely explain it may have been a case of “contagious shooting.” One cop fires, two cops fire, three cops—get the picture? It’s a kind of social illness, like alcoholism.

But neither Sean Bell, Trent Benefield, nor Joseph Guzman was armed. According to some reports, one of the men *said* he was armed.

Like the madmen who launched a pre-emptive war on the unsubstantiated suspicion of weapons of mass destruction, undercover cops launched an urban war on unarmed Black men, reportedly based on unsubstantiated suspicions. Fifty shots, death, and serious injury. No cell phones, no wallets, no candy bars, for such trifles are no longer deemed necessary. In America, Blackness is sufficient.

Even maleness isn’t required, as shown by the recent shooting of an elderly woman who allegedly allowed a drug dealer to use her home. The woman, having lived almost nine decades, was shot to death while trying to defend her home after it was attacked by undercover cops. According to a neighborhood snitch, he never claimed her house was a drug site, despite police pressure to do so. No significant quantity of drugs was found at the home.

What was her crime? Trying to survive to 90 while Black? {Kathryn Johnston was reportedly 92 years old when she died—WWJ} What’s more dangerous—drugs, or undercover cops kicking in doors allegedly on a drug raid? How many of these armed maniacs will ever see the inside of a cell? How many will reach the confines of death row?

We know the answer, because we’ve seen this movie before. Paid leave, which amounts to paid vacation; a whitewash of an investigation; and a “they were just doing their jobs” is all that ever happens. □

### WE WANT FREEDOM

A life in the Black Panther Party

Mumia Abu-Jamal provides a history of the founding of the Philadelphia Black Panther Party in this book. Mumia, known to the world as a wrongly convicted political prisoner held for 25 years in Pennsylvania’s death row, is exacting and luminous in his history

Paperback, 320 pages, 2004 \$18.

Order on line at [www.Leftbooks.com](http://www.Leftbooks.com)





CUBA LABOR CONFERENCE

# Hears call for solidarity with immigrant workers

By Bob McCubbin  
Tijuana, Mexico

The Cuba/Venezuela/Mexico/North America Labor Conference convened Dec. 8 in the Mexican border city of Tijuana, where international representatives, activist union leaders, immigrant-rights youth activists, people working in solidarity with revolutionary Cuba and Venezuela and others involved in struggles against racism, imperialism and war all gathered for two days of fruitful discussion and information exchange.

Action proposals included the May 1, 2007, immigrant rights mobilizations, a spring “Hands off Cuba and Venezuela/Free the Cuban Five” demonstration in Washington, D.C. or New York City, and the Sixth Anti-FTAA/FTA International Conference in Havana at the end of April 2007.

Other highlights of the conference included presentations on the achievements of and current challenges facing Cuban workers, on the struggle to free the Cuban Five, on the situation of Mexican workers, and on the efforts to defend the Colombian SINALTRAINAL union.

Ignacio Meneses from the U.S./Cuba Labor Exchange, the initiating organization of the conference, said, “This gathering helped us to understand clearly the connection between the devastation from NAFTA and ‘Free Trade’ agreements on the economy of Latin America and the millions of unemployed who have no other alternative but to immigrate to the U.S., where they face super exploitation and discrimination as workers.”

### May Day action for immigrant rights

Immigrant rights organizers at the conference introduced a call for a national conference in Los Angeles on Feb. 3 and 4 and a May Day action, which is being called the Great American Boycott II, continuing to reclaim that working class holiday in the country where it originated. The Union of Mexican Electrical Workers (SME) and U.S.-based organizations endorsed and supported a May Day 2007 boycott in



From left, Ike Nahem, Cheryl LaBash, María Rodríguez Pedroso, Raymundo Navarro Fernández and Judge Claudia Morcom are first panel in Tijuana, Mexico, Dec. 9.

defense of immigrants.

Larry Holmes, representing the Million Worker March and the Troops Out Now Coalition, motivated this proposal during the discussion period. He noted that in the face of the ruling class’s efforts to bury May Day as a holiday of workers struggle, the incredible outpourings of millions of workers in U.S. cities last spring were astounding.

“We cannot allow the immigrant workers to remain isolated,” he insisted. “We must build Black-Brown unity to answer the racist attempts to divide us. And white workers and the general progressive movement must join the struggle too. We must not ignore this opportunity to unite with immigrant workers. Inaction now would be unconscionable and dangerous.”

### Cubans promote solidarity

Raymundo Navarro Fernández, director of foreign relations of the Confederation of Cuban Workers (CTC), opened the conference by urging attendees to visit Cuba, promising expressions of solidarity equal to those he was receiving at this conference. He offered statistics demonstrating the growing strength of Cuba’s economy and the resulting social benefits being enjoyed by all of Cuba’s people.

With an eye to Cuba’s future, Navarro explained how the tasks of the new generation are now under discussion. Technical job categories are being developed that will offer fresh continuing education and advancement opportunities for Cuba’s

workers, especially youth. He also dealt at length with the problems Cuba faces, most ominously the tightening of the U.S. blockade, the threat of overt military attacks concealed in a secret addendum in the latest update of the Commission for Assistance to a Free Cuba and the U.S. funding of counter revolutionaries inside Cuba.

### Advances in Cuban health care

Another speaker from Cuba, María Rodríguez Pedroso, member of the National Secretariat Healthcare Workers Union, CTC, detailed the tremendous advances the revolution has made in healthcare for all Cubans, including the recent law expanding social security measures like extending fully paid maternity leave from 6 months to a full year. A concerted effort is now underway to renovate the health facilities that suffered the effects of the “special period” now that the economy has recovered.

A dramatic banner with enlarged photos of the five Cuban political prisoners now held in U.S. federal prisons covered part of one wall of the conference hall. Retired Judge Claudia Morcom detailed ongoing work to make the case of the Five well known. (For information on the Cuban Five, visit [www.freethethefive.org](http://www.freethethefive.org) and [www.freethethefivey.org](http://www.freethethefivey.org))

Several of the Cuban speakers spoke with justifiable pride of Cuba’s Operation Milagro and the Latin American School of Medicine (LASM). Operation Milagro

has restored the sight of many thousands unable to afford capitalist-priced treatment. The LASM provides free medical training to youth from around the world who otherwise could only dream of such education.

Bill Camp, Executive Secretary of the Sacramento Central Labor Council, described an exciting project where doctors from the U.S. and Cuba plus medical professionals and volunteers jointly work with Cuban-trained Garífuna doctors to develop health clinics. The Garífuna are Honduran descendants of African people who escaped enslavement and who were represented at the conference. A delegation from the New York health care workers union, 1199 SEIU, also participated.

### Mexican unionists speak

The conference was honored to have the presence of Lauro López García and Fernando Muñoz Ponce, two leaders of the Mexican Union of Electricians, characterized by López García as the only union in Mexico that has been successful in stopping the widespread privatization of formerly public Mexican enterprises. Muñoz Ponce pointed out that the buying power of Mexican workers’ salaries is decreasing year after year. And with no significant number of new jobs being created, Mexican workers are thus forced across the Mexican/U.S. border in search of the means to feed their families.

Both López García and Muñoz Ponce spoke with pride of the Mexican people’s

*Continued on page 9*

# World comes to Cuba to fete Fidel’s 80th

By Julie Fry  
Havana, Cuba

The Cuban people and guests from all over the world gathered for a belated celebration of President Fidel Castro’s 80th birthday in early December. The events were sponsored by the Guayasamín Foundation, named for the famous Ecuadorian artist, Oswaldo Guayasamín, who devoted much of his work to celebrating the Cuban Revolution and to depicting President Castro in particular.

The events began with a conference attended by international delegates as well as Cuban leaders. Participants spoke about the importance of President Castro’s life and leadership to the Cuban Revolution in particular. Also, many guests spoke about his contribution to the worldwide struggle for justice—and for socialism in particular—since the triumph of the Cuban Revolution.

In his closing remarks to the conference, Cuban Foreign Minister Felipe Pérez Roque spoke about how President Castro embodies the vision of the revolution he is

fighting for in both his public and personal personas. Pérez Roque, who once served as Fidel Castro’s personal assistant, said that President Castro believes very strongly in leading by personal example. President Castro’s tirelessness, his optimism, and his humanity are examples of the qualities and the ideas the president values, from which all of those who fight for social justice can learn, according to Pérez Roque.

The celebration included several cultural events. There was an art exhibit featuring the work of Oswaldo Guayasamín. In addition, the event featured a music concert held at the Anti-Imperialist Plaza in Havana and featured performers from all Latin America, the Caribbean and Africa.

Some of the most well-known performers were Silvio Rodríguez and Pablo Milanés of Cuba and Miriam Makeba of South Africa. The concert was free and open to the public. It was attended by thousands of young Cubans in addition to the international guests.

Heads of state from several Latin American and Caribbean countries came to pay homage to President Castro.

Among them were President Evo Morales of Bolivia, René Préval of Haiti, Prime Minister Ralph Gonsalves of St. Vincent and the Grenadines, President-elect Daniel Ortega of Nicaragua and a representative of the government of Venezuela.

All of these leaders thanked President Castro and the Cuban people for their generosity in providing unconditional material aid, mostly in the form of thousands of Cuban doctors, to the poor all over Latin America and the Caribbean.

Some, like Evo Morales, thanked President Castro for his political leadership. President Morales spoke about the exciting political developments in Latin America right now in terms of the re-emergence of the left. He spoke of President Castro and the Cuban Revolution as positive examples for the growing people’s movement in the region.

The birthday celebration ended with a military parade through the Plaza de la Revolución in Havana. Raúl Castro, Cuba’s military leader and acting-president, spoke at the event. After a long procession of Cuban soldiers, tanks, planes and other

vehicles, the parade ended with what was announced as “Cuba’s most important weapon: its people.”

Hundreds of thousands of residents from Havana paraded through the square. They were carrying homemade signs with greetings for Fidel as well as thousands of Cuban flags. Their mood was jubilant and celebratory.

Missing from the birthday events was President Fidel Castro himself, a fact that was widely emphasized in the U.S. media. The president was advised by his doctors that attending the celebrations might impede his recovery. However, President Castro sent a written statement to all of the guests, thanking them for their generosity and apologizing for not being able to thank every guest in person.

Despite the continued concern over President Castro’s health, the mood of the participants in the events was quite optimistic. The main themes at every stage of the celebration were the positive prospects for the continued success of the Cuban Revolution and for its growing influence in Latin America. □



# Mass marches force closing of ASEAN summit

By Dianne Mathiowetz  
Manila, Philippines

The Philippine government of President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo abruptly canceled a much hyped summit of the Association of South East Asian Nations on Dec. 8, shortly before the leaders of these nations were scheduled to meet in Cebu City to ratify trade and security agreements. The official reason for the cancellation was the supposed threat of Typhoon Seniang, although weather forecasters had issued no dire warning for the area.

Most people, including journalists and political observers, agreed with the progressive movement's assessment: that the real storm was the rising popular opposition to the government's policies.

Like U.S. President George W. Bush, Arroyo is widely considered to have gained office through electoral fraud. She is a staunch supporter of the "war on terror" and did not hesitate to send Filipino troops to Iraq.

The Arroyo regime's latest political outrage was an attempt to ram through changes in the Philippine Constitution, the one instituted after the 1986 overthrow of the Marcos dictatorship. After her initial effort to alter the constitution was declared illegal by the country's highest court, Arroyo and her supporters in the lower house of congress tried still another maneuver to expand presidential powers to repress the

## Cuba labor conference

*Continued from page 8*

growing readiness to fight for their rights: the miners of Lázaro Cárdenas, the flower sellers of Atenco and the people of the state of Oaxaca. The conference also warmly welcomed José Jacques Medina, presently a federal deputy of the Mexican Congress and a longtime advocate for Mexican immigrant workers.

Camilo Romero of United Students Against Sweatshops, described the life and death struggle of the SINALTRAINAL union at Coca Cola in Colombia. Coca Cola, in its quest for ever greater profits, hires Colombian death-squad members (paramilitaries) to kill union militants.

### Immigrants' struggle inside U.S.

With a detailed exposition of the crimes of U.S. imperialism against Spanish-speaking people in the U.S. Southwest, youth activist and World Social Forum organizer, Ché López, set the stage for a discussion of the struggles of immigrant workers in the U.S. Javier Rodríguez, leader of the March 25 Coalition in Los Angeles, gave an overview of the tremendous million-fold immigrant mobilizations of last spring.

Elena Herrada, who opened the Detroit Centro Obrero on May 1 last year, noted that auto parts plants are now super-exploiting immigrant workers right in Michigan in the same way as in the border factories known as maquiladoras. Juan José Gutiérrez from Latino Movement, USA, expressed the need for unity by describing the revolutionary and leadership characteristics of Fidel Castro.

Gloria Verdieu of the San Diego International Action Center highlighted the role of documented and undocumented workers in the reconstruction of the Gulf Coast following Katrina. She also introduced San Diego FIST activist Mary Tamburro, whose group, along with youth from other San Diego organizations, has challenged and successfully impeded the anti-immigrant activities of the so-called Minutemen along the border and at day labor hiring sites where these fascists



population and open the country to even greater domination by foreign capital, most notably from the United States.

In a colossal blunder, Arroyo's cohorts failed to constitute themselves as delegates to a sham constitutional convention that would have rubber-stamped the reactionary changes she sought. And instead of fooling the people, the regime's machinations sparked mass outrage from every sector, including labor, women, students and intellectuals. The Catholic Church has also signaled its opposition, and along with many others is calling for a Dec. 17 rally and march in Manila.

### Leading role for BAYAN

The group playing a leading role in the demonstrations is the militant Bagong Alyansang Makabayan—BAYAN. "As long as the illegitimate president and her stubborn allies in the House of Representatives pursue their selfish options to change the constitution, protests will continue until the administration gives up its plans for charter change," BAYAN Secretary General Renato Reyes Jr. said.

Simultaneous with the attempted legislative coup d'etat, the level of repression against progressive political forces has intensified. During Arroyo's term in office, hundreds and hundreds of union activists and advocates for the poor have been assassinated, disappeared, jailed or tortured.

In fact, in the week after the ASEAN summit was canceled, Jesus Buth Servida was murdered in front of the plant where he was an organizer and formerly worked.

Workers struggling for living wages and decent working conditions at transnational plants owned by billion-

dollar profit-making companies such as Toyota are often fired in retaliation for their organizing efforts.

The overall living standard of Filipino workers and peasants is in a disastrous freefall as the economy loses its national character and becomes subservient to foreign capital.

It is estimated that 3,000 Filipinos leave their homes each day to seek work abroad in order to sustain their families. The remittances sent back home make up an essential part of the country's economic stability. BAYAN also organizes among the Filipino diaspora, and BAYAN USA is an alliance of anti-imperialist Filipino organizations in the United States.

The Philippine government is a key player in the commodification of workers. It acts as a recruiting agent in the marketing of Filipino workers abroad. Nurses, laborers and domestic workers from the Philippines can be found in most countries, from the United States to Iraq to Saudi Arabia.

Holding the ASEAN summit in the Philippines had been envisioned as a way for Arroyo to prove her usefulness to the forces of globalization, and particularly to the U.S. war machine.

Millions of dollars were diverted, spent to build a fancy venue for the summit in Cebu City. Flowers and trees were planted along the streets the delegates were expected to travel—although just feet away on the side streets, desperately wretched housing abounds.

About 10,000 police and military troops, along with high-tech equipment and armaments, were brought in from all parts of the country to prevent disruptions and protests.



Teresa Gutierrez speaking at protest in Philippines. Left, protest in Cebu City.

WW PHOTOS: DIANNE MATHIOWETZ

Undeterred by the state's threats, people's conferences, encampments and demonstrations were organized to expose the real conditions facing workers, farmers, fisherpeople and others in their struggles for justice, equality and democracy.

### Anti-militarist actions

International delegations attended several of these progressive events, including the Jobs and Justice Conference on Dec. 7-8, the International Conference on U.S. Militarism and War on Terror in the Asia-Pacific on Dec. 9-10, and the International Human Rights Day march in Cebu City on Dec. 10.

Teresa Gutierrez, national co-director of the International Action Center and a member of the U.S. delegation, addressed the militant marchers: "Today is Human Rights Day and Dr. Martin Luther King once said that the greatest purveyor of violence was the U.S. government. For this and for fighting for his people as well as for condemning the U.S. war against Vietnam, Dr. King was assassinated by the government. This is but one example of how the U.S. government cannot set the agenda on human rights. George Bush's alliance with Macapagal-Arroyo is an affront to Filipinos and to progressives in the U.S."

Gutierrez told the crowd that the movement in the United States not only wants to defeat imperialism, it wants a society where money is spent on people's needs, not war and profits. "When that day comes," she said, "we will invade the Philippines again—but with love, peace and friendship."

Attending the conference were representatives from 19 countries, mostly in Asia, ranging from north and south Korea to New Zealand and Australia, Pakistan to Nepal, Hong Kong to Taiwan. Delegates also traveled from Europe, Canada and the United States. BAYAN USA, the IAC and the Malcolm X Grassroots Organization made up the U.S. delegation.

*Mathiowetz, a retired auto worker from Atlanta, attended the progressive events.*

# Cuba's free med school draws Detroit crowd

By Dave Sole  
Detroit

A crowd of students and community activists gathered at the Detroit City Council chambers Dec. 9 to hear the Rev. Lucius Walker from Pastors for Peace describe a program offering free medical schooling in Cuba.

Detroit City Councilmember JoAnn Watson hosted the meeting, held on International Human Rights Day.

After describing Cuba's great gains in providing free medical care for all its people thanks to the 1959 Revolution, Walker went on to talk about the generous offer the Cuban government has made to poor people and students of color in the

Lucius Walker  
and Detroit  
Councilmember  
JoAnn Watson.

WW PHOTO:  
DAVE SOLE



United States.

He told how the Latin American School of Medicine was established in a former Cuban naval base. "Why can't the U.S. government convert the Fort Benning School of the Americas to teach medicine instead of teaching torture?" he asked.

Currently there are about 100 students from the United States at the Cuban medical school. Cuba has offered to train 500.

After Walker's presentation, students from Michigan State University, Wayne County Community College and other schools met with him to find out more about how to apply to study medicine in Cuba.

The entire program, along with the lively question-and-answer session, will be broadcast over Detroit's public TV cable station for the rest of the month.

For more information, go to: [www.pastorsforpeace.org](http://www.pastorsforpeace.org). □





# Pinochet’s friends still alive

The brutal dictator Gen. Augusto Pinochet, who ruled Chile through murder and police terror from 1973 to 1990—killing tens of thousands of workers, organizers and progressives and opening his country to the plunder of imperialist corporations—died on Dec. 10, Human Rights Day.

Many Chileans remember all too clearly his cruel regime. They celebrated his death in Chile’s streets. And when some now in office in Chile dared to lower flags to half-mast, crowds clashed with the police and authorities.

What’s missing from most big-business media accounts of Pinochet, particularly the monopolized media here in the United States, is the role of the CIA in the bloody coup that brought the military dictatorship into power.

Former U.S. Secretary of State Henry Kissinger, while in the Nixon White House, plotted with the CIA, the Pentagon and the Chilean military to destabilize Chile’s democratically elected pro-socialist government of Salvador Allende and replace it with a bloody dictatorship.

To the rich and powerful transnational corporations, and big business media, Pinochet was a weapon against the workers and poor who dared to organize to take charge of society. Britain’s former Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher was among the first to express her “sadness” at Pinochet’s death.

Kissinger and Thatcher are world-class criminals, outranking Pinochet in the scope of their crimes.

The current Bush administration prattles on about “extending democracy” to the Middle East and the rest of the world. This is talk. Washington’s deeds have been installing and/or backing dictatorships: Pinochet in Chile, Marcos in the Philippines, Duvalier in Haiti, Somoza in Nicaragua, Suharto in Indonesia and Mobutu in Congo (Zaire), to name just a few of Washington’s Cold War clients.

The U.S.-engineered coup in Chile offers a valuable lesson to those struggling for socialism—it’s a Leninist lesson regarding the class character of the capitalist state. Simply being elected to office doesn’t allow the working class or its parties to rule society—not as long as the army, police, courts, prisons and media are in the hands of the capitalist ruling class.

Pinochet has earned the hatred of the Chilean workers—who suffered so greatly in the bloody counter-revolution. But without support from U.S. imperialism—and its allies—Pinochet would never have been successful in his murderous coup on Sept. 11, 1973. □

## Lavender & Red

*Continued from page 2*

be working—instead searching for material relevant to a historical analysis of homosexual oppression, there was heartbreakingly little to be found.

“I spent several years collecting material that might be relevant to a more complete analysis. Many comrades knew I was working on such an analysis and brought relevant material to my attention.”

Together—lesbian and gay, bisexual and heterosexual, transgender and transsexual—members of Workers World Party worked to dig for the ancient economic, social and political roots of modern lesbian and gay oppression.

What resulted made a historic contribution to the struggle for liberation from sexual oppression, strengthened the communist left politically, and demonstrated the power of Marxist tools in the hands of workers who know how to use them.

*Next: Impact of “The Gay Question,” published in 1976.*

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## Lesson from Iraq Study Group

# Mobilize to end the occupation

By John Catalinotto

After months of consultation and preparation, on Dec. 6 the Iraq Study Group published a report that admitted the utter collapse of the U.S. attempt to take over Iraq. The ISG recommended training Iraqi forces—that is, “Iraqization” of the war over a drawn-out period—and negotiations with neighboring states and with resistance groups inside Iraq.

The Bush administration and its allies in the right-wing media, like the Wall Street Journal and the New York Post, soon condemned the study as a “surrender.” Bush, who still controls the state apparatus for the next 25 months, vowed to push on to “victory” in Iraq.

Anti-war voices in the United States of different political tendencies condemned the ISG proposals for offering no rapid end to the occupation. War opponents called instead for a popular mobilization to end the U.S. occupation of Iraq, and continued to attack the criminal Bush regime.

The ISG, which Congress set up on March 15, consists of five Democrats and five Republicans. Most are either former members of Congress or former key administrative officials in the federal government. All have a reputation in Washington as loyal guardians of U.S. imperialism’s strategic and economic 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. Baker co-chaired the ISG with Lee Hamilton, a leading Democratic politician. While they are both sharp opponents of the Bush regime’s tactics, the two share Bush’s strategic goal: imposing Washington and Wall Street’s domination on the Middle East and on the world.

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.” To do this the group first consulted with over 150 high-level civilian and military officials, including about two dozen from Iraq. Then they deliberated with numerous working committees to produce their report and its 79 recommendations.

### A realization of defeat

The motivation for setting up the group, the driving force behind it, was the realization by larger and larger sections of the U.S. political, military and economic establishment that the invasion and occupation of Iraq had turned into a disaster, not only for the Iraqis but for Washington. Scattered through the report are phrases like “the situation in Iraq is grave and deteriorating,” “the situation in Baghdad and several provinces is dire” and “the global standing of the United States could be diminished.”

Although these descriptions reflect the impossibility for the U.S. to successfully set up a compliant and stable regime in Baghdad, the group’s recommendations are of a tentative nature, really half-measures. The report in general has the tone of a compromise document.

The ISG’s military proposal is to gradually withdraw combat troops—who are about one-quarter of the total U.S. troop strength—with these combat troops out by the first few months of 2008 “if conditions on the ground allow,” to replace these troops with “advisers,” and to pay increasing attention to training Iraqi forces. In other words, the proposal is Iraqization of the war that could drag out over a long period.

The ISG didn’t discuss what to do with the over 100,000 “contractors”—that is, mercenaries—who are operating for U.S. military and corporate interests in Iraq.

The ISG’s diplomatic recommendation is to step up the effort to involve Iraq’s neighbors in finding a solution and especially to negotiate with Syria and Iran. Within Iraq, the ISG recommended that the United States negotiate with all parties except al-Qaeda. That means negotiating with both Baathists and with Moqtada al-Sadr, the political leader of the Shiite based Mehdi Army.

Its economic recommendations are for more aid to Iraq. But the ISG couldn’t help also recommending that all subsidies to the population for buying Iraqi energy be dropped, and that oil reserves be privatized. (Recommendation 62)

This is a reminder of what the U.S. war to seize Iraq was all about. For all the talk about “democratizing” Iraq, the real goal of the Bush regime and of the U.S. ruling establishment was to seize the abundant, easily reached oil reserves and set up permanent military bases in this strategic area.

“Weapons of mass destruction,” “the hunt for al-Qaeda,” “bringing democracy” were only lies spread to win support for the war. Neither the ISG nor Bush will admit this.

### ISG rejects ‘precipitous’ withdrawal

The ISG rejected dividing Iraq into three separate states in majority Kurdish, Sunni Arab and Shiite Arab areas, saying it would wreak even more havoc on the country. This is Democratic Sen. Joe Biden’s plan.

The ISG also rejected any more drastic and sudden changes in U.S. policies. Militarily, this means no “precipitous withdrawal” of U.S. forces. “Precipitous” is defined as over the next six months—a proposal made by Rep. John Murtha much earlier.

It is a weakness within the center of the U.S. empire that there is no establishment political or military leader with the support and authority to clearly recognize the defeat in Iraq and carry out a retreat. While it is not a perfect analogy, when French colonialism was obviously defeated in its attempt to subjugate Algeria in the late 1950s, Gen. Charles de Gaulle—a consummate imperialist statesperson—was able to force the French ruling class to accept this defeat. No U.S. political figure has similar prestige.

Bush refuses to recognize defeat. He is instead looking around for alternate tactics from two other study groups, one attached to the State Department and one to the National Security Council.

The most likely outcomes are either a long, slow bloodletting in Iraq over years, or some dramatic and dangerous escalation that attempts to change the character of the war. President Richard Nixon, while drawing down U.S. forces in Vietnam from 1969 on, stepped up bombings of Laos, Cambodia and North Vietnam.

One possible side effect of Donald Rumsfeld’s exit from the Defense Department is that a major obstacle to troop increases in Iraq has been removed, since Rumsfeld strongly defended his concept of a streamlined military that was not dependent on a mass intervention of ground troops.

### Anti-war forces say ‘mobilize!’

Occupation opponents—from the Troops Out Now Coalition on the anti-imperialist left, to left columnist Tom Hayden, to mainstream columnists like Bob Herbert in the New York Times—agree that the ISG recommendations are inadequate and that a rapid withdrawal is necessary.

TONC, the ANSWER Coalition and United for Peace and Justice have called for mass mobilizations to continue the struggle to demand an immediate withdrawal of U.S. troops from Iraq. Among other things, they demand that Congress stop funding the war.

TONC was especially sharp in condemning the Democratic Party’s “doublecross” since the midterm elections, asserting in a statement: “We need to stop this war—not another dollar, not another casualty, not one more day. No timetables, no more commissions, no waiting for another election. We must take to the streets in unprecedented numbers and force them to bring the troops home now.”

TONC has called for a mass demonstration in Washington on March 17, 2007, the fourth anniversary of the invasion of Iraq.

A sentence in a key Dec. 10 New York Times article should send an alarming message to the anti-war movement: “The administration’s inclination to dismiss so many of the major findings of the bipartisan group sets the stage for what could

*Continued on page 11*





Solh Square in Beirut an hour before start of mass rally.

PHOTOS: SAMIA HALABY, AL-AWDA NY

By Bill Cecil  
Beirut, Lebanon

Dec. 11—George Bush doesn't like what's happening in this small Arab country. "Hezbollah extremists are trying to destabilize Lebanon," he says. He claims that Syria and Iran are behind it all.

Bush is no more honest about Lebanon than he was about Iraq. What's happening here is a movement of the people on a scale rarely seen in history. It is like the Palestinian Intifada or the fight against apartheid in South Africa.

Yesterday more than half of Lebanon's four and a half million people filled the streets around Parliament to protest the U.S.-backed regime of Fuad Siniora. From morning on, this city's avenues to the south were a sea of people as hundreds of thousands walked in from the Dahye—Beirut's working-class southern suburbs. The highways were a slow-moving river of cars, vans, buses and trucks bringing hundreds of thousands more from cities and villages all over Lebanon.

The rally was the largest in 10 days of protests that began with a rally of almost two million on Dec. 1. Since that day, thousands have been staging a sit-in in and around the two main squares of central Beirut. They vow they will not leave until their demands are met.

They sleep in tents, and there are more tents every night. In the evening their numbers multiply further as thousands stream in after work and school to attend nightly political rallies and concerts.

The protesters are women and men, adults and children. They are workers, students, farmers, homemakers, professionals, small business people, the self-employed and the unemployed.

In a country long divided by religion, they are Shiite and Sunni Muslims, Orthodox and Maronite Christians, Druze and Armenians, and secular Communists, socialists and nationalists. They are members of many political parties, labor unions, student groups, women's

*Continued from page 10*

become a titanic struggle over Iraq policy."

As long as the occupation continues, the Iraqis, the troops and the people from poor and working-class communities here in the United States will suffer from it.

The ISG's failure to resolve the "titanic" internal ruling-class battle will create a need—and an opportunity—to arouse mass intervention independent of the Democratic and Republican Parties and take anti-war actions that go beyond expressing dissent to finally bring an end to the war and occupation.

E-mail: jcat@workers.org



Lebanese stream across bridge over Shuhada Square in Beirut, Dec. 10.

organizations. A majority of Lebanon's union members took part in the Dec. 10 demonstration.

### 'For the first time we are together'

"Our country has been so divided by religion and region," said Ghada, a student from the Dahye. "For the first time we are all together; for the first time we are meeting each other and finding out about each other."

Most are working class. And they all express common sentiments. They are tired of a regime that enriches bankers and land speculators while the people get poorer, a regime that has burdened the country's four million people with a \$44 billion debt, half of it in just the past four years.

They are tired of a 35-percent unemployment rate that has forced hundreds of thousands of young Lebanese to emigrate, of New York City prices in a country where the minimum wage is \$250 a month (and many earn less), of a regime that tried to disarm the people's resistance when Israel attacked Lebanon last summer.

Most of all, they are tired of a government that follows the dictates of the United States, while that country arms Israel to murder Lebanese and Palestinians. This is a struggle for national independence.

On Thursday night, Dec. 7, tens of thousands of people filled Beirut's Riad Solh and Martyrs Squares to watch a televised address by Sayyid Hassan Nasrallah, general secretary of Hezbollah and leader of the resistance against Israeli occupation. Hezbollah's base is among Shiite Muslims, Lebanon's largest and poorest group. But it won support and admiration in all of Lebanon's communities when it repelled Israel's U.S.-funded assault on Lebanon. And it continues to win support for its

social and reconstruction work in the war-ravaged communities of South Lebanon.

Hezbollah is the largest party in the National Opposition. There are many others. These include the largely Shiite Amal Movement led by Nabih Berri, the Free Patriotic Movement led by retired general Michel Aoun, and the Marada Party, led by former Prime Minister Suleiman Franjieh, both Christians. The Movement for Unity, the Democratic Party and the Struggle Movement, whose main support is among the Druse, are also in it. Also included are the Lebanese Communist Party, the Syrian Social Nationalist Party, the Peoples Democratic Party, the Arab Democratic Party and the Movement of the People.

### 'Gov't encouraged Israeli attack'

In his speech, Sayid Hassan Nasrallah revealed that some in the ruling March 14 Coalition had encouraged the U.S.-Israeli attack on Lebanon and that the state's Internal Security Forces had aided Israel in its efforts to track down the leadership of the resistance. "Can anyone accept that in a time of war, the prime minister ordered the Lebanese Army to seize weapons being delivered to us as we were trying to defend our country from Israeli attacks?" He called for a pan-Arab tribunal to investigate the conspiracy.

He repeatedly expressed solidarity with the people of Palestine and Iraq and warned of U.S.-backed intrigues to provoke sectarian warfare in Lebanon as it has in Iraq.

Sayid Hassan saluted martyr Ahmad Mahmoud, who was murdered last Sunday by supporters of the government. "When they killed Ahmed Mahmoud, they wanted to push us to clashes," he said. "I tell them

that we refuse civil war and discord. Our weapons have only been raised against our Israeli enemy."

But he vowed that the movement would not retreat or surrender. "The door is open for negotiations, but we will not leave the street before achieving the goal of saving Lebanon."

On Friday, Dec. 8, Imam Fathi Yakka, who is Sunni, led Shiite and Sunni Muslims in a joint prayer service. Before prayer he told worshipers, "This sit-in will foil the American project in Lebanon just as the resistance broke the myth of the invincible Israel during the July-August war. This massive protest can last not only for one more week or month but for years until it defeats the American [U.S.] plot. Lebanon will be the cemetery of the 'New Middle East.'"

At the Dec. 10 rally Sheikh Naim Qassam, Hezbollah's deputy general secretary, called on "those holing up in their mansions" to hear the voices of the hundreds of thousands of people in the streets. He warned Siniora's regime that "U.S. support and the backing by some Arab and Western states will be futile."

### 'Barbed wire is no protection'

Michel Aoun said, "In the few coming days, we expect to change the status quo. And this must be the last big rally we'll call for because in the next one there will be no room for all the protesters. Barbed wire will no longer protect the Grand Serail because people will move there naturally and without any instigation."

The Lebanese democratic movement's demands seem modest: that Prime Minister Siniora form a new cabinet in which the National Opposition has greater representation. But deeper issues are clearly at stake.

This movement has alarmed not only Lebanon's ruling parties and their economically privileged base. It has frightened the White House and the Pentagon, Downing Street and the Elysee Palace. The kings of Jordan and Saudi Arabia have joined the chorus of worriers, as has Egyptian president-for-life Mubarak, not to mention the apartheid regime in Tel Aviv.

Washington turned Iraq into a killing field in the name of "democracy." In the name of "peace," it arms Israel to starve and massacre the people of Palestine. But when the Lebanese people unite across sectarian lines to demand democratic reform, the White House and corporate media call them "terrorists" and "extremists." For the masses of poor and working class people inside the United States, the people's movement in Lebanon should serve as an example. □



¡Proletarios y oprimidos de todos los países, uníos!

## EL LÍBANO

# Dos millones se manifiestan en Beirut exigiendo salida de títeres

Por Bill Cecil  
Beirut, Líbano

Vinieron a pie, en motocicletas, o apiñad@s en carros, autobuses y micro—buses. Mujeres y hombres, en su mayoría jóvenes, algun@s con sus niñ@s. Llegaron desde el sur, del este y del norte, de todas partes excepto por el mar. Inundaron el centro de Beirut hasta que el parlamento fue rodeado por un mar de banderas libanesas.

A las 3 de la tarde del viernes 1º de diciembre ya casi la mitad del Líbano estaba allí. Dos millones de voces gritaban al unísono “América fuera del Líbano” y “Queremos un gobierno libre.” El sábado y el domingo salieron de nuevo. Hoy decenas de miles todavía permanecen bajo gigantescas carpas en las afueras del parlamento. Prometieron permanecer allí hasta que el gobierno pro-estadounidense de Fuad Siniora renuncie.

La noche del domingo 3 de diciembre, las fuerzas de los ricos y poderosos atacaron cobardemente. Dos manifestantes fueron heridos de muerte en una emboscada mientras viajaban por un vecindario derechista en camino a sus casas después de la protesta. Otros más resultaron heridos.

Soldados fuertemente armados rodeaban los edificios gubernamentales y patrullaban las calles. Pero el pueblo piensa que tiene la simpatía de los soldados y que el primer ministro teme ordenar al ejército a que detenga las protestas.

La gente respondió con sólo 27 horas de aviso, después de un llamado televisivo por Sayid Hassan Nasrullah el 30 de noviembre. Sayid Hassan es el secretario general de Hizbolá, uno de los muchos partidos que compone la Alianza del 8 de Marzo, la oposición democrática del Líbano.

El Hizbolá tiene su base en la comunidad chiíta, la más grande y pobre del

Líbano. Pero es popular entre todas las comunidades libanesas porque el verano pasado repelió los ataques de Israel mientras que el régimen de Siniora no hizo nada.

La gran mayoría de l@s que asistió a la protesta fue chiíta. Llegaron de Dahiye, los empobrecidos suburbios del sur de Beirut, y de villas destrozadas por la guerra en el sur y también del valle Bekaa. Much@s perdieron seres queridos el verano pasado cuando las bombas y proyectiles israelitas hechos en Estados Unidos llovieron sobre sus hogares. Much@s tomaron las armas en contra de la maquinaria guerrerista de Israel/EEUU.

Pero también se les unieron cientos de miles de cristianos del este de Beirut y de las montañas del norte. Y también musulmanes sunitas, druse y armenios. También llegaron palestinos que han estado en el exilio en el Líbano por el sistema del apartheid israelita al igual que “trabajadores visitantes” de Siria, Jordania y Egipto.

Todos expresaron sus deseos comunes en sus conversaciones con personas de los Estados Unidos: Fin a las políticas económicas dictadas por Wall Street. Fin a la creciente división entre la riqueza y la pobreza. Fin al terror israelita financiado por los Estados Unidos. Un Líbano y un mundo árabe libre de la dominación política y económica de los Estados Unidos.

Much@s se identificaron con la lucha global en contra del poder imperial de los EEUU. Una mujer mayor que llevaba una bufanda hejab cubriendo su cabeza, ondeaba una gigantesca bandera venezolana. Un hombre joven llevaba una enorme bandera palestina.

Tanto como en Palestina, Irak y en el Norte de Irlanda, los medios de comunicación corporativos intentan dibujar lo que está pasando aquí como una

riña sobre la religión. Pero en el fondo es una lucha de clases.

Por un lado está la coalición dominante del 14 de Marzo, que representa el poder de una élite privilegiada y occidentalizada. Su control está basado en un sistema de divisiones sectarias dejadas por la antigua dominación colonial de Francia. Está sostenida artificialmente por los EEUU, Francia, Israel y Arabia Saudita.

Por otro lado está la alianza del 8 de Marzo, la cual tiene el apoyo de l@s pobres y l@s explotad@s del Líbano, quienes sufren más por las políticas económicas de Siniora dictadas por los EEUU y por los misiles israelitas hechos en los Estados Unidos. Incluye a los partidos chiítas Hizbolá y Amal, a los Partidos Movimiento Patriótico Libre y Marada que están primordialmente basados en la comunidad cristiana, al Partido Demócrata liderado por los Druses, al Partido Comunista Libanés y al Partido del Pueblo de Siria.

“¡Ven a ver! Este es el verdadero nuevo Medio Oriente”, dijo Husein Huseini, un mecánico de motocicletas de Dahiye, suburbio al sur de Beirut. “Esto no es el Medio Oriente de George Bush o Condoleezza Rice. Este es el Medio Oriente popular. Todos estamos aquí juntos —chiítas, sunitas, católicos, ortodoxos, druses, armenios. Pero Bush cree que él puede dominarnos. ¡Pero esto será el fin de su sueño!”

“Yo soy sunita”, dijo Khidr, un estudiante de 24 años. “Mi padre es un musulmán sunita, mi madre es drusa. Los dos están hoy aquí conmigo. Todos nosotros amamos a Hizbolá. No porque derrotó a Israel, sino porque ayuda a los pobres, construye escuelas y hospitales”.

“Yo quiero que caiga este gobierno”, dijo Tariq, de 16 años original del Sur del Líbano. El huyó de su hogar el verano pasado para escapar de las bombas de

Israel. “Está controlado por los EEUU e Israel. Queremos un gobierno que represente al pueblo del Líbano —a todo el pueblo, no solamente a unos pocos”.

Ahmed N. se crió en Michigan, donde trabajaba como chofer. Regresó al Líbano este año para ayudar a su familia. “No se puede creer cuán pobre es la gente aquí”, dijo. “Familias enteras subsisten en 200 libras por día [\$US 0.13] y como en los EEUU, hay unos pocos capitalistas que lo tienen todo”.

La gente se rió por las afirmaciones del régimen de Bush que Hizbolá es una organización “terrorista” y que está controlada por Siria e Irán. “Mira a todas estas personas”, dijo Yusuf, quien trabaja por las noches como guardia de seguridad. Gana \$50 a la semana con precios tan altos como en Nueva York. “¿Son terroristas tod@s ell@s? ¿Son sirios e iraníes? No, este es el verdadero pueblo del Líbano. Estamos aquí porque no encontramos empleos decentes; ya no podemos costear la vida en nuestro propio país”.

“Pero no tenemos nada en contra de Siria o Irán. Son nuestros vecinos; queremos ser sus amigos. No nos están atacando. Son los Estados Unidos e Israel quienes nos atacan.” Una y otra vez, la gente subrayó la diferencia entre el pueblo estadounidense y su gobierno.

“Tengo un mensaje para el pueblo de los Estados Unidos,” dijo Fátima Al Kubaisi, una madre del Dahye cuya casa fue destruida durante el bombardeo. Ella vivió un año en Michigan. “Oigan lo que nosotr@s mism@s decimos, no lo que dice CNN sobre nosotr@s. Y entérense de lo que su gobierno hace aquí en el Líbano y en Irak y en Palestina, donde están matando a los niños. Y también dentro de los Estados Unidos, lo que están haciendo a la gente negra y también a la gente blanca. Y queremos que ustedes hagan un cambio en su país.” ■

## BOLIVIA

# Se aprueba Reforma Agraria masiva

El presidente boliviano Evo Morales firmó el 28 de noviembre una serie de leyes progresistas, incluyendo una para recobrar decenas de miles de kilómetros cuadrados de tierras ociosas pertenecientes a rancheros ricos.

La ley permitirá la redistribución de tierra en la región de los llanos orientales a campesin@s pobres sin tierra, y establece que la tierra cuyo uso está en contra del interés colectivo, será tomada sin compensación. El Servicio de Prensa Inter reporta que entre el 60 y el 70 por ciento de los terrenos para cultivos está en manos de sólo unas

pocas familias. (29 de noviembre)

Más de 4.000 indígenas habían marchado a la ciudad capital de La Paz para demandar la promulgación de esta ley; tres personas murieron durante la marcha, dos en un accidente sospechoso de carro, y otra por un relámpago.

La ley pasó a pesar de las maniobras políticas que hicieron los partidos de oposición para bloquearla al boicotear el Senado de 27 miembr@s, haciendo imposible lograr el quórum necesario de 14 delegad@s. Sin embargo, después de que Morales amenazara pasar

la ley por decreto presidencial, tres senadores de la oposición regresaron a la mesa con 12 senadores del partido de Morales, Movimiento a Socialismo.

Además de la ley de reforma agraria, pasaron los contratos con 10 compañías extranjeras de petróleo, acto conectado con la nacionalización de las reservas de hidrocarburos en Bolivia. Se aprobó además un convenio de cooperación económica con Venezuela. Morales anunció también planes para pasar otras leyes como la de la nacionalización de las minas bolivianas de estaño y de otros minerales. □

