

WORKERS WORLD

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DEC. 28, 2006 VOL. 48, NO. 51 50¢

GOV'T ATTACKS WORKERS



Latin@s Unidos and supporters from the Farm Labor Organizing Committee, Welfare Rights, MECAWI, Students for a Democratic Society and various UAW locals demanded 'Stop the raids, free the workers' at the Detroit Homeland Security office on Dec. 15.

Solidarity needed

Racist ICE raids terrorize immigrants

By John Parker

This time of year an added emphasis is put on sharing with children. However, for the children of Swift and Co. meatpacking workers in six states, it's a time of misery, fear and anger.

Department of Homeland Security and Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agents, armed with military weapons, stormed into the unionized workplaces of Swift on Dec. 12, terrorizing nearly 1,300 workers in what Homeland Security Secretary Michael Chertoff said was an attack on "illegal immigration."

According to a statement by the United Food and Commercial Workers union, which represents these workers, ICE agents "marched into plants Thursday morning with military weapons, herding, segregating and terrorizing workers. Plants and plant gates were locked down. ...

"Families have been ripped apart leaving traumatized children stranded at school waiting to be picked up. In some cases, their parents are being transported to detention centers in distant cities and

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Stop racist killer cops!

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Black youth set up

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Pentagon threatens as

75,000 join Goodyear pickets

By Martha Grevatt

For one day, the 15,000 workers striking Goodyear in the U.S. and Canada had their strength multiplied by five. On Dec. 16, a National Day of Solidarity drew 75,000 strikers and supporters to 150 pickets of Goodyear dealerships in over 100 cities.

Nearly every state and Canadian province had one or more actions, which were called jointly by the United Steelworkers (USW) and the AFL-CIO. Even where the nearest picket was outside a 500-mile radius, unionists felt the importance of showing solidarity. "Wherever union workers are on strike, we try to support them," explained Archie Archuleta, a retired teacher and unionist picketing in Salt Lake City.

The Great Lakes states had the most demonstrations. The Cleveland area had two separate actions. In Cleveland and Akron, a big morale boost came when USW International President Leo Gerard paid a visit to and spoke with the picketers.

Goodyear still has its world headquarters in Akron, Ohio. Some 150 strikers and their allies chanted and held signs outside. But

even without them, few would be buying Goodyear tires in this union-conscious town.

Despite Goodyear's near-annihilation of the unionized workforce—less than 500 are striking the company, which once supported 12,000 workers and their families—feelings of solidarity run deep. The Goodyear dealer at Chapel Hill mall had few customers and had to listen to horns honking for two solid hours.

For most dealers, however, lack of customers is the least of their problems. According to a recent article in Modern Tire Dealer, getting tires from strikebound plants is tough. Dealers must "say some prayers and pull some teeth" if they want products delivered. Goodyear has already burned up \$350 million of the \$1 billion it borrowed in October to break the strike.

Still further proof that the strike, now two and a half months old, is having an impact on production came Dec. 14, when the chair of the House Armed Services Committee threatened to invoke the Taft-Hartley law to force 200 strikers in Topeka, Kansas, back to work. Rep.

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Dec. 16 protest against police killing of Sean Bell.

Impact of ‘The Gay Question,’ 1976 Marxist analysis rocked U.S.left

By Leslie Feinberg

Workers World Party—a revolutionary communist party in the United States made up of people of diverse nationalities and countries of origin, ages and sexes, genders and sexualities—published in 1976 the first known, fully developed Marxist analysis of how, when and why state repression, social oppression and widespread prejudice against same-sex love arose and developed in human society.

The pamphlet, written by gay WWP leader Bob McCubbin, was originally entitled, “The Gay Question: A Marxist Appraisal.”

The title did not mean that fighting lesbian/gay oppression was a question for the author, who was himself an activist in the movement against the oppression, or for Workers World Party as a whole.

The term “gay question” in the title honors more than a century of Marxist analysis that has brought important social issues—including the battle against forms of oppression above and beyond the overall economic exploitation of the working class—to the fore of the political movement: the national question, the woman question, the housing question. Those who have been introduced to a vulgarization of Marxism offering merely a mechanistic and simplistic view of the relationship between economic and social life—economic determinism—will be pleased to know that.

“The Gay Question” established a foundation and a framework for understanding why repression and oppression of people who love and/or desire people of the same sex rose and developed in human history.

It was not the first time a sexually oppressed Marxist attempted to look back over the vista of history to find clues.

A century earlier homosexual British socialist Edward Carpenter began to dig into history, sifting for answers.

The leaders of the late 19th and early 20th century German Homosexual Emancipation movement did, too. Many of its leaders identified as socialists. At the height of the movement—the eve of fascism in Germany—the Scientific Humanitarian Committee had compiled more than 12,000 books that included cross-cultural and cross-historical references about same-sex love and gender variance. How many analyses were researched and penned in that precious archive before German fascist forces—on their march to power to save and serve big capital—burned it to the ground?

Gay communist Harry Hay founded the first-known widespread grassroots gay movement in California at the height of the Cold War witch-hunt in the United States. He also brought his Marxist tools to history and unearthed a wealth of information. But Hay, who had to leave the Communist Party USA in order to openly do gay mass organizing, was later driven out of that activist role by gay anti-communists. Many of Hay’s public historical presentations appear to be lost to the record.

Marxist analyses about the violent colonial and imperialist suppression of indigenous sexualities and genders may have been developed. But if so, attempts at cultural genocide by the occupier nation prevented international publication and circulation.

Part of what was so significant about the 1975-1976 Marxist analysis in the United States written by McCubbin was that he was a leading member of Workers World Party and he didn’t have to leave the party to publicly formulate a Marxist analysis of lesbian/gay oppression. He had the whole party behind him and behind the politics of the book.

While one member of the organization authored the pamphlet, it represented the contributions of the entire party.

Looking back, McCubbin states, “In the fall of 1975, I finally felt I had, at least minimally, what I needed and sat down to write.” He recalls finishing the first edition of the manuscript in early winter.

McCubbin gave copies of the analysis, which so many comrades of all sexualities had contributed to in ways small and large, to WWP founders Sam Marcy and Dorothy Ballan, and to Fred Goldstein, today a contributing editor to Workers World newspaper. McCubbin said the feedback from these comrades—”whose profound grounding in the science of Marxism and whose analytical abilities I have always admired”—was extremely positive.

The impact of this Marxist analysis on the left-wing movement, and lesbian and gay self-identified radicals and revolutionaries within it, was first politically felt just one month later, in a pre-publication edition of the pamphlet.

A delegation of lesbian/gay/transgender and heterosexual members of Workers World Party traveled by bus from New York City to Chicago through a blizzard to take part in the January 1976 “Hard Times” conference. As part of their political work at the conference, they sold all 300 xeroxed copies of the pamphlet they’d brought with them.

What made the defense of the lesbian and gay liberation struggle at that event particularly important, McCubbin emphasizes, “was that this conference was a gathering of most of what remained of what was called ‘the New Left’—the radical youth movement of the late sixties and early seventies.”

It was not an easy task to politically intervene in the conference with a strong Marxist call to defend lesbian and gay liberation as a dynamically integral and necessary part of battling capitalism—economically and socially, politically and ideologically.

Many white activists there, even those who were lesbian or gay themselves, tried to argue that this oppression was of “secondary” or “tertiary” importance in the overall struggle for liberation.

“It’s hard to understand,” McCubbin notes, “but even at this late date—1976—there was still strong resistance within the progressive movement to acknowledging the legitimacy of the struggles of lesbians and gay men for full equality.”

Workers World Party’s principled position as part of and in solidarity with the lesbian/gay liberation movement of the early and mid-1970s strongly influenced both the left wing of the communist movement and the left wing of the autonomous movement for sexual liberation.

Next: ‘The Gay Question’: Blazing history’s trails
E-mail: lfeinberg@workers.org



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

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

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Hey! Don’t cry!

Just wanted to get your attention.

There will be no issue of Workers World next week.

See you in the New Year.

Workers World

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Breast cancer rates linked to drug company profits

By Minnie Bruce Pratt

The most common form of breast cancer in the U.S. dropped by 15 percent from 2002 to 2003, says a study just released by the M.D. Anderson Cancer Center in Houston.

Researchers believe the reason for this exciting decline may be that millions of women stopped taking hormone replacement therapy (HRT) in 2002. That year a study from the Women’s Health Initiative warned that women taking one type of HRT, Prempro, risked higher breast cancer rates. Until that announcement, about a third of U.S. women over the age of 50 took hormone-replacement drugs prescribed by their doctors.

Breast cancer rates had been climbing since 1945, and killed an estimated 40,000 U.S. women a year. Dr. Peter Ravdin, one of the study’s authors, said the recent dramatic decline was “the largest for a single cancer in a single year” that he knew of. (New York Times, Dec. 15)

Drug companies and doctors had pushed HRT on women for years, saying it prevented or minimized all sorts of ailments, from heart disease and stroke to bone loss to mental decline. Critics of HRT were ridiculed, studies undertaken to assess the usefulness of HRT were attacked as unnecessary, and their doctors badgered women who resisted taking HRT.

But, as Cynthia Pearson, executive director of the National Women’s Health Network, points out: “There was never a single clinical trial that showed that HRT prevented cardiovascular disease or stroke. This is not a story of science moving sedately forward, carefully adding

pieces to a puzzle before making recommendations to patients. This is a story of the corruption of the medical and scientific community. The belief that hormones are good preventive medicine has been a triumph of marketing over science.” (www.womenshealthnetwork.org)

Drug companies spend an average of \$10,000 to \$15,000 in marketing per physician per year. They offer doctors office catering, lavish dinners and even free cruises. It has been shown that the factor with the most influence on doctors’ prescribing practice is visits from pharmaceutical representatives. Drug companies fund studies and pay physicians to give talks at conferences, and spend more than twice as much on advertising and marketing as on research. (Family Therapy Network, March 2000 and www.gayhealth.com)

For the launch of early HRT sales, pharmaceutical companies used some of the most insidious and powerful of these marketing techniques.

In the 1960s, the main popularizer of HRT as “supplemental estrogen” was gynecologist Robert Wilson. In his book “Feminine Forever,” Wilson used sexist, heterosexist and ageist reasons to make the natural end of the reproductive process in women seem like a dreadful fate—what he termed the “vapid cow-like state” of menopause. He crisscrossed the U.S. promoting his ideas—and by 1975 Wyeth’s HRT drug Premarin was the fifth-most-prescribed medicine in the U.S. (New York Times, July 10, 2002)

After Wilson’s death in 1981, his son revealed that Wyeth Pharmaceuticals (as Wyeth-Ayerst) had paid all of Wilson’s

expenses for “Feminine Forever” and for his so-called “research institute.”

In 2001, before HRT dangers were publicized, drug giant Wyeth earned \$900 million in sales from Prempro. The next year its sales dropped 50 percent in six months. (New York Times, July 17, 2002)

To make their millions, drug companies have continued to market HRT products in the teeth of evidence that shows the drugs actively harm women and in fact bring on disease and death. Solvay Pharmaceuticals has sold the HRT Estratest, an estrogen/testosterone combination, for 25 years without ever having received Food and Drug Administration (FDA) approval, despite the fact that the Nurses’ Health Study shows that the drug increases breast cancer risks in women. The National Women’s Health Network has filed a citizens’ petition with the FDA in an attempt to halt the sales. (NWHN Alerts, Aug. 28)

Lack of science, distortion and suppression of facts, marketing hype and failure to consider the common good is “business as usual” for big pharmaceutical companies. Their drive for profits brings additional sickness and suffering to people all over the world.

A Dec. 17 New York Times article points out that “The drug maker Eli Lilly has engaged in a decade-long effort to play down the health risks of Zyprexa, its best-selling medication for schizophrenia,” and continues to reveal severe problems of obesity and diabetes that the company’s own published data supports. Lilly sold \$4.2 billion worth of the drug worldwide in 2005.

Pharmaceutical giants like Glaxo Smith Kline have worked ferociously to block

distribution and manufacture of generic versions of their HIV/AIDS drugs. As the AIDS epidemic accelerates in Africa, India and the Pacific Rim countries, affecting women in particular in growing numbers, U.S. drug companies jockey to increase their profits by retaining their drug patents.

Of the recent study linking Wyeth’s HRT drug to breast cancer, a spokeswoman for the company said, “Clearly, more studies are warranted.”

On the contrary, what is warranted is the removal of the profit motive from the health care system through the establishment of a public health program in which people’s needs are the primary criteria for all decisions. For how this might be possible, the world can look to the magnificent health system of socialist Cuba. □

ON THE PICKET LINE
by Sue Davis

‘Negotiate, don’t legislate’

At least 10,000 New Jersey state workers—teachers, firefighters and government workers—rallied at the State Capitol in Trenton on Dec. 11. They were protesting the way the governor and the Legislature may ease property taxes, the highest in the country, by Jan. 1: by passing legislation cutting state workers’ pension and health benefits.

Such legislation would totally bypass contract negotiations for 80,000 state workers, whose contracts expire June 30, 2007.

“We are not going to sit back and take this disrespect,” said Barbara Keshishian, vice president of the New Jersey Education Association. “We keep this state running, and let me tell you, if we have to, we can shut it down.” (New York Times, Dec. 12)

State workers have signed giveback contracts in recent years and vow not to become scapegoats for legislators’ tax cuts for the rich as well as fiscal mismanagement.

Tree planters in class-action lawsuit

About 6,000 immigrant tree planters working in the U.S. under H-2B visas, which require under federal law that employers pay prevailing wages, have sued four forestry companies for back pay and reimbursement of out-of-pocket expenses.

Though prevailing hourly wages range from \$6.32 in North Carolina to \$9.20 in Alabama, immigrant workers in Southern pine forests were paid less than the federal minimum wage of \$5.15 an hour with no overtime. Often they were required to pay for their own tools, visas and travel costs from Latin America.

On Sept. 28, a federal judge classified the case brought by the Southern Poverty Law Center as a class-action lawsuit. The center described the H-2B (so-called “guest worker”) program as a way that employers use to rip off immigrant workers. (USA Today, Nov. 15)

President George W. Bush has proposed tripling the number of such visas each year. However, just issuing more visas won’t end the exploitation, oppression and demonization of immigrant workers.

‘Gaza on the Ground’

By Audrey Hoak
Philadelphia

The realities of war in the Gaza Strip came to life here on Dec. 5 as photo-journalist Mohammed Omer presented “Gaza on the Ground” at the Quaker Center. The presentation included slides, video footage, related stories and a first-hand account by Omer that left unforgettable images in the minds of his audience.

The 22-year-old Palestinian, who is on tour with his photos, is winner of the Best Youth Voice category for the first National Ethnic Media Awards. He overcame many travel restrictions to share a bone-deep slice of life in Gaza and to take home a firsthand look at the people of the United States. “Too often the only impression of America arrives at the end of a gun or bulldozer,” he said.

“Gaza on the Ground” begins in Rafah refugee camp and an adjacent corridor on the Gaza-Egypt border, an area Israel is said to be interested in reoccupying. Rafah is a distressed area under siege. People are confined to their homes. Water stations have been destroyed. Little food is available—not even milk for babies.

Omer’s video footage shows unarmed residents gathered in the streets to protest lawless Israeli attacks that continued for 17 days and that stripped people of their rights, homes and even their lives.

In Palestine, where over 60 percent of the population are under 18, Omer’s camera captured the moment when the mostly youthful crowd was fired on with bullets, tear gas and shrapnel. Some people

were hauled away by Israeli soldiers, adding to the swelling prison population of over 10,000. Some were wounded but still standing, while others lost limbs. The seriously injured were carried off to wait for medical help.

Ambulances along with fuel are in short supply, so help is sent only in critical cases. In this situation people were packed in the vehicles and rushed to the hospital. There, Omer captured disturbing footage of an unattended man standing, arms held stiffly by his sides, his mouth open in an endless scream. A doctor reported witnessing this in other patients who had suffered exposure to white tear gas. He wondered what chemical had been devised to cause this horrible delirium.

As the hospital morgue filled beyond capacity, bodies of dead children were placed in refrigerators along with food items.

As his presentation moved from video to still photographic slides, in a quiet voice Omer named faces on the screen, gave ages and personal accounts.

“She is 80 years old, not military, not political. She cared about harvesting oranges and almonds.” The woman’s eyes convey the loss of her trees and home, which Israeli soldiers systematically bulldozed from front to back.

Another slide showed little boys peeking over a pile of debris as their home was buried. When Omer asked them why they risked their lives at such close range to the soldiers, one replied, “I’m looking for my bicycle.”

Omer’s neighbor was shot down in front of his home. He lay in a puddle of blood

as his children inside screamed. His wife ran to his side and was hit: more blood, more screams. The puddle grew into a pool as two more people, including his child and an ambulance driver, tried to help and were shot.

Omer presented video coverage of the International Solidarity Movement trying to stop the rampaging destruction of homes and property. Among his photographs was the maimed face of U.S. citizen Rachel Corrie, whose solidarity work ended when she was crushed to death by an Israeli bulldozer. Omer, who had met Corrie, said he was unable to sleep or eat for days after her death.

Omer had experienced his own home being bulldozed, leaving his mother and sister injured when they jumped out a back window. His 17-year-old brother, described as a dedicated student, both non-military and non-political, was killed in a spray of gunfire from Israeli soldiers. At age six, as the oldest child in his family, Omer found himself the family provider when his father was imprisoned for resisting the occupation.

The Israeli occupation of Palestine is supported by U.S. money and weapons. Banks there are routinely closed for accepting money from the Arab League. So it was no easy task for Omer to begin this tour. While he was finally able to secure a visa to leave Gaza, he is uncertain whether he will be allowed to return home.

To learn more about “Gaza on the Ground,” check out Omer’s website at www.rafahtoday.org or e-mail Mohamed Omer at rafahtoday@yahoo.com.

Unions protest hospital closings

By Beverly Hiestand
Albany, N.Y.

“Bring it up, vote it down,” demanded more than 400 health-care workers as they rallied on the steps of the State Capitol here Dec. 13, the last day of the legislative session.

They were responding to a report by the New York State Commission on Health Care Facilities in the 21st Century, also known as the Berger report. It calls for closing nine hospitals, restructuring 48 others, downsizing 3,000 nursing-home beds and laying off 7,000 health-care workers.

Gov. George Pataki had structured legislation on the closings to automatically go into effect, without any revisions, on Jan. 1, 2007, unless the state Legislature took it up. Despite the demonstration outside, the lawmakers failed to bring it to a vote. Demonstrators accused them of being cowardly for not taking individual responsibility for an act that will have devastating effects on their communities.

John Klein, president of Communication Workers Local 1168 Nurses United, spoke to the emerging fight back seen at the rally as he said wryly, “I want to thank the Berger commission for bringing us together in unity across the state.” The crowd was made up of representatives from the New York State Nurses Association from Cabrini and St. Vincent’s Midtown



Patient health and thousands of jobs are at stake.
WW PHOTO: BEV HIESTAND

hospitals in New York City, the Public Employees Federation, Civil Service Employees, Communication Workers, United University Professions and New York State United Teachers.

The loss of thousands of health-care jobs will have a devastating effect on already economically depressed communities, especially in the upstate area.

The speakers and placards showed, however, that the greatest concern of these health-care workers was the negative impact the cutbacks will have on the quality of care.

Signs of workers at St. Vincent’s said, “Help save us so that we can save you.”

Cabrini workers carried placards saying, “Healing one neighbor at a time—our tradition.”

Nurses and other health-care workers from these two hospitals spoke of the compassionate, respectful and excellent care provided to the poor by clinics and programs that cannot just be moved to other places. Multilingual health-care workers also provide care to immigrants in their own communities, without questioning their right to it. The health-care workers at both facilities noted that they had been the first to provide care to people with AIDS. The Berger plan would close these programs, although they are

still needed. Anthony Feliciano from the Save Our Safety Net Committee noted there was no representation on the state commission from the affected communities and that the report is racist and discriminatory because it doesn’t address the needs of the most vulnerable communities.

Representatives of public-employee unions spoke out against the recommended privatization of hospitals affiliated with the State University of New York. The commission is calling for SUNY Upstate Medical Center to be merged immediately with Crouse hospital in Syracuse and says privatization should be considered for SUNY’s Brooklyn and Stony Brook hospitals. The commission has demanded a merger between the Kaleida health-care system in Buffalo and the public Erie County Medical Center under a new, private entity.

Bill Scheuerman, president of United University Professions, stated that “the bottom line would become how much money you make rather than how much health care you provide.”

Alan Lubin, vice president of New York

Continued on page 8

ICE raids on immigrants tear apart working families

Continued from page 1

denied the opportunity to call anyone to make arrangements for their children. Workers at the Swift plant in Grand Island, Neb., have been bused to Camp Dodge, Iowa, six hours away from their families, with no guarantee of return transportation.

“Workers at the Greeley, Colo., plant reported that gunshots were fired. Representatives and attorneys with the UFCW, who have standing to represent these workers, have been denied access to the detained workers.”

In Marshalltown, Iowa, the local news service reported that a priest and nun were forced to give up trying to find the mother of a baby she had been breastfeeding due to non-cooperation from ICE officers. After driving to Camp Dodge, which people had been herded into, they received no cooperation.

They “wouldn’t tell us anything about anybody,” said Rev. Jim Miller, a priest from St. Mary’s Parish. He also inquired

about an asthmatic child’s father and a 7-year-old girl who repeatedly asks why her mother was taken.

By the next day, the baby was refusing any food or the breast milk of another parent.

According to some reports, immigration agents were also stopping cars and knocking on residents’ doors late at night. Understandably, people are afraid to go to work. Some are in hiding or taking sanctuary in churches. Many fear what this terror campaign will mean for a community forced to live from paycheck to paycheck and thus unable to buy food or pay rent and heating bills during winter.

Racist, anti-worker raids

Many are pointing out the racist nature of these attacks. The Hispanic National Bar Association reported on Dec. 18 that “non-Latinos’ and light-skinned employees were provided blue wristbands which exempted them from questioning, while ‘Latinos,’ persons perceived to be of Hispanic or Latino origin, underwent immigration

processing. ... The serious concern is the use of police and immigration officials to sort amongst workers and determine upon unknown criteria who is Latino, and then to assume that all persons perceived to be Latinos are illegal.”

The spin from Homeland Security, being mouthed by the corporate media, is that these raids were justified due not just to lack of documents but to illegal activity, like identity theft. However, 95 percent of those arrested were not charged with either identity theft or any other criminal activity, other than illegal immigration. Out of the nearly 1,300 arrested, 65 were charged with identity theft and/or other crimes.

If the reason for the raids was to stop illegal immigration, one would think the government would go after the companies that lure workers to their plants and sometimes even provide them with Social Security numbers. Instead, however, Homeland Security officials emphasized that only Swift’s workers, not the company, had been charged with wrongdoing.

The fact is, immigrant workers create billions in profit for employers here and the absence of their labor would devastate the economy. According to a report in the Dec. 14 New York Times, businesses “shuddered” after hearing the news about the Swift raids and the CEO of Swift warned that production levels would temporarily fall below normal.

“This is any business’s nightmare, whether you are in the meat industry or outside the meat industry,” said Janet Riley, spokesperson for the American Meat Institute.

Instead of being about targeting terrorism, crime or illegal immigration, as Chertoff claimed, this is all about targeting workers, especially unionized workers. The attack on immigrant workers is the wedge used against all working people in this country.

The raids targeted UFCW workers and stripped them of any union rights they had. Union officials were not even allowed to approach their members.

This is nothing more than an attempt to take the militancy seen on May 1 out of the immigrant community and intimidate workers out of their unions. The Department of Homeland Security and the “war on terror” provide the means.

Role of U.S. economic and military warfare

In explaining the raids to the media, Homeland Security officials endorsed the Bush administration’s attempt to push through a new version of indentured servitude, a new spin on the Bracero program that ripped off Mexican workers in the mid-20th century.

Bush’s “guest worker” proposal would allow employers to “invite” workers across the border to work and un-invite those wanting higher pay or a union.

Chertoff also urged Congress to pass legislation allowing Social Security officials to pass along information about valid Social Security numbers being used in multiple workplaces. This would be

Continued on the next page

Palmer Raids, 1919-20

The first mass arrest of immigrant workers

By Robert Dobrow

The Dec. 12 raids by immigration police against hundreds of workers at meatpacking plants across the country bear all the earmarks of an earlier anti-immigrant chapter in U.S. history.

The 1919-20 Palmer Raids saw thousands of immigrants—mostly from Europe—rounded up, detained without trial, beaten and many eventually deported. Like today, it was a time when the government was obsessed with “regime change” abroad and fighting “terrorism” at home; a period of economic and political crisis, when the bosses were waging an anti-labor offensive and the foreign-born made an easy scapegoat for harsh economic conditions.

On Nov. 7, 1919, Attorney General A. Mitchell Palmer ordered a series of coordinated raids against the offices of an immigrant labor group, the Union of Russian Workers, in 12 cities across the U.S. Police arrested 650 people without warrants. The pretext for the raid was a series of bombings in eight U.S. cities. Conveniently, anarchist pamphlets were found at several sites, prompting a hysterical campaign against “lawlessness,” “anarchism” and “un-American Bolshevism.”

Typical of the media frenzy was this editorial in the Tacoma (Washington) Leader: “We must smash every un-American and anti-American organization in the land. We must put to death the

leaders of this gigantic conspiracy of murder, pillage, and revolution. We must imprison for life all its aiders and abettors of native birth. We must deport all aliens.”

On Dec. 21, six weeks later, 249 “radical aliens” were dragged from their homes, forcibly put on board a ship and deported. But that was only the dress rehearsal.

On New Year’s Day of 1920, between 5,000 and 10,000 individuals, in 23 states, were arrested and jailed. Some of the arrests were made just because the individuals subscribed to left-wing newspapers, read Russian novels or ate in restaurants that served ethnic food.

Most of the arrests were made without

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Lessons of strike

TWU weakened anti-union Taylor Law

By Milt Neidenberg
New York

Before being reelected president of Transport Workers Union Local 100, Roger Toussaint told a recent labor conference, “It was our proudest hour. We did not strike to make history. We struck and so we made history.” It was a thoughtful summary of the heroic three-day transit strike that shut New York City down a year ago, paralyzing the financial center of the world.

Toussaint, who was born in Trinidad, had faced four challengers in the election. His victory showed the maturity of the rank and file and their recognition that **their president had steered the union through the pressure, tension and fear that a strike which challenged the infamous Taylor Law could weaken or even destroy the union. The Taylor Law prohibits New York state public employees from striking.** Breaking it to get economic and social justice is what made the three-day strike historic. The workers went in strong and came out stronger.

A defensive strike with power

The Metropolitan Transit Authority and the boss politicians were ill-prepared

Continued from the preceding page

especially handy to “justify” future raids against, say, Smithfield meat processing workers in North Carolina. Workers there, in mid-November, won back the jobs of co-workers fired for not having proper Social Security match-ups.

The Bush administration and the Democratic Party, too, know that U.S. imperialism’s economic and military warfare causes immigration. It is well documented how President Bill Clinton’s introduction of NAFTA—the North American Free Trade Agreement—impoverished workers abroad. NAFTA is a form of economic warfare. But that is not the only type of U.S. warfare that has destroyed economies and living conditions, forcing immigration to the U.S.

The workers arrested in the Dec. 12 raid were from Mexico, Guatemala, Honduras, El Salvador, Sudan and Ethiopia, plus other countries.

In Guatemala, workers are still reeling from the CIA overthrow in 1954 of elected President Jacobo Arbenz Guzmán, which forced an end to his successful land reform that gave peasants desperately needed land.

In Honduras, the U.S. military invasion in 1905 and support and training of death squads years later ensured that today 65 percent of the population in Honduras lives in poverty.

In El Salvador, the U.S.-created death squads and the arming of its military against the poor and workers in the 1970s exacerbated poverty and homelessness, forcing many to emigrate in search of a better life.

The history of U.S. involvement in Africa is one full of fueling civil wars to weaken and attempt domination, as it has tried in Ethiopia and Sudan.

Instead of deportations, the U.S. government should be dismantling its huge military and handing out reparations to those attacked.

Working people and all progressive organizations must unite to fight this most dangerous threat by Homeland Security. A vital step: solidarity with the workers at Smith & Co. □

for Local 100’s decision to break the law. They were convinced that disarray in the labor movement—the TWU International sabotaged the strike with a call to cross the picket lines—and the Taylor Law, with its prohibitive penalties, would force Toussaint to bargain on their terms. The miscalculation cost them hundreds of millions of dollars.

On Dec. 20, 2005, 33,000 transit workers walked out in defiance of the Taylor Law, defending the principle of “no contract, no work.” The strike, which took place during the hectic Christmas week when giant retailers counted on ringing up big sales, was attacked viciously by Gov. George Pataki and billionaire New York Mayor Michael Bloomberg, who called the strikers “cowardly” and “selfish.” Other politicians, television commentators and the capitalist newspapers, led by the New York Post with a headline “Jail Them,” joined the anti-worker and racist pack.

Pataki and Bloomberg swore there would be no agreement as long as “thugs” and “criminals” were on strike. The strike ended only when the MTA secretly agreed to sign on to many of the union’s demands—information revealed recently by Toussaint. This contract was rejected by the membership by a margin of seven votes, but later, in a second vote on the contract, it was overwhelmingly accepted. The MTA rejected that second vote, leading to binding arbitration under the Taylor Law.

Shock and awe

The power of Local 100 was awesome. They stripped from the bargaining table MTA demands for a two-tier system of health and retirement benefits, under which new hires would have had to contribute to health insurance coverage. Under the old contract, workers paid nothing for a basic plan.

Management wanted to raise the retirement age from 55 to 62. It pushed for broad-banding many job titles—combining two

jobs into one—with the power to arbitrarily make assignments in violation of the contract. It wanted to run the trains with no conductors and gradually eliminate tollbooth operators and platform workers. It offered an insulting 2 percent wage increase, even though it had a \$1 billion surplus.

The strike paralyzed the financial center. Nothing moved for over 7 million passengers daily who depended on train and bus service to get to work or shop. Yet a majority of riders supported the strike, particularly among the oppressed nationalities. They appreciated the dedication and hardships of transit workers, overwhelmingly Black, Latin@ and women, who must work in intense heat or cold under unsafe and dangerous conditions, both above and under ground. They understood the racism endured by these sisters and brothers and supported their demand for dignity, respect and justice.

Just and reasonable?

This Dec. 17, almost a year to the day after the strike began, and following Toussaint’s reelection, the chief arbitrator of a three-member panel set up under the Taylor Law imposed a contract identical to the one the MTA had rejected. The arbitration involved 1,742 pages of transcript, 172 exhibits and 23 witnesses. It cost the MTA millions.

Chief Arbitrator George Nicolau called the binding settlement “most just and reasonable.” But why should Local 100 and its members have to pay prohibitive fines for a settlement that was “just and reasonable”? Under the Taylor Law, a state judge had fined the union \$2.5 million and each striking member six days’ pay. He also decreed an end to dues checkoff and three and a half days in jail for Toussaint.

This settlement parallels the union’s original demands of the previous year, which the MTA fought relentlessly and ruthlessly. The agreement calls for raises averaging 3.5 percent over 37 months, dis-tributes a \$131.7 million pension refund to

about 20,000 transit workers and provides for the first time a Martin Luther King Jr. holiday. It also will enhance health benefits for retirees before Medicare kicks in.

Most important, the union stopped the MTA from imposing two-tier plans, which would burden new hires with excessive costs and cuts in health and pension benefits. In a trade-off, union members must contribute 1.5 percent of their pay toward the health plan for the first time, a controversial issue that led to divisions among the membership. Other sections of the settlement—like screening out thousands of disciplinary suspensions, broadbanding jobs, and paid maternal leave—have not been revealed.

Taylor Law must go

The Taylor Law may well be a casualty of the historic strike if Toussaint and the rank and file provide leadership and mobilize the hundreds of thousands of public sector workers throughout the state to confront the incoming governor and the legislators. The will of public sector workers to withhold their labor in the Local 100 tradition can pose a threat. The TWU strike taught Pataki and Bloomberg that using the Taylor Law to impose harsh giveback contracts could backfire and lead to a costly strike.

Will incoming Gov. Eliot Spitzer learn from their miscalculations?

The three-day strike has national significance as a model for a fightback. Strikes are on the rise as corporate America continues to interpret the labor movement as passive and pliant. Health insurance and pensions are on the chopping block. In the U.S., 47 million people are already without health insurance and millions more are under-insured.

Corporate demands for two-tier compensation and benefit systems are sweeping the country abetted by Chapter 11 bankruptcies, which dump defined-

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As Pentagon threatens injunction

75,000 picket with Goodyear strikers

Continued from page 1

Duncan Hunter of California cited a 35 percent drop in the supply of tires for military Humvees. Seeking to allay fears on Wall Street, Goodyear representatives are repeating the now-tired refrain that no shortage exists.

In a desperate attempt to boost stock prices, JP Morgan Securities recently joined Goodyear in generating false stories that strikers will lose health care coverage on Jan. 3. Ignoring the proud history of struggle of the United Rubber Workers (merged with the United Steelworkers since 1995), spokesperson Himanshu Patel claimed this loss “could spur increased pressure from union members to reach an agreement.” Seeking to refute the truth that workers have power, he argued that **the union had only one weapon, the strike, and it had already used that weapon, so the union was in effect already beaten.**

In fact, it is Goodyear that asked the Steelworkers union to come back to the table. Bargaining resumed two days after the powerful day of solidarity.

Prior to Dec. 16, burgeoning local, national and international solidarity took on a multitude of forms. In Gadsden, Ala., an elderly widow of a Goodyear retiree gave out \$50 bills to everyone on the picket line there. In Danville, Va., the

Danville Ministerial Alliance—comprised of 40 Black and white churches—placed a full-page ad in the local paper supporting the strike.

In Eastern Europe, the union at Goodyear-owned Sava Tires in Slovenia pledged its support, stressing the need to “coordinate our struggle with this global firm.”

Indeed, the 65,000 Goodyear employees outside the U.S. and Canada are facing the same or greater challenges as those currently on strike. The threat of plant closings looms over the heads of workers in Eastern Europe, especially in Poland.

Facing corporate demands for concessions, Turkish rubber union Laitik-Is voted to strike and was subsequently locked out. After two years, though, the workers won a concession-free contract.

In Bangkok 17 fired unionists are celebrating a recent court ruling upholding their reinstatement with back pay. Goodyear had defied a previous court order to reinstate them.

Among strikers’ complaints are company plans to shift production to China, where the company pays workers 42 to 56 cents per hour. Yet while the USW leadership is quick to attack the Chinese government, U.S. corporations, including Goodyear, have locked horns with Beijing

over pending labor legislation cracking down on sweatshop abuse.

According to Global Solidarity, a newsletter for Goodyear workers all over the world, the tire baron is “lobbying against the legislation and threatening to build fewer factories” if the new law is enacted. As it is, Chinese labor laws have prevented Goodyear from forcing its employees to work over 40 hours.

No to Pentagon union-busting!

The workers are naturally concerned for the safety of U.S. servicepeople in Iraq and Afghanistan. With the shortage of military-use tires, and the fact that scab tires are unsafe, the USW local in Topeka, Kansas, has offered to resume production of these tires if the scabs are removed from the plant. Desperate to claim a shortage exists, Goodyear has declined the union’s offer.

However, an alternative position to take, and the only one that would truly guarantee the soldiers’ safety, would be to demand the immediate return of U.S. troops. The labor movement must strongly denounce the union-busting Pentagon and its anti-union puppets in Iraq, and prepare to go into battle if Washington invokes Taft-Hartley to break up the magnificent solidarity of the Goodyear workers. □

WWP delegation visits Mumia Abu-Jamal

By Monica Moorehead
Waynesburg, Pa.

On Dec. 17, a Workers World Party delegation traveled to the remote mountain town of Waynesburg, Pa., near the West Virginia border, to visit award-winning African American revolutionary journalist and political prisoner Mumia Abu-Jamal at the State Correctional Institution.

The delegation, which spent six hours visiting Mumia, was composed of Larry Holmes and Monica Moorehead, WWP Secretariat members; Lal Roohk, WW newspaper technical editor and Web weaver for the Millions for Mumia Web site; and Gary Wilson, WW newspaper managing editor.

Prison regulations did not allow the delegation to tape or to take notes during the visit. Mumia was handcuffed during the entire six hours. A glass partition in a small booth physically separated the delegation from Mumia.

Known worldwide as the “voice for the voiceless,” Mumia was arrested on Dec. 9, 1981, for allegedly shooting to death a white policeman, Daniel Faulkner. Mumia, who was also shot by the Philadelphia police that same night, was falsely charged with first-degree murder and was sentenced to death in a racist sham of a trial in 1982.

Mumia really was tried for his political beliefs, especially his involvement in the Black Panther Party, and for being outspoken against police brutality. The late Judge Albert Sabo, who presided over

Mumia’s 1982 trial and his post-conviction relief hearings in 1995 and 1996, was overheard by a white stenographer, Terri Maurer-Carter, calling Mumia a racist epithet.

Eyewitnesses to the shooting like William Singletary, who testified against Mumia, came forward years later to say the Fraternal Order of Police coerced them to lie under oath. Singletary was forced to move to another state.

Singletary recently said he would be willing to testify that Mumia did not shoot Faulkner if he could be guaranteed protection from any threats on his life.

Mumia had been scheduled for execution in the 1990s, but the death warrants were reversed after anti-death penalty mass demonstrations here and worldwide.

Even though Mumia’s death sentence was overturned in 2000, he still remains on death row. His attorneys are attempting to win a new trial in federal appeals court in order to be able to prove his innocence. (See www.millions4mumia.org for legal updates and briefs.)

Issues discussed with Mumia

The WWP delegation found Mumia to be in relatively good health and very upbeat. Despite his repressive and isolating conditions, he stays abreast of the important struggles and developments of the day by cable television, books and newspapers, as well as the many letters and visits he receives from supporters across the country and worldwide.



SCI Greene, above.
Mumia Abu-Jamal

Mumia and the delegation discussed a number of important issues.

These included the current stage of the immigrant rights struggle, particularly the historic general strike of at least 5 million immigrants this past May 1 and the recent racist raids at six Swift Foods plants by Immigration and Customs Enforcement, a repressive arm of Homeland Security. These raids resulted in the arrests of close to 10 percent of the work force, or over 1,300 majority Latin@ workers.

They spoke of the U.S. debacle in Iraq, due mainly to the heroic Iraqi resistance, and the fact that the Democrats, who took control of both houses of Congress, have not indicated any plans so far to carry out the clear mandate of the Nov. 7 elections to bring the troops home now. This will offer great opportunities for carrying forward the independent anti-imperialist struggle.

The ongoing wave of anti-imperialist resistance in Latin America was also discussed, especially the U.N. talk of Venezuela’s President Hugo Chávez this past September where he called George W. Bush a “devil.” Abu-Jamal mentioned that his recent book, “We Want Freedom,” on his experiences as a Panther in Philadelphia is being translated into Spanish in Cuba.

Letter to the editor

CCNY activists defend Assata Shakur and Guillermo Morales

On Dec. 12, the New York Daily News printed a front-page attack on a community and student center named in honor of Puerto Rican freedom fighter Guillermo Morales and former Black Panther Assata Shakur. This center is located on the campus of City College of New York, also affectionately known as Harlem University.

“Disgrace” was the front-page headline; the page 3 article managed, in just a few lines, to call Assata a “terrorist and cop killer.”

A slam was also sent Fidel Castro’s way, since Cuba has provided political exile for Assata after she escaped from a New Jersey prison in 1979. Assata had been falsely accused and then found guilty of murder of a white New Jersey state trooper in 1973 by an all-white jury.

Morales was a member of the Armed Forces for the Liberation of Puerto Rico (FALN) and was also granted political exile in Cuba.

It was no surprise that this attack on Assata and Guillermo came on the heels of a brutal killing by police of an unarmed Black man, Sean Bell, along with the wounding of his unarmed friends, Trent Benefield and Joseph Guzman.

The full-page Daily News article went on to quote New York Patrolmen’s Benevolent Association President Patrick Lynch on how “disgusting it was to honor a person whose life’s goal was to kill people.” Imagine that? Nowhere did the article point out that the center was a lighting rod for student political and social activism nor the community’s historical recognition of the center’s work. Somehow they neglected to talk about the evidence of Assata’s innocence and the FBI’s campaign against the Black Panther

Party under COINTELPRO.

The outcome of the Daily News article was the removal of the center’s 17-year-old sign with the pictures of Shakur and Morales. An emergency community/student meeting was called on Dec. 15 at the North Academic Center (NAC) of City College to address the attacks by the Daily News and police on the center.

The students and faculty see this as a long-range plan by the administration not just to remove names. The organizers pointed out the battles won in the 1960s and 1970s are being overturned. Educational gentrification and ethnic cleansing was happening right in the open.

We crossed Amsterdam Avenue onto a campus that seemed not to show any signs of an event. Blue police uniforms were scurrying about and the police carts seemed strategically placed in front of a building. A lone student stood in the dark as we neared the NAC building. There were no visible signs for directions, only a student wearing a SLAM button. Very quietly, the student told us the community and students were locked out of the room and they had to resort to Underground Railroad techniques to get the community to the meeting. Many community people were actually turned away by the police.

Why would a public institution put their campus on a lockdown to prevent a community meeting? Why would students be locked out of their own center, a center whose mission is to serve as a student community room?

The meeting took place in a classroom offered by a long-time revered champion of educational and social justice, Dr. Leonard Jefferies. He opened his classroom to ensure the meeting could take place. The room was filled with students,

faculty, former students and many other organizations and activists. The agenda was well organized and facilitated by members of the center, the Student Liberation Action Movement (SLAM) and Students for Educational Rights (SER). The most impacting moments came from faculty and former students who gave a crash course in the history of CCNY, which was once known as Free Academy.

The time line was plotted by Rodolfo Leyton, a volunteer at the center, and Ydanis Rodríguez of the Dominicans 2000. As described, the policies and practices at City College were changed only after many Black and Puerto Rican students waged a victorious fight for free higher education in the late 1960s. The previous white-elite-male domination of CCNY was fought physically by a handful of Black and Brown students. SLAM members who work out of the Shakur/Morales Community Center explained what was won after the 1989 student hunger strike and takeover of City College.

Bill McGuire, an alumnus and lawyer representing students of SLAM, spoke of the case being prepared. He vowed to also bring charges against the intimidating tactics by the administration. The committed faculty promised to stand with each other and the students. Students involved in the struggle vowed to organize, educate and have actions of protest. The immediate action would include putting the center’s sign back up, even though it received a memo from City College Vice President Ramona Brown threatening college disciplinary action.

Joy Simmons, spokesperson for City Council Member Charles Barron, stated Mr. Barron’s support and pledge to put the sign back. Community leaders and

Roohk and Wilson shared with Abu-Jamal impressions of their trip to the immigrant city of St. Denis in France last April as part of a U.S. delegation that attended the naming of a street there for Mumia.

The people of St. Denis have a long history of support for political prisoners around the world; near Mumia Street is Nelson Mandela Stadium. “Rue Mumia Abu-Jamal” has raised the international status of Mumia and has prompted the Philadelphia FOP to try to stir up local and national politicians, who have made ineffective attempts to get the people of France to withdraw their support.

Just recently, the U.S. House of Representatives passed a resolution denouncing the local government of St. Denis for honoring Mumia. Some members of the Congressional Black Caucus either voted against the resolution or abstained. Wilson told Mumia that many people who had not heard about the St. Denis street-naming first read about it on the Workers World newspaper Web site.

Toward the end of the visit, the delegation asked Mumia if he had any thoughts that he wanted to share with other activists and revolutionaries. Mumia responded with these words: “I want to send my love and appreciation to all of those who have supported me for so many years. The best support that you can give me is to continue to build a strong, powerful movement for change.”

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WW PHOTO: G.DUNKEL

Dec. 16 anti-police brutality march, NYC.

activists in attendance promised grass-roots pressure as well.

The meeting ended with a determined chant, “Hands off Assata and Morales!” No amount of media spin would cause the community to forget the FBI’s COINTELPRO.

On Dec. 20, there will be a gathering at the NAC Plaza, which is across from the Administration Building. There will then be a march to deliver a statement of demands to President Gregory Williams of CCNY. For more information, contact the Morales/Shakur Community & Student Center at 212-650-5008. E-mail: harlemslam@gmail.com.

—Agnes Johnson
International Action Center
volunteer member

Tens of thousands march against police killings

By LeiLani Dowell
New York

A determined outpouring of 40,000 people, stretching 20 city blocks, rallied here on Dec. 16 to denounce the police killing of 23-year-old Sean Bell, an unarmed Black man who died after a hail of 50 police bullets on the morning of his wedding day. The crowd loudly chanted their demand for an end to racist police brutality.

Demonstrators marched down Fifth Avenue, home to some of Manhattan's most high-end department stores and boutiques, on one of the busiest shopping days of the year. The police, who had originally penned in one lane of traffic for the protest, were forced to open the entire avenue for the crowd.

The march was led by Trent Benefield, a survivor of the incident who himself was shot three times by the police; Bell's fiancée, Nicole Paultre Bell; and Abner Louima, a survivor of severe physical and sexual torture at the hands of the NYPD in 1997. The Rev. Al Sharpton pushed Benefield's wheelchair. Several labor union delegations participated with their banners.

Other protests against police profiling and brutality were also held throughout the New York/New Jersey area. On Dec. 15, a march sponsored by the People's Organization for Progress was held in Newark, N.J., to demand justice for Warren Lee. Lee died on Oct. 12 while being beaten and arrested by Newark police. Other rallies were organized by the New Black Panther Party and the October 22nd Coalition.

Since the killing of Bell on Nov. 25, New York police have not only stepped up their harassment of Black men throughout the borough of Queens, but have also come under question for another police killing, this one in the Bronx.

On Dec. 13, police killed 19-year-old Timur Person, who they say was carrying a gun on him. However, eyewitness Hector Suarez told the media that the police shot Person at close range as he told cops, "I'm giving you the gun." Suarez said, "[The officer] stood over his head and he just



looked down at him and he just shot four times, one, two, three, four." (Newsday, Dec. 14) Denise Morales, Suarez's wife, says police have repeatedly tried to question Suarez without a lawyer since the incident. (NY1, Dec. 15)

An upcoming rally will focus on disrupting those who profit from the criminalization of the poor and people of color. A Day of Outrage to "Shut Wall Street down" is planned for Dec. 21. An e-mail announcement by the Black Men's Movement and the Dec. 12th Movement, organizers of the protest, urges a citywide boycott: "Because we have no justice, they should have no profit. ... Police don't have a problem killing us and manufacturing lies to cover their crimes.



Young and old march to end police terror in the streets of New York.

WW PHOTOS:
G DUNKEL

if they don't understand or care that we

Our taxes pay the salaries of people who have no problem taking our lives with impunity."

The announcement continues, "We need to keep our money in our pockets and wallets. They will understand this even

are tired of the injustice and total lack of respect."

For more information on the Day of Outrage, one in a series of rallies against the police state, contact 718-398-1166.

E-mail: ldowell@workers.org

FBI sting operation sets up Black youth

By Larry Hales

On Dec. 8, federal authorities in Chicago announced charges against Derrick Shareef, a young Black Muslim male who also goes by the name Talib Abu Salam Ibn Shareef. The indictment against the 22-year-old alleges a plot that validates the so-called "war on terror."

What an affidavit of the FBI and the Joint Terrorism Task Force agent in charge of the investigation reveals is that the young man's anger and frustration with racist U.S. society and U.S. imperialism were taken advantage of and directed by a paid informant.

Just as in the arrests of five African-American and two Haitian men in Florida earlier this year, it seems that a federal informant directed and delivered an oppressed youth to federal authorities.

The official charges against Shareef are one count of attempting to damage or destroy a building by fire or explosion and one count of attempting to use a weapon of mass destruction. The alleged weapons of mass destruction are four grenades, shrapnel from metal garbage cans and a 9-millimeter handgun.

The investigators said that Shareef was acting alone. Robert Grant, the agent in charge of the Chicago FBI office, said,

"He fixed on a day of December 22nd on Friday ... because it was the Friday before Christmas and thought that would be the highest concentration of shoppers that he could kill and injure."

U.S. Attorney Patrick J. Fitzgerald said in a news release, "While these are very serious charges, at no time was the public in any imminent peril."

Even according to the official story, the plan to attack a mall on Dec. 22 during the shopping rush was not Shareef's idea, but the idea of the FBI's "confidential source." The affidavit says the informant asked Shareef if it would be better to "hit the mall," and further says, "I mean, alright, we gotta look at it this way, we want to disrupt Christmas."

Shareef had no connections to get weapons other than the informant. The informant fed him plans about what to do and how to do it and what would be most effective, and it was the informant who drove him and whose car was to be used on the day of the supposed attack.

While the affidavit says Shareef was under investigation since September 2006, it makes no mention of how the informant came into contact with the young man.

Was Derrick Shareef angry? That is to be expected. Any truly compassionate person need only look at life for an oppressed

youth under capitalism to understand the young man's anger, given the daily indignities of his life.

This arrest, as well as the round-ups of Arab, Southeast Asian and Muslim people shortly after 9/11 and the recent roundups of immigrant workers, along with increased state repression being felt in poor and communities of color around the country, shows the hardening of U.S. rulers' state agents in wake of a rising global rebellion and a deepening capitalist crisis.

After the fall of the Soviet Union, some of the same policy makers behind the current Bush regime began plotting what they felt would be an unimpeded assault on the global working class.

The oil reserves and other riches in Arab lands, Africa and South America were up for grabs, and "rogue states" that dared defy U.S. imperialism would feel its weight.

Reality now has smashed those well-laid plans. The Iraqi resistance has shown a people's resolve cannot be simply ground into dust by tank treads or blown to bits by high-tech weaponry, but is forged by history and is stronger than the aims of Western world imperialism and the designs of capitalist rulers.

Though not yet at movement pitch, the workers' struggle and the struggles against racism and imperialist war in the

U.S. have been emboldened by the courage and strength of immigrant workers, who have much to lose.

On May Day of this year, immigrant workers launched the first general strike against oppressive federal legislation. The response from the Bush administration has been more oppression and round-ups, using the racist and vile excuse of the "war on terror" as part of its reasoning.

This latest arrest of Derrick Shareef is part of the Bush regime's ploy of repression and obfuscation to whip U.S. workers into a frenzy. But whether headed by Republicans or Democrats, the government's policies are driven by the nature of capitalist production.

While the U.S. wages war in Iraq, Afghanistan and Colombia and supports oppressive regimes around the world, it wages a constant war here at home. The police are occupiers in communities of color and terrorize the inner city as part of a nationwide trend of gentrification of urban areas.

What is needed is for the movement to engage youth, many of whom face a bleak future, as part of a struggle of the masses against a common oppressor. That struggle should take up the banner of socialism and show that there is an answer to the ills of capitalism—and the answer is socialism.



CARIBBEAN

Imperialists stand by as AIDS crisis grows

By Melissa Kleinman

In the year to come, thousands of Caribbean people will die of AIDS and thousands more will become infected with the HIV virus. In just the past two decades, over 6,000 AIDS deaths were reported in the Caribbean, but the actual number is **admittedly higher due to underreporting or misdiagnosis.**

All the while, as people die and infection increases, imperialist governments in the United States and Europe reveal their racism as they economically strangle Caribbean countries such as Haiti and the Dominican Republic. They offer no reparations for the centuries of damage and exploitation done to these nations and peoples. Capitalist drug companies are even reluctant to provide the desperately needed antiretroviral drugs that can improve the quality of life and life expectancy for those living with HIV/AIDS.

In Haiti, the Bahamas, Barbados, the Dominican Republic and Guyana, the AIDS epidemic has spread beyond those called “high risk” to the general population. This occurs once the infection rate in the general population reaches approximately 5 percent. At such a rate the HIV virus spreads even more rapidly.

AIDS is most devastating to Haiti, where 12 percent of the urban and 5 percent of

the rural population are estimated to be infected with the terrible disease.

By the end of 1999, 83,000 children under the age of 14 had been orphaned by AIDS in the Caribbean.

Furthermore, the AIDS epidemic is placing tremendous burdens on health care systems and on the labor force. As of 2006, 83 percent of AIDS cases in the Caribbean were found in the age group 15 to 54 years old, considered the prime age span of the work force. This epidemic not only affects personal lives and relationships but has the potential to negatively impact various key sectors, from agriculture, tourism and mining to trade, as well as national budgets.

In the Caribbean, AIDS is a “hurricane” disaster, said Dominica’s Minister of Planning Artherton Martin in his closing statement at a recent HIV/AIDS conference: “We must deploy against HIV/AIDS as we would any other disasters. In fact, it is worse than hurricanes because it destroys people, our most important resource.”

Haitians in Dominican Republic

Amelia Cayo, 53, who is part Haitian and a Creole speaker, is one of 43 AIDS patients receiving free antiretroviral therapy from a clinic in the Dominican Republic sponsored by Bateye Relief Alliance Dominicana, a nongovernmental organization. She is one

of many people who will be destroyed by AIDS if left untreated. Like many victims to the virus, she is on a time-consuming regimen of antiretroviral treatments, taking as many as four to seven different pills three times a day.

Cayo comments, “I feel better since I started the pills, and you can be sure I will keep taking them.” She and other descendants of Haitian sugarcane workers are part of an estimated 200,000 residents of bateyes, migrant worker communities adjacent to the mostly now-fallow sugarcane fields. Before the opening of the center, the estimated 3,000 bateye residents in the area received no medical care whatsoever.

There are currently only 3,500 people taking drugs, and they receive little or no medical attention. Among the country’s bateye inhabitants, roughly 5 to 12 percent are HIV-positive. Alliance Executive Director María Virtudes Berroa says sugarcane workers have been systematically excluded from the public health system because of racial, economic and social discrimination.

The Bateye health group has already lost funding in education and prevention programs for 30 bateye communities and at this point is reaching only a tiny portion of the people with AIDS in the bateyes. Wendy Valdez, a physician in the Cinco

Casas bateye, said, “It would be disastrous if we had to stop.”

It has been suggested that an individual could receive antiretroviral therapy for less than \$1 a day—which of course would exclude profits for the drug companies. However, under common political and funding trends, including all the programs underway and all the funds donated towards the Global AIDS effort, these medicines reached fewer than 1 million people by the end of 2005.

Worldwide, including the Caribbean, 5 to 6 million people urgently need antiretroviral treatment (ART), due to the severity of their illness, but only 300,000 people in developing countries receive these medicines. Many grassroots efforts have shown that ART can be delivered in poorer countries as effectively as developed countries. The World Health Organization says that increasing the availability of antiretroviral therapy makes it more likely that people will come forward for HIV testing, learn their status, receive counseling and care and become knowledgeable about preventing the spread of the virus.

Nevertheless, by the year 2015 the Caribbean region stands to have nearly 3.5 million people living with the virus, according to UNAIDS.

Yet there is a small beacon of light in the Caribbean, 90 miles from U.S. shores on the island of Cuba. The Cuban government has sent at least 4,000 doctors and health personnel to the poorest countries in the Caribbean, those most hard hit by AIDS, with the idea of creating an infrastructure able to provide the population with medications and the necessary follow-up. (www.cubaweb.com)

The immediate ongoing need is for the international community to come forward with the raw materials for further products and services. Yet, with the ongoing war on people of color and the poor, what can Caribbean countries and individuals like Amelia Cayo hope for from greedy capitalist nations?

Melissa Kleinman is a FIST member and a Denver public health care HIV/AIDS worker.

Latin@ workers fight harassment at Harvard

By Phebe Eckfeldt
Cambridge, Mass.

Fed up with racism in the workplace and threatened with layoffs, Latin@ workers at Harvard University are fighting back. Due to their organizing efforts and the active support of community groups, unions and Harvard students, the layoffs have been stopped temporarily.

The workers are animal technicians who care for laboratory animals and clean their cages. They are members of the Harvard Union of Clerical and Technical Workers, an affiliate of AFSCME.

Harvard recently completed building a multi-million-dollar facility that expanded its Department of Molecular and Cellular Biology (MCB), but it notified four Latin@ workers at the beginning of October that they would be laid off in January.

Harvard claims that automation is behind the proposed layoffs, but the Latin@ workers have made it clear that the driving force is racism. All four workers have seniority. They state that six new employees were hired in the past few years and that rooms full of recently purchased animal equipment need people to staff them.

“Almost 70 percent of the workforce of animal technicians and cage washers in the MCB are Latin@,” Jaime Moreno told Workers World. “We are routinely passed over for job and education opportunities by Harvard management. We are told to speak only English in the workplace and are harassed and intimidated daily. The Latin@ workers are written up and humiliated for mistakes we make, mistakes that are ignored by management when made by white workers.”

Moreno is one of the four workers who were slated for layoff. The workers recounted to Workers World a particularly horrible incident where an employee,

later promoted to management, sprayed “Fantastic” household cleaner on some of the Latin@ workers’ food and onto their clothes, saying she did not like the smell.

A flyer put out by the workers states, “We demand that Harvard immediately address the racist conditions for Latin@ workers at the Office of Animal Resources. It is appalling that a university of such worldwide stature as Harvard would allow such a climate to exist.”

Ed Childs, chief shop steward representing Harvard’s dining hall and kitchen workers, stated at a recent teach-in held to support the Latin@ MCB workers, “This is a struggle against institutional racism, which every major employer uses and every union must fight. Harvard not only uses racism but teaches it. Harvard is now expanding its teaching of biological determinism by hiring Professor Steven Pinker to train future capitalist corporate leaders in institutional racism.” Biological determinism has been used to claim the superiority of one race or sex over another.

Members of the Women’s Fightback Network, the International Action Center, Fuerza Latina, the Latino Men’s Collective, Student Labor Action Movement (SLAM) and the Harvard Coalition for Respect and Equality for Workers (CREW) have been holding meetings, pickets, handing out flyers and gathering signatures on a petition to support the workers. On Dec. 7 they held a teach-in attended by 70 people, including nine animal technicians. CREW was formed in response to the animal techs’ struggle.

Rosa Norton, a junior at Harvard and member of SLAM and CREW, told Workers World, “The Latin@ workers are being discriminated against and Harvard is trying to cover it up. It is important that the rest of the student body knows this.

We want to show the managers that the workers have a lot of support and that it is an issue that won’t go away.”

This solidarity has forced Harvard to rescind the layoffs, but only temporarily. The workers also won their demand to establish a joint union/management committee to investigate the layoffs and the racist environment at MCB.

Eckfeldt is a member of the Harvard Union of Clerical and Technical Workers.

Unions protest hospital closings

Continued from page 4

State United Teachers, said privatization would jeopardize the hospitals’ teaching mission.

The unions have warned that public hospitals that provide specialized services such as burn units, trauma centers and AIDS clinics will not survive in a for-profit atmosphere.

Union representatives circulated through legislative offices and chambers after the rally. They reported that legislators were already feeling the anger coming from their constituents and that some promised to hold hearings after the beginning of the year.

While the plan had been not to revise any of the commission’s report, even Senate Majority Leader Joseph Bruno, whose political base is in the Republican-dominated upstate area, said that next year the state Legislature and incoming Gov. Elliot Spitzer can address issues in the plan “that need to be fixed.” In particular, Bruno criticized the recommended closing of Bellevue Woman’s Hospital in the Schenectady County town of Niskayuna.

The Buffalo News on Dec. 17 noted that some state Assembly members talked about “improving” the recommendations

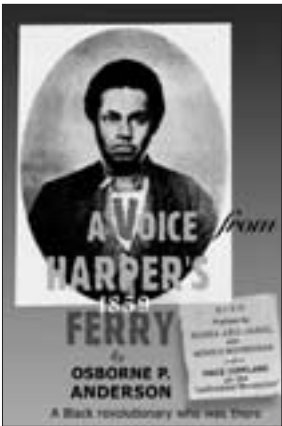
next year. Pataki, moving away from his position that nothing could be changed or negotiated, told reporters last week that the next governor and lawmakers could alter the proposal.

Union representatives have already unanimously stated that this is just the beginning of the fight back.

They know it will take a strong, unified struggle with participation statewide from not only the unions but also the affected communities. They say they are ready to carry out just such an effort. □

With prefaces by Mumia Abu-Jamal and Monica Moorehead. An essay on the ‘Unfinished Revolution’ by Vince Copeland. Order online at

www.Leftbooks.com



Does Bush plan to escalate war in Iraq?

By John Catalinotto

Is the White House going to order a massive escalation of the Iraq war? It all depends on how you interpret the meaning of the word “surge.” This word is used 12 times in an article in the Dec. 16 New York Times on U.S. plans to increase troops stationed in Baghdad.

Take away the smoke and mirrors and a surge is an escalation, one disguised as a momentary blip on the EKG monitor of the collapsing occupation. Pentagon generals must pay attention to some realities. They know that there are not enough troops available at present for a sustained escalation.

Sen. John McCain has called for 35,000 combat troops or 10 combat brigades, but he hasn’t explained where they will come from, how they will be equipped or whether they will be willing to fight.

As more U.S. troops die or are maimed, a victory for Washington seems impossible, and the war gets more cruel and ugly, the fewer the young people who find joining the Army and Marines an attractive choice, even with many financial incentives. So at present no one doing the planning dares suggest the kind of massive escalation that Gen. Colin Powell, then head of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, pushed in the first Gulf War.

That was 16 years ago. Powell now says the U.S. Army is overextended and “about broken.”

Fearing the impact of a massive escalation, the war hawks instead have developed another stop-gap measure: Some troops are supposed to come home from Iraq, but they will stay another three months. Some others are supposed to arrive in Iraq in three months, but they will deploy now. By sleight of hand—and an extra three months of horror for the troops—the Pentagon can double the deployment in Baghdad for three to six months by bringing in 15,000 to 30,000 forces.

Then, with Robert Gates heading the Pentagon instead of Donald Rumsfeld, they might be able to develop a bigger Army and Marines. A Dec. 18 AP article said it all: “Rumsfeld had resisted increasing the size of the Army or the Marine Corps; Gates’ view is unknown.”

Their first step is to increase the number of U.S. trainers of the Iraqi Army. Brig. Gen. Dana Pittard, who heads the training contingent there, said Dec. 17 that this number would triple from 5,000 to 15,000 soon, and it would come from troops already in the region.

The incoming Senate majority leader, Harry Reid (D-Nev.), has already demonstrated how useless the Democratic Party

victory is to the anti-war movement. He has approved a three-month increase, a “surge”: “If the commanders on the ground said this is just for a short period of time, we’ll go along with that.”

Bush hasn’t formally announced any changes in his plan for the Iraq occupation. But he has insisted the U.S. will not leave Iraq without a “victory.”

Resistance within U.S. military

What the generals and war-happy politicians avoided discussing was whether the stress on the Army would lead to a significant change in the morale of the troops, that is, if the troops, who have already given up on the war, will gain the courage to confront their oppressors in the Pentagon. There are already signs that the resistance inside the military, which has developed slowly over the first 44 months of the war, is beginning to accelerate.

The first resistance came from individual refusers who are guided by conscience. This has continued and was brought into the New York area on Dec. 7-11 by Carolyn Ho, Lt. Ehren Watada’s mother. Ho spoke at four meetings, including one at New York University on Dec. 7 that stuffed a ground-floor meeting hall.

Like Watada himself, Ho is articulate and capable of winning anyone neutral or sympathetic. She explains how the former Eagle Scout had joined the Army out of patriotism following 9/11, how he won honors and commendations in officer training school. He was an “ideal soldier” until his highly demanding colonel in

South Korea instilled in Watada a drive to learn everything about any place he would be sent.

“The colonel never expected that Ehren would study it and come to the conclusion that he did: that the war was unjustified; it was sold by lies, and that the U.S. had no business being in Iraq.” Once he convinced himself that the war and occupation of Iraq were unconstitutional, Watada stayed firm in his refusal to deploy, despite the threat to his career and his freedom.

Watada, who is of Asian-Pacific Islander background, is charged with missing movement, conduct unbecoming an officer and a gentleman, and contempt toward officials. He faces a possible eight years in prison. (www.thankyout.org)

Along with individual refusers of conscience like Watada, a new movement has begun to draw broader participation from troops who are ready to take legal steps to demonstrate their opposition to the war.

A petition entitled an “Appeal for Redress,” calling for a prompt withdrawal, has attracted the signatures of troops of all services, ranks and of varied political viewpoints who are willing to take a stand against the war.

The organizers say the petition has 1,000 valid signatures now and they’re hoping to double that by Jan. 15, Martin Luther King Jr. Day, when these legal military resisters plan a news conference at a Unitarian Church in Norfolk, Va. (www.appealforredress.org)

E-mail jcat@workers.org

Youth continue effort to close recruiting station

By Ben Carroll
Chapel Hill, N.C.

Some 50 youth and community members held a demonstration Dec. 15 at the recently opened Army recruiting station in Chapel Hill, N.C. The demonstration, organized by the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill Students for a Democratic Society (SDS), was scheduled to coincide with an official ribbon-cutting ceremony at the station by the Chapel Hill Chamber of Commerce.

About 10 youth activists, including members of Raleigh FIST (Fight Imperialism, Stand Together), were prepared to attend the ceremony posing as onlookers. When the ribbon was cut, they would unzip their jackets to reveal shirts that read “Iraqi Civilian” splattered with red paint and fall to the ground in a die-in. The direct action was called off at the last minute, however, as the activists received word from a Town Council member, from recruiters present for the ceremony and from the media that the ceremony had been canceled.

Youth activists then joined community members in a picket line in front of the recruiting station. With chants of “Out of Iraq! Out of our schools!” and “No justice, no peace! U.S. out of the Middle East!” the demonstrators made their presence known.

After several minutes of the moving picket line, about 10 police officers and the property manager descended on the group of demonstrators and ordered them to leave the supposedly public ceremony. Using their physical prowess, the cops herded the demonstrators from the shopping center and onto the sidewalk.

It became apparent that the ceremony was indeed taking place, even without the Chamber of Commerce present. Three older community members who had remained at the ceremony then revealed signs that read, “Hands off my grandchildren—no recruiting” and “We mourn the dead.” These peaceful

demonstrators were promptly arrested and hauled off to jail. Additionally, two youth activists received citations for holding a banner.

The Chapel Hill Chamber of Commerce later issued a public statement claiming it had received credible information that the demonstration was going to be “non-peaceful” and that it felt the “safety of Chamber staff and volunteers” was threatened. The Chamber used this violence-baiting not only as a tactic to avoid addressing the political content of the demonstration, but also to justify the police repression under the guise of “public safety.”

Youth activists from FIST and SDS

Continued on page 11



SF Labor Council:

‘Cut off funding for Iraq war’

On Dec. 11, the San Francisco Labor Council adopted the following resolution by unanimous vote:

Whereas the war in Iraq is continuing, and

Whereas the American people in the last election have clearly stated their opposition to this war, and

Whereas the war can’t continue without war funding, and

Whereas a major factor in ending the Vietnam war was the cut-off of funding by Congress, and

Whereas the Bush administration will

ask for further funding for war early next year—up to \$160 billion on top of the \$70 billion approved by Congress last October; therefore,

Be it resolved that the SF Labor Council communicate its opposition to continued war funding directly with Representatives Nancy Pelosi and Tom Lantos and Senators Barbara Boxer and Dianne Feinstein by setting up delegations to discuss the issue of ending war funding in order to bring the troops home now.

Submitted by Allan Fisher, David Welsh and Rodger Scott. □

Detroit school board OK’s counter-recruiters



On Dec. 14, the Detroit Public School Board voted unanimously to allow counter-recruiters into the city’s schools. Zoe Villegas, a recent high school graduate, had appealed to youth online to come out to the Board meeting:

“This meeting will determine whether Finding Alternatives to Military Enlistment (FAME) will be allowed in schools to present an opposing argument (not even just an opposing argument, but the truth) to military enlistment. We all know how heavily recruiting is done in Detroit public schools. We are facing an economic draft that is targeting us directly, using the fact that we’re less likely to afford or be accepted into most colleges.

“But just because our education has been compromised does not mean that we are only worth a college education if we are willing to sell ourselves over to the military. The fact that we haven’t necessarily had an adequate education that’s on par with standardized testing isn’t our fault. That is institutional and we don’t have to apologize for low test scores

by playing Russian roulette.

“FAME being allowed in schools will present students with the opportunity to scrutinize actual military contracts and understand the deceptive language. We all know how popular JROTC (jr.nazi) is and for those of you who are considering joining the military, this would just be an opportunity for you to carefully weigh your options.

“I know a lot of people who considered joining the military to get their college education paid for, or just to see something other than the same thing we’ve seen every day. But, I want you all to know that showing support for Finding Alternatives to Military Enlistment would be a way for DPS students to have people giving them real guidance and support, and would allow us a way to defeat the propaganda and have people in our corner for once. I’m going to try to get off work early and I drive a big ass car so if anyone wants to car pool, call me. It’d mean a lot to me if we would actually express enough optimism to change things.”

—Cheryl LaBash



2006 had two sides

Reality always has many sides. This is clear when assessing the year 2006 from the point of view of the worldwide class struggle. Simply by looking at the news covered in this issue of Workers World, the last in 2006, two opposing sides come into focus: the nightmare, and the hope of a new dawn.

The standard of living of the working class at home—indeed, everything having to do with economic security as measured by steady work, guaranteed pensions and health insurance—has come under relentless attack by big capital. It seems like a one-sided battle that capital is winning.

Yet the year ended with 75,000 unionists and supporters demonstrating across the U.S. and Canada in support of striking Goodyear rubber workers.

Racist police brutality is rampant across the country, punctuated by the gunning down of a 92-year-old African-American woman in Atlanta and a 50-shot fusillade fired at a car with three unarmed Black men in Queens, N.Y., that killed 23-year-old Sean Bell on his wedding day.

Yet this horror has aroused a massive response, including a march of 40,000 along New York’s Fifth Avenue and other actions planned to confront Wall Street as the root of racism.

December saw a vicious “Homeland Security” roundup of historic proportions of 1,300 working people, mainly immigrants from Mexico and Central America—those who do a major portion of the really hard, dangerous and unpleasant jobs in the United States. This blow from the repressive state apparatus caused the suffering of many.

But it did nothing to erase the potential shown by the millions who marched for immigrant rights last spring, culminating in the May Day strike and boycott.

In these three examples of class and anti-racist struggles at home—and there are many others—there is a common element: an unresolved conflict that is sharpening daily and that allows no easy compromise.

In Washington’s foreign policy—

especially its wars of aggression against Iraq and Afghanistan—this sharpening has reached an acute stage that is bringing the war home. The U.S. has inflicted a nightmare of horror on the Iraqi people, killing hundreds of thousands and disrupting all of Iraqi society. Meanwhile, the 3,000 U.S. troops killed and more than 20,000 severely maimed also are victims of the U.S. war.

The U.S. capitalist rulers have finally recognized that they are losing the battle, that they will not wind up with Iraq’s oil, with military bases, with the promised strategic world dominance that the Bush administration convinced them could be achieved with its course of criminal aggression four years ago. Instead, the war now presents them with new, harsh realities. Two-thirds of the U.S. people want the war to end. Three-fourths of the Iraqis want to see U.S. troops killed.

Yet the Bush gang’s answer, facilitated by new Pentagon chief Robert Gates, is to increase U.S. troops in Iraq. The Democrats, elected by voters who wanted the war to end, have already betrayed their electorate by refusing to consider ending the war by withdrawing U.S. troops.

The unbearable contradiction of an unwinnable war—the Iraqis intend to resist for generations if necessary—and a U.S. regime determined to bet double or nothing makes an upturn in resistance inside the U.S. military both necessary and inevitable. It puts obstructions at recruiting centers, like those reported on from North Carolina and New York, on the order of the day.

Those are the two sides of 2006 as seen objectively: intensification of mass suffering and a growing fightback.

Now all those who understand this potential must make a subjective choice: to enter this great battle on the side of the workers and oppressed people, to help make sure that the struggles against war and racism and for immigrant rights are joined together with all progressive struggles—so that next year this space can report a big step forward for humanity. □

U.S., Britain & France threaten Sudan

By G. Dunkel

Behind the cover of a major imperialist media “justification” campaign, the governments of the United States and Britain have begun planning military intervention in Darfur. France, an imperialist rival, has already militarily intervened in Chad and the Central African Republic (CAR).

Darfur is the name generally used for the western portion of the Sudan. Chad and the CAR are two very poor, landlocked countries on the western border of Darfur. Both are former French colonies. Chad is developing its oil, while the CAR is almost totally agricultural.

U.S. President George W. Bush and British Prime Minister Tony Blair met in Washington the first week of December. This meeting, held after the Iraq Study Group report came out, was obviously focused on Iraq. But despite the fact that both of their militaries are tied up in Iraq and Afghanistan, they still took the opportunity to evaluate their military option in Darfur.

Tony Blair described the plans he and Bush approved for Darfur in a media conference he held on his return. The plans involve creating “no fly” zones in Darfur, a naval blockade, an International Criminal Court indictment of Sudanese leaders and an embargo on financial dealings with the Sudan.

The U.S. and Great Britain will seek United Nations approval for any action, but are reportedly worried about a Chinese veto in the Security Council. China buys some 40 percent of its oil imports from Africa—the majority from the Sudan.

Imperialist media spin

How the big-business media are treating the situation in Darfur is significant. While there is a tremendous emphasis on the human suffering in Darfur, Chad and the Central African Republic, some significant aspects of the situation are not covered.

There were roughly 600 articles published in the major English-language newspapers from Dec. 10 to Dec. 17 about these countries. Only one, in the British

newspaper The Independent, admitted that France had used its Mirage jet fighters based in N’Djamena, the capital of Chad, to attack armed groups fighting the government in the CAR.

Le Figaro, a right-wing French newspaper, confirms that account and states that without solid French support the current regimes in N’Djamena and Bangui, the capital of the CAR, would have fallen. The Independent and left-wing French sources talk about the direct intervention of French special forces in the CAR. But the French government has been quiet about the fact that French troops are fighting in Africa.

The rebel group in the CAR is called the Coalition of Democratic Forces for Unity (UFDR from its French initials). They feel that CAR President François Bozizé is dividing the country along ethnic lines.

In early November, the UFDR took the northeastern town of Birao, close to Darfur, as well as Ouadda-Djalle and Sam-Ouandja. France replied to this UFDR victory by sending in special forces to seize the airport at Birao so it could transport CAR troops to the town.

The UFDR reported that thousands of residents of the area then fled to Chad or Darfur.

Le Monde has reported that France has 11,000 troops in Africa, spread over six countries.

For two centuries, imperialist interventions in Africa have been painted in glowing terms. In reality, imperialist control, domination and intervention have led to millions of African deaths and incredible suffering, and have left the continent the poorest in the world. □

Lessons of TWU strike

Continued from page 5

benefit pensions and other contractual obligations.

Restructuring the work force and consolidating, eliminating and outsourcing jobs to non-union contractors are swelling the profits of greedy bosses, which are distributed in outrageous bonuses and obscene salaries to cutthroat CEOs.

A rumble of resistance and struggle is rising from below. Resisting unjust laws and racist practices will surface. Divisions will break down as overcoming race, national and class issues feeds the emergence of one unified force, though these questions remain a huge challenge for the men and women of many diverse backgrounds in the work force.

The struggle of 12 million undocumented immigrants must be high on labor’s agenda, along with the militarization of the economy and U.S. imperialism’s worldwide objectives. The three-day transit strike will be long remembered as a strike that broke the law, got a contract and came out stronger. □

Palmer Raids, 1919-20

Continued from page 4

warrants. Reports at the time tell of indiscriminate beatings. Many were detained for long periods without legal counsel. Hundreds were deported.

In Detroit, the raid “marked a peak in brutality,” according to “Labor’s Untold Story,” a remarkable U.S. labor history published by the United Electrical workers.

“Eight hundred men were packed in a narrow windowless corridor on the top floor of the Federal Building. They remained there, many ill and without food, for six full days. ... Then they were moved to a deserted army encampment at Fort Wayne where new methods of torture were devised. The wives and children of those imprisoned there were beaten in the sight of the prisoners.”

Another account reported, “In some cases, persons coming to visit or bail out those arrested were themselves arrested on suspicion of being communists. Palmer explained such persons were ‘practically the same as a person found in an active meeting of the Communist Party.’”

Not one person was ever tried and convicted for the 1919 bombings. The

only evidence of domestic terrorism ever produced was a blueprint for what was originally claimed to be a bomb, but which eventually was discovered to be a record player.

Palmer’s first raid took place exactly two years after the Russian Revolution, the singular event of the 20th century that shook the imperialist world to its core. The revolution had toppled the tsarist aristocracy, put an end to Russia’s participation in World War I, and brought the workers and peasants to power. The Bolshevik slogan “Workers and oppressed peoples of the world, unite!” resonated everywhere, including in the U.S.

In this country, it was a time of working-class revival and militancy. Socialist, anarchist and communist organizations, including the International Workers of the World (the Wobblies) and the newly formed Communist Party, were on the rise.

In the year 1919, 4 million workers, an estimated one-fourth of the working-class at the time, went on strike. In Seattle, a government-imposed lockout against shipyard workers sparked a citywide general strike. In September 1919, over

300,000 steelworkers fought a bitter nationwide battle against U.S. Steel Corp. The workers, many of them immigrants, labored 12-hour days and were paid starvation-level wages.

Stopping this working-class renaissance was the real reason for the Palmer Raids, not any phony war against terrorism. And what better way to divide the workers than the tried-and-true method of promoting racism as well as hatred toward the foreign-born.

When Palmer’s agents were breaking down the doors of immigrants’ homes, one particular agent leading the charge was an enthusiastic 24-year-old anti-communist zealot by the name of John Edgar Hoover.

Palmer had named Hoover to head up the General Intelligence Division (GID), a newly formed anti-radicalism department in the Justice Department. The GID eventually morphed into the FBI.

The lessons learned by Hoover in strike-breaking, illegal domestic surveillance and detention, denying workers their rights, infiltrating progressive organizations, and beating and even killing progressive leaders have served the FBI well during its 80-year-long infamous history. □

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
Order on line at www.Leftbooks.com



BOLIVIA

Oligarchy tries to block nationalization

By Berta Joubert-Ceci

Since Evo Morales Ayma, a member of the Aymara Indigenous nation, was elected president of Bolivia one year ago with 53 percent of the vote, the oligarchy in that country has been working to try to preserve its elite status and riches.

This is not unique to Bolivia. Seeing their pursuit of profits endangered, oligarchs all over Latin America—together with International Monetary Fund/World Bank-aligned transnational corporations, and with ready help from the United States government—are trying to set in motion diverse plans to return to the former status quo.

With the disenfranchised masses throughout the area rising up, and elected progressive governments moving away from neoliberal programs that impoverish the peoples, these plans are taking the form of attempted balkanization of countries, among many other tactics. They have been applied—unsuccessfully so far—in Venezuela, Ecuador and at this moment in Bolivia.

In Bolivia, a coalition of social movements has formed a committee, Comité Impulsor, to work towards the extradition of former President Gonzalo Sánchez de Lozada, who is living in the United States. The groups want him to face trial for massacres against his own people and for ransacking the treasury of Bolivia, the poorest country in South America.

A group of progressive U.S. lawyers will be traveling to Bolivia this January as part of a National Lawyers Guild delegation to meet with activists of this committee and families of Sánchez de Lozada’s victims from the Indigenous, working class city of El Alto. They intend to bring information concerning this case to the progressive movement in the U.S.

Sánchez de Lozada is another in a long line of former presidents and nefarious terrorists and gangsters—such as Toto Constant of Haiti and Posada Carriles of Cuba—who, after working to carry out imperialist dictates in Third World countries, are given safe haven in the U.S. when they are no longer useful to their masters. The Bolivian social movements are determined that Sánchez de Lozada, who currently resides in the Washington, D.C., area, will answer to the people of

The Morales government has promised major improvements in the lives of the Indigenous, peasants and workers, who had militantly fought to overthrow the criminal and neoliberal former president, Gonzalo Sánchez de Lozada. Their quest is particularly to nationalize Bolivia’s abundant natural gas, and for a life with dignity for the population in general.

The agenda of the Morales government has three basic steps: a Constitutional Assembly for the refounding of the Republic, agrarian reform and the nationalization of natural gas. With these measures it is attempting to finally bring some justice to the suffering and excluded masses.

However, a government that is determined to firmly follow the electoral process and the law, while trying to carry out a revolution in the economy, land distribution and a social agenda, is likely to be confronted with challenges from the oligarchy—rich landowners and businessmen who were Sánchez de Lozada’s partners.

Four of the nine departments of Bolivia—what the elite call the “half moon” because they geographically go from east

to south in a comma-like formation—have great wealth, particularly the eastern department of Santa Cruz, site of vast resources of natural gas. The other three are Beni, Pando and Tarija.

The oligarchs, who are demanding a vote of two-thirds instead of a majority to approve a new Constitution, have turned to violence, are staging hunger strikes and have decided to press for autonomy of the four departments. On Dec. 15, the Santa Cruz Civic Committee, a thoroughly racist organization of the elite, held a meeting to “constitute the Autonomous Region of Bolivia,” together with the other three departments.

But the movement of the peoples in Bolivia, particularly the Indigenous, is not going to let a minority in the elite turn back the gains they have achieved and the promise of a better future. Some 300,000 Bolivians are now learning to read and write, using the Cuban method called “Yo sí puedo” (Yes, I can), and supported by the Venezuelan government.

Sympathizers of Morales’s Movement Towards Socialism (MAS) blocked the

roads leading to the meeting site of the oligarchs for 24 hours. Several buses were burned and clashes left around 40 people wounded. In retaliation, groups associated with the “Cruceños”—the elite of Santa Cruz—went to San Ignacio, a locality with MAS sympathizers, to threaten them and to loot.

The government sent the military and the police to prevent more attacks from the Santa Cruz-associated groupings. It is interesting to note that the armed forces have publicly expressed their loyalty to the government.

Several Indigenous organizations have issued communiqués supporting the Constitutional Assembly and calling for unity, not autonomy.

These events began as the second South American Summit was taking place in Bolivia, where most of the 13 South American heads of state met to discuss further integration of the region.

The United States, contrary to what it does at home, asked the Morales government to “listen to the minorities”—which in this case means the white elite. □

Bolivian groups seek extradition of former president

By Mark Burton

Bolivia for his actions.

Sánchez de Lozada was twice president of Bolivia. His second presidential campaign in 2000 was strongly supported by the International Monetary Fund and the U.S. He ran a slick media campaign managed by none other than Bill Clinton’s campaign manager, James Carville.

Sánchez de Lozada quickly began to implement the policies of the IMF. He privatized state assets and cut social spending to free up capital for transfer to multi-national corporations and the local comprador bourgeoisie, while neglecting the needs of the poor majority.

In February of 2003 the Sánchez de Lozada government tried to implement an income tax to make up for a budget deficit caused in large part by the privatization of the oil and gas industries. This tax would have been devastating to the poor. A strike and demonstrations opposing the tax were begun, interestingly enough, by police unions in the capital of La Paz. With the police on strike, sections of the Bolivian working class, students and masses of Indigenous people from the nearby suburb of El Alto were emboldened to come out in large numbers. The government attacked these demonstrations, using the Bolivian military and killing several people. The government withdrew the tax and survived, but the Bolivian social

movements continued to organize.

In October 2003, the Sánchez de Lozada government began to negotiate for the sale of mass quantities of gas to Chile. The Bolivian people became alarmed that the government was going to sell off all the nation’s natural resources, with apparently no benefit for the country, and rose up in strikes and protests all over the nation. The social movements massed in La Paz and demanded the nationalization of Bolivia’s oil and gas industries and the resignation of President Sánchez de Lozada. The president sent in the army against the people and approximately 67 people were killed.

The social movements led strikes and blockades that eventually forced Sánchez de Lozada to flee the country. Since then,

Bolivia has elected its first Indigenous president, Evo Morales.

The effort to extradite Sánchez de Lozada faces many challenges in both Bolivia and the United States. In Bolivia the military and members of the former ruling classes have attempted to block this extradition. The Bush administration has so far refused to cooperate with Bolivia concerning service of process—the legal notice to a defendant of a court’s jurisdiction over that person.

Bolivian activists feel that this issue is important to the future of the Bolivian revolutionary process and are asking for solidarity from progressives in the United States.

Burton will be taking part in the lawyers’ delegation to Bolivia in January.

Youth to close recruiting station

Continued from page 9

said the reaction by both the Chamber and the police reveals the strength of the movement the youth are building. These organizations have vowed to continue confronting this recruiting station until it is forced to close its doors for good.

Anti-recruiting in New York

Anti-recruiting activists from North Carolina attended the Troops Out Now Coalition Antiwar Summit meeting in Harlem on Nov. 18, where the breakout group on counter-recruiting decided to do something concrete to impact the ability of Washington to wage war. “The one way we could do that,” Dustin Langley said, “was

to hinder military recruiting.”

“So far,” Langley continued, “we in New York have been picketing at the Chambers Street recruiting station each Tuesday and Thursday. Our plans for the New Year are to hold a counter-recruiting activists meeting in January and see if we can organize picketing outside the station every day.

“After the New Year, we will also be calling on antiwar activists across the U.S. to ‘adopt a recruiting station’ and maintain a regular presence at that site with the goal of shutting it down. So far we’ve gotten a friendly reception on the street, and even a small protest will bring all the recruiters out and stop them from recruiting.” □

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EDITORIAL

Los amigos de Pinochet siguen vivos

El brutal dictador General Augusto Pinochet, quien gobernó Chile por medio de homicidios y terror policial desde 1973 hasta 1990 —asesinando a decenas de miles de obrer@s, organizador@s y progresistas, abriendo su país al pillaje de corporaciones imperialistas, murió el 10 de diciembre, Día de los Derechos Humanos.

Muchos chilen@s recuerdan con demasiada claridad su cruel régimen. Celebraron su muerte en las calles de Chile. Y cuando algunos en el gobierno actual se atrevieron a bajar las banderas en su honor, las multitudes se enfrentaron a la policía y otras autoridades.

Lo que no aparece en los reportes periodísticos en los medios de comunicación monopolistas, especialmente aquí en los Estados Unidos, es el papel jugado por la CIA en el golpe de estado sangriento que llevó a la dictadura militar al poder.

El ex secretario de estado Henry Kissinger, mientras estuvo en la Casa Blanca de Nixon, conspiraba con la CIA, el Pentágono y los militares chilenos para desestabilizar el gobierno pro-socialista de Salvador Allende elegido democráticamente, y remplazarlo con una dictadura sangrienta.

Para las corporaciones transnacionales ricas y poderosas y para los medios de comunicación monopolistas Pinochet fue un arma contra l@s trabajador@s y l@s pobres que se atrevían organizarse para liderar la sociedad. La ex primera ministra británica Margaret Thatcher fue entre las primeras personas en expresar su “tristeza” por la muerte de Pinochet.

Kissinger y Thatcher son criminales mundiales de primera clase, con rangos más altos que el de Pinochet en el sentido de la amplitud de sus crímenes.

La administración de Bush ahora habla de “extender la democracia” en el Medio Oriente y el resto del mundo. Esto es charlatanería. Los hechos verdaderos son que Washington ha instalado o apoyado dictaduras: a Pinochet en Chile, Marcos en las Filipinas, Duvalier en Haití, Somoza en Nicaragua, Suharto en Indonesia y Mobutu en Congo (Zaire) para nombrar unos pocos de los clientes de Washington durante la Guerra Fría.

El golpe de estado en Chile, maniobrado por los EEUU, ofrece una lección valiosa para quienes luchan por el socialismo —es una lección leninista sobre el carácter clasista del estado capitalista. El ser simplemente elegid@ al poder no permite a la clase trabajadora o a sus partidos regir la sociedad — no mientras el ejército, la policía, las cortes, las prisiones y los medios de comunicación queden en manos de la clase dominante capitalista.

Pinochet ha ganado el odio de l@s trabajador@s chilen@s, que sufrieron tanto en la sangrienta contrarrevolución. Pero sin el apoyo del imperialismo estadounidense, y sus aliados, Pinochet jamás hubiera sido exitoso en su golpe de estado criminal el 11 de septiembre de 1973. □

Gobierno de EE.UU. pone en riesgo a bebés de inmigrantes

Por Kathy Durkin

Imagínese que su bebé de tres semanas de nacid@ tiene fiebre alta o una fuerte tos, o no está ganando peso. Pero usted tiene mucho miedo de llevarl@ al doctor/a para que la examinen y le den tratamiento.

Esta es la realidad de muchas familias que viven en este país. Si los padres son inmigrantes, sus temores están más que bien fundados.

Los Centros de Servicios de los Programas de Medicare y Medicaid (CMS por las siglas en inglés) impusieron una decisión arbitraria y malévola en el mes de julio dirigida claramente a las familias inmigrantes. Los centros ordenaron a todos los estados cesar automáticamente la cobertura de ayuda médica para los recién nacidos de padres documentados que han residido en los Estados Unidos por menos de 5 años y para l@s bebés de padres indocumentados.

Los CMS son parte del Departamento de Salud y Servicios Humanos de los Estados Unidos. Esta agencia, la cual debería estar promoviendo el cuidado de la salud para todos, declaró que estos padres inmigrantes deben solicitar ayuda de Medicaid para cada recién nacido. Ellos deben proveer documentos que comprueben la ciudadanía y la identidad del bebé aunque estas criaturas son automáticamente reconocidas como ciudadan@s si son nacidos aquí e incluso cuando los gastos del procedimiento médico fueran cubiertos por el Medicaid de “emergencia”.

Los padres también deben proveer información sobre su elegibilidad e ingresos. Hasta que estos documentos no sean presentados, los bebés no podrán recibir ayuda del Medicaid. En algunos estados para poder obtener una copia del certificado de nacimiento u otra prueba de la ciudadanía de la criatura o la aprobación del Medicaid, se puede tomar semanas o meses. Y después de todo eso, para muchos la ayuda se demorará o les será negada.

Los CMS citaron la ley que el Presidente George W. Bush firmó por medio del Acta para la Reducción de Déficit (ARD), en febrero del 2006. Esta ley requiere que todos provean pruebas de ciudadanía e identidad cuando busquen o quieran renovar los servicios del Medicaid. Aunque esto fue claramente una regulación totalmente en contra de l@s inmigrantes, se puede usar también para negar ayuda a otras personas oprimidas que no tengan pasaporte o certificados de nacimiento. Sobre todo, l@s ancianos nacidos en las áreas rurales están en riesgo.

Antes de la declaración de julio, Medicaid automáticamente cubría a l@s infantes nacid@s en los Estados Unidos a padres de bajos ingresos, hasta que l@s infantes cumplieran su primer año de edad, especialmente cuando Medicaid pagaba los gastos del parto.

Sara deLone, quien reporta desde el Centro de Prioridades Presupuestarias y Políticas, dice que en el ARD no hay estipulación que termine automáticamente los servicios de Medicaid para l@s infantes en su primer año de vida.

Al basar la negación de los servicios de Medicaid para los infantes en el estatus migratorio de sus madres, los CMS han formulado una política discriminatoria que niega el cuidado de la salud para l@s infantes. Esta política claramente refleja la discriminación y el racismo contra l@s inmigrantes de muchos en el gobierno de los Estados Unidos. Esto es un acto de puro hostigamiento y terror dirigido a l@s trabajador@s inmigrantes y sus familias.

Intento de intimidar

Forzar a los padres a llenar formatos para recibir Medicaid para sus infantes en oficinas gubernamentales donde pueden ser entregad@s a las autoridades del servicio de inmigración es claramente una intimidación. Por supuesto algunos padres, temiendo al hostigamiento o a la posibilidad de deportación, se cohíben de

hacer los trámites de solicitud y documentación.

Ahora el gobierno federal está incrementando las presiones a los estados para que implementen estos terribles reglamentos.

Rosita Romero, directora ejecutiva del Centro de Desarrollo para Mujeres Dominicanas, dijo a Mundo Obrero: “Esta es una política ultrajante y cruel. Dice que no estamos preocupados por el bienestar de los más vulnerables. ¿Cómo puede un gobierno negar el cuidado de salud a un bebé? Esto rechaza uno de los derechos humanos más básicos por falta de documentos legales. Esto es simplemente inaceptable”.

El consistente cuidado de la salud es crucial en el primer año de vida. Creando obstáculos para recibir cobertura de Medicaid puede dañar a much@s infantes, especialmente quienes más necesitan cuidado de salud. Dado el alto costo hoy día, muchos padres que están desesperadamente preocupados sobre la salud de sus hij@s simplemente no pueden pagar el tratamiento médico.

L@s proveedor@s de servicios de salud y grupos de apoyo están preocupad@s porque muchos bebés no recibirán el cuidado de salud necesario, como por ejemplo inmunizaciones, atención médica preventiva y cuidado para el mantenimiento de la buena salud, y que por lo tanto problemas como el bajo peso al nacer y defectos de nacimiento puedan quedar sin recibir atención médica. O que problemas agudos o crónicos puedan empeorar sin una atención inmediata. Muchos están pidiendo que los estados mantengan automáticamente la cobertura de Medicaid para l@s infantes

La enfermera-comadrona Ellen Catalinotto explicó: “Los primeros meses de vida son críticos. La tasa de mortalidad infantil es más alta durante las primeras 28 horas de vida”. Hay que examinar a l@s bebés a las dos semanas de edad y se requieren varias visitas más a la clínica durante el primer año de vida. Ella enfatizó que estos reglamentos nuevos pueden impedir que un bebé reciba el tratamiento médico si se presenta un problema durante este período tan vulnerable.

El Medicaid proteje a 25 millones de niñ@s en los EEUU, incluso un 60 por ciento de l@s hij@s de familias de bajos ingresos e infantes de menos de un año de edad. Este programa es crucial para las familias pobres en los Estados Unidos que lo necesitan para poder obtener cuidado médico para sus infantes; la inscripción automática lo hace mucho más accesible.

Negar este cuidado de salud a los decenas de miles de recién nacid@s a padres indocumentados en los Estados Unidos todos los años es moralmente inaceptable. En este, el país más rico del mundo, el cuidado de la salud debía estar garantizado y proporcionado a tod@s l@s niñ@s. Debe ser un derecho reconocido por el simple hecho de haber nacido. □

