

WORKERS WORLD

Workers and oppressed peoples of the world unite!



OCT. 11, 2007

VOL. 49, NO. 40

50¢

Anti-war marches of new type

Protest hits FEMA, ICE

By LeiLani Dowell
Washington, D.C.

Two months of anti-war activity culminated at the end of September in dynamic encampments to stop war at home and abroad and militant, anti-imperialist and anti-racist demonstrations in both Los Angeles and Washington, D.C.

Here in Washington, during the Sept. 22-29 Encampment to Stop the War at Home and Abroad, more and more participants arrived and staked their tents in front of the Capitol building as the Sept. 29 mass march approached. A real sense of unity could be felt among the many activists from varied struggles who share a common enemy.

A FEMA (Federal Emergency Management Agency) trailer brought by Katrina survivors direct from New Orleans joined the Iraq Veterans Against the War bus, which had been parked in front of the Encampment since Sept. 22. The tent city was treated to a delicious meal of shrimp, crawfish and sausage cooked by the Common Ground Collective organizers who, after traveling more than 17 hours to get to the Capitol from New Orleans, spent the next day cooking the meal.

Encampment participants, mostly women from Code Pink, disrupted a Senate Appropriations Hearing on Sept. 26 in

D.C.

Continued on page 5

Activists build unity

By John Parker
Los Angeles

The week leading up to the anti-war demonstration at Olympic and Broadway on Sept. 29, which included a tent city to "Occupy the Occupiers," was historic in many ways.

When the idea was first introduced by members of the Troops Out Now Coalition-L.A., a group that was formed to build for the September actions in Los Angeles, many in the anti-war movement were excited about this idea, seeing it as a powerful way to move from protest to resistance. However, many others believed it was too ambitious and would never be allowed

L.A.

by federal authorities, since a week-long anti-war encampment on federal property had never been done before in Los Angeles.

However, the determination of TONC-L.A. not only made the encampment a reality but brought together various anti-war and social justice organizations, which organized their own teach-ins and actions at the encampment. As if this weren't enough, the tent city not only occupied one federal building but, during midweek, organizers marched 15 miles to the downtown Federal Building to repeat the encampment there for another four days, culminating in the

Continued on page 7

JENA 6

Students walkout 3

GM CONTRACT

Market-driven 4

U.S. CRIMES AGAINST IRAQ

Partition, prostitution 9

Pakistan & Myanmar

EDITORIAL 10



WW PHOTOS (FROM LEFT): LIZ GREEN, DEIRDRE GRISWOLD AND CHERYL LABASH

(Top) D.C. march steps off from Encampment. (Middle) Defiant youth sit down in street, blocking Constitution Avenue. (Bottom) Lead banners in L.A. march.



Subscribe to WORKERS WORLD

- 4 weeks trial subscription: \$1
- One year subscription: \$25

NAME _____ PHONE _____

EMAIL _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY/STATE/ZIP
WORKERS WORLD NEWSPAPER
 55 W. 17 St. NY, NY 10011
 212-627-2994 www.workers.org

an evolving impact

HIP HOP & THE CUBAN REVOLUTION

This week ...



By Larry Hales



During the Golden Age of Hip Hop in the United States, from the 1980s to the early 1990s, the music was stealth. It is not that it flew under the radar. How could it, when it resonated around the country in oppressed communities? However, because of pure racism it was not seen as an art form but as a fleeting expression of the righteous anger of the oppressed.

It was a logical evolution in a time of the decline of the great social movements of the 1960s and 1970s. It was also the beginning of deindustrialization, the reintroduction of the death penalty, the booming growth of the prison-industrial complex and Reaganomics.

Hip Hop was at its most creative, its most enlightening, its most explosive and to the U.S. ruling class, its most dangerous point.

In Cuba, that period was one of great anxiety, but the revolution triumphed in spite of the hardships and Hip Hop has since helped reinvigorate youth on the island.

It was Harry Belafonte who first had a conversation with Fidel Castro and Minister of Culture Abel Prieto about the many Hip Hop artists in which he explained the culture to Commander Fidel.

Belafonte said of the meeting, "I wasn't surprised that there were Cuban rappers, because I don't care where you go in the world ... rappers seem to be everywhere. But I was surprised at how many there were and how uninformed the hierarchy in Cuban cultural circles was of the whole culture of hip-hop music."

"After meeting with the hip-hop artists in Havana about seven or eight years ago, I met with Abel Prieto at a luncheon that Fidel Castro had, and we got to talking about hip-hop culture. When I went back to Havana a couple of years later, the people in the hip-hop community came to see me and we hung out for a bit. They thanked me profusely and I said, 'Why?' and they said, 'Because, your little conversation with Fidel and the Minister of Culture on hip-hop led to there being a special division within the ministry and we've got our own studio.'"

Since then, Fidel has called rap the "vanguard of the revolution."

Culture is protected in Cuba. In the U.S., Hip Hop, like all things under capitalism, has become a commodity. However, more than just that, both the attacks on Hip Hop and the co-optation of the culture are part of the racism endemic to the system.

Hip Hop is seen as a threat to the U.S. ruling elite and as a threat to white supremacy. The Hip Hop generation of today is a multi-national generation of youth who have seen through the lies of the system and understand much more deeply than their forebears the attempts to divide the multi-national working class, though not in those words.

Hip Hop is like the coded language of the slave in the fields; the blues of an era where the objective reality of U.S. capital is one of crisis and more wars. It is the "CNN of the Ghetto," as Chuck D says. It also is the barometer of the people's willingness to openly struggle, as was evident in the music before the great Los Angeles rebellion, when the Black masses in South Central L.A., tired of the repressive conditions, rose up.

Cuba, however, sees the now global phenomenon and the power it holds. Like with the early Hip Hop musicians in the U.S., the culture arrived at a time when artists had to improvise. In the U.S. turntables became instruments; beat boxing, making music with one's mouth, drove impromptu ciphers—free-

style circles. In Cuba, early artists used typewriters to bang out beats.

The difference, though, is how this culture flourished in two diametrically opposed social systems, one run by a small exploitative class, the other by a workers' government with the task to provide for all of society and solve the problems of an ever-changing world.

One is an anarchic system, the other is a planned economy.

The approach to culture is rooted in each system's approach to humanity. The capitalist system has out-used its usefulness. It came into the world dripping in blood from head to toe, and as is evident in the rise of the U.S. military juggernaut, will go out of this world covered in blood.

While Fidel says, "Within the revolution, everything," the U.S. rulers see little value in a thing that does not produce profit or cannot be used for subterfuge.

In 2002, Cuba opened the Cuban Rap Agency and from the agency came the magazine La Fabri-K and a record label.

Capitalist media outlets such as the New York Times, CNN and a few artists in the U.S.—like Pitbull of the song "Culo" and "independent" film producers—try to use the culture against the Cuban revolution.

One need only look at the source of the criticism. Pitbull also wrote a song called, "Ya Se Acabó," joining in the clamor with other right-wing Miami Cubans and U.S. politicians when Castro had to undergo surgery and then stepped down because of his illness.

Pitbull is part of the ignominiously named "Guerilla Radio: The Hip Hop Struggle Under Castro," a documentary made by filmmakers associated with CNN and Mountain View Group Ltd. According to its web site, Mountain View has "created award-winning corporate communications campaigns, educational programs, TV commercials and sales tools for over 200 clients, including Fortune 500 companies."

One of the filmmakers who worked for CNN, Tom Nybo, was "embedded" with the occupation forces in Iraq. A report from the School of Journalism at the University of Montana said that before Nybo went to Iraq in 2003, "he received two weeks of military training—one organized by CNN and the other by the Pentagon."

In Cuba, culture flourishes and the Cuban Rap Agency will see that it is not used by outside forces to try to destabilize the revolution, but rather is used to deepen the consciousness of youth on the island in the service of deepening the revolution.

As Belafonte said, "What I think was important is how open the leadership was to this thing called hip-hop, whereas in the United States we do so much to demonize the culture, and we don't even have a Ministry of Culture in this country. But here we have Cuba, with a new form of music that came from another place, from the United States of America, and they were open to giving it assistance, to help develop hip-hop music in Cuba." □

★ In the U.S.

- Anti-war marches of a new type 1
- Hip Hop and the Cuban Revolution, part 2 2
- Students walk out in solidarity with Jena 6 3
- Ohioans demand 'No death penalty!' 3
- Michigan students defend LGBT rights 3
- GM, UAW craft market-driven contract 4
- ICE raids provoke fear—and outrage 4
- How the Troops Out Now rally rocked! 5
- Youth and students cut artery to Capitol 6
- Katrina survivors speak out 6
- Vigil calls for universal health care 7
- Anti-imperialist keynotes Arizona LGBT event 8
- Dave Cline, organizer of anti-war veterans 8

★ Around the world

- Senate proposal: another bad plan for Iraq 9
- Sexual exploitation of Iraqi women 9
- Egypt textile workers 10
- Viet-amnesia: Bush's distortions of that dirty war 11
- Delegation delivers petitions to free Cuban 5 11

★ Editorials

- Defend longshore workers! 10
- Pakistan and Myanmar 10

★ Noticias En Español

- Gaza: Crímenes de guerra 12
- Columbia: ¿Invitación o emboscada? 12

Workers World
55 West 17 Street
New York, N.Y. 10011
Phone: (212) 627-2994
Fax: (212) 675-7869
E-mail: editor@workers.org
Web: www.workers.org
Vol. 49, No. 40 • Oct. 11, 2007
Closing date: Oct. 3, 2007

Editor: Deirdre Griswold
Technical Editor: Lal Roohk
Managing Editors: John Catalinotto, LeiLani Dowell, Leslie Feinberg, Monica Moorehead, Gary Wilson
West Coast Editor: John Parker
Contributing Editors: Greg Butterfield, G. Dunkel, Fred Goldstein, Teresa Gutierrez, Larry Hales, David Hoskins, Berta Joubert-Ceci, Cheryl LaBash, Milt Neidenberg, Bryan G. Pfeifer, Minnie Bruce Pratt
Technical Staff: Shelley Ettinger, Bob McCubbin, Maggie Vascassenno
Mundo Obrero: Carl Glenn, Teresa Gutierrez, Berta Joubert-Ceci, Donna Lazarus, Carlos Vargas
Internet: Janet Mayes
Supporter Program: Sue Davis, coordinator

Copyright © 2007 Workers World. Verbatim copying and distribution of articles is permitted in any medium without royalty provided this notice is preserved.

Workers World (ISSN-1070-4205) is published weekly except the first week of January by WW Publishers, 55 W. 17 St., N.Y., N.Y. 10011. Phone: (212) 627-2994. Subscriptions: One year: \$25; foreign and institutions: \$35. Letters to the editor may be condensed and edited. Articles can be freely reprinted, with credit to Workers World, 55 W. 17 St., New York, NY 10011. Back issues and individual articles are available on microfilm and/or photocopy from University Microfilms International, 300 Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor, Mich. 48106. A searchable archive is available on the Web at www.workers.org.

A headline digest is available via e-mail subscription. Subscription information is at www.workers.org/email.php.

Periodicals postage paid at New York, N.Y.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to Workers World, 55 W. 17 St., 5th Floor, New York, N.Y. 10011.

JOIN US.

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.

If you would like to know more about WWP, or to join us in these struggles, contact the branch nearest you.

National Office
55 W. 17 St.,
New York, NY 10011
212-627-2994;
Fax (212) 675-7869
wwp@workers.org

Atlanta
P.O. Box 424,
Atlanta, GA 30301
404-627-0185
atlanta@workers.org

Baltimore
426 E. 31 St.,
Baltimore, MD 21218
410-235-7040
baltimore@workers.org

Boston
284 Amory St.,
Boston, MA 02130
617-983-3835
Fax (617) 983-3836
boston@workers.org
workersworld.net/boston

Buffalo, N.Y.
367 Delaware Ave.
Buffalo, NY 14202
716-566-1115
buffalo@workers.org

Chicago
27 N. Wacker Dr. #138
Chicago, IL 60606
773-381-5839
chicago@workers.org

Cleveland
P.O. Box 5963
Cleveland, OH 44101
216-531-4004
cleveland@workers.org

Denver
denver@workers.org

Detroit
5920 Second Ave.,
Detroit, MI 48202
313-831-0750
detroit@workers.org

Houston
P.O. Box 595
Houston, TX 77001-0595
713-861-5965
houston@workers.org

Los Angeles
5274 West Pico Blvd.,
Suite 203
Los Angeles, CA 90019
323-936-1416
la@workers.org

Milwaukee
milwaukee@workers.org

Philadelphia
P.O. Box 9202,
Philadelphia, PA 19139
610-453-0490
phila@workers.org

Raleigh, N.C.
raleigh@workers.org

Richmond, Va.
P.O. Box 14602,
Richmond, VA 23221
richmond@workers.org

Rochester, N.Y.
585-436-6458
rochester@workers.org

San Diego, Calif.
P.O. Box 33447
San Diego, CA 92104
619-692-0355

San Francisco
2940 16th St., #207
San Francisco, CA 94103
415-738-4739
sf@workers.org

Washington, D.C.
P.O. Box 57300,
Washington, DC 20037,
dc@workers.org



Students walk out in solidarity with Jena 6

By Jaimeson Champion

On Oct. 1, tens of thousands of students on high school and college campuses across the country participated in the National Student Walkout in Support of the Jena 6. A coalition of Hip Hop artists, including Mos Def and Talib Kweli, had called on the students to walk out, along with a number of organizations including the Malcolm X Grassroots Movement, Sankofa Community Empowerment, and the National Hip Hop Political Convention.

Students on more than 100 campuses across the country participated in the walkout.

Under the banner of "We all live in Jena," students in many different cities and towns demonstrated their solidarity with the six teenagers arrested in Jena,

La., and their outrage at the racist, criminal injustice system that seeks to systematically criminalize and imprison millions of Black youth.

The list of demands included in the call for the walkout included the dropping of all charges against the Jena 6, the investigation of District Attorney Reed Walter for unethical and illegal practices, and the barring of Judge J.P. Mauffray from presiding over any part of the case.

On the University of Colorado campus, the Black Student Alliance organized a well-attended rally that featured live music and political poetry. Students held signs saying "Justice or just us?" and "Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere."

In New York, on the Columbia University campus, more than 150 students walked out and participated in a march

organized by a coalition of the Black Students Organization and the Muslim Student Association. As the students marched up Broadway, numerous people on the sidewalks read their signs and joined the march.

In Kentucky, more than 100 University of Louisville students walked out. A march organized by the Association of Black Students was followed by a town-hall-style forum where participants discussed issues of racism in the city of Louisville.

On the University of Massachusetts campus, more than 200 students and faculty members participated in a march organized by the Black Student Union. The march held up two lanes of traffic, with many stalled drivers honking their horns and raising their fists in support.

A recurring message at many of the

student walkouts was that the blatant racism on display in the Jena 6 case was not limited to that town but was part of the systemic racism inherent to the criminal justice system and the prison-industrial complex. Speakers asserted that the events that transpired in Jena could happen anywhere. Many of the rallies and marches held as part the national walkout addressed issues of racism and police brutality faced in their local communities.

The massive and historic demonstrations on Sept. 20 and the national student walkout on Oct. 1 have highlighted the fact that a growing anti-racist movement is surging across the country. The Jena 6 case has galvanized resistance in communities nationwide. In the words of a speaker at the University of Louisville walkout, "This is only the beginning." □

Michigan students defend LGBT rights

By Kris Hamel
East Lansing, Mich.

On Sept. 25, lesbian, gay, bi and trans students and their supporters at Michigan State University in East Lansing came out to protest a speech sponsored by the rightwing Young Americans for Freedom campus organization. YAF was hosting a lecture by Ryan Sorba, a reactionary student from southern California who came to speak on the topic of "the born-gay myth," which is also the title of a book Sorba is supposedly writing.

According to the Young Conservatives of California, of which Sorba is a member, his speech aimed to "expose the complete fabrication contrived by 'pro-sodomy' activists in a legal and public relations campaign to gain minority status as a suspect class under the 1964 Civil Rights Act." Sorba's lecture states that all persons are born heterosexual and that homosexuality is "unnatural" and "immoral."

If YAF thought they could have free reign on campus to spout this vile message, they were dead wrong. When it became known to the campus community that YAF was sponsoring the reactionary anti-LGBT lecture, bisexual activist and student leader Lauren Spencer initiated meetings with LGBT individuals and organizations to plan a response.

LGBT students and allies at MSU organized on a few days' notice for a demonstration outside of the YAF lecture. more than 150 people came out in support of LGBT rights and liberation. Most of them



WW PHOTO: KRIS HAMEL

were young women. They included a grouping of Chicana and Latina students there in solidarity.

The demonstrators filled the auditorium where Sorba was giving his vitriolic presentation. With colorful signs and rainbow flags, they vastly outnumbered the handful of reactionary students and YAF members. When the meeting began and everyone was asked to stand for the "pledge of allegiance," the protesters sat down. Constant cell phone ringing, loud conversations, hisses and laughter filled the hall. When Sorba many times stumbled on his words, the protesters laughed

and applauded thunderously.

In April YAF had sponsored a program featuring Chris Simcox, leader of the ultrareactionary and racist Minutemen organization. At that meeting, campus cops, aided and abetted by racist students in YAF, brutalized Latin@ students and suppressed the anti-racist protest, arresting five students, two of whom faced felony charges. Subsequently, police raided the homes of anti-racist students.

YAF was founded on Sept. 11, 1960, at the Sharon, Conn., estate of millionaire William F. Buckley, Jr., to support Barry Goldwater's bid for the presidency.

Ronald Reagan joined the YAF national advisory board in 1962 and was honorary advisor until his death. Reagan was the "standard bearer" and a key leader of YAF who embodied their goals.

Last year, the MSU chapter of YAF became the first university-recognized and -sponsored hate group to be listed by the Southern Poverty Law Center's Intelligence Project.

YAF has announced the return to MSU of Chris Simcox of the Minutemen on Nov. 13, when the group will sponsor a meeting featuring the racist leader. Student organizers are already planning a response. □

Ohioans demand 'No death penalty!'

By Sharon Danann
Columbus, Ohio

Rallying at the Statehouse here on Sept. 26, people from all corners of Ohio chanted, "No death penalty!"

Their message was aimed at Ohio's legislators and Gov. Ted Strickland. Ohio has been second to Texas in the number of executions performed from 2004 to 2006. The rally followed a morning of prayer vigils and teach-ins.

Large numbers of high school students attended the rally. They heard powerful messages from a man whose parents were murdered, a woman with a family member on death row, a former death row prisoner who was later exonerated, and leaders from many religions.

The keynote speaker was Sam Milsap, a former Texas prosecutor who had pros-

ecuted Ruben Cantu. Decisive evidence of Cantu's innocence came to light—but only after he had already been executed. Milsap became an activist against the death penalty.

The rally supported the findings of an American Bar Association (ABA) study, released on Sept. 24, criticizing the fairness and accuracy of Ohio's death penalty system. The ABA called for a halt to executions due to serious flaws in Ohio's system, such as racial imbalances. The report also found fault with how defense-related evidence including DNA has been preserved, the failure to make prosecutors give over documents that are helpful to the defense, and the lack of defense access to public records. In Ohio, defense attorneys have less access to public records than reporters.

The ABA also criticized the use of the

death penalty on prisoners with mental illness. Of 93 criteria for fairness and accuracy, Ohio met only four.

Sister Alice Gerdeman, president of Ohioans to Stop Executions, declared, "Ohioans have lost confidence in Ohio's death penalty and are here today calling on our state leaders to halt executions and examine these problems."

On Sept. 25, the U.S. Supreme Court agreed to hear a Kentucky case on lethal injection, challenging its constitutionality based on Eighth Amendment protections against cruel and unusual punishment.

Many hoped there might be a change in Ohio's death machine when Gov. Strickland, a Democrat, was elected in 2006. Due to a class action lawsuit by prisoners challenging whether lethal injection is cruel and unusual punishment and a stay of execution, there have been

only two executions in Ohio in 2007. The second one was the botched execution of Christopher Newton in May, which took 113 minutes.

So far, Gov. Strickland is being non-committal. He stated, "I'm not changing anything that I've done in the past at this point but I certainly will read the report, commissioned by the bar association, and follow the proceedings of the U.S. Supreme Court." Activists have pledged to keep the heat on Gov. Strickland and their state legislators in the coming months as the tide turns against the death penalty.

The death penalty is just one aspect of the racist, anti-working class injustice system that keeps 2 million people behind bars, a huge number of them youth of color, and is now being challenged from Jena, La., to Ohio. □

After powerful two-day strike

GM, UAW craft market-driven contract

By Martha Grevatt

For two days in September the eyes of the world were on 80 General Motors plants in the United States. On the morning of Sept. 24 workers began a mass exodus from inside the plants. In the first national strike of General Motors in 37 years, not one car rolled off the assembly lines; not even one small part was produced.

Two days later UAW President Ron Gettelfinger announced that a tentative agreement had been reached with GM. By the evening shift, workers were back on the job. Gettelfinger assured the rank and file that the contract guaranteed job security. "We're proud of this tentative agreement and we look forward to getting into the field and discussing it with our membership," Gettelfinger said. (www.uaw.org)

On the surface the UAW's boasts appear credible. A moratorium on plant closings remains in effect for the life of the contract. Language calls for replacing any workers who retire, quit, die or are fired.

However, nine plants are scheduled for closing and a tenth will either be sold or closed. Others will see the number of workers drop. Furthermore, the agreement devotes pages to listing various skilled maintenance tasks that are to be "exited." Carpenters and painters are among the skilled tradespeople who could see their jobs "exit." Also exiting will be whole job classifications of janitors and others who fall under the umbrella of "housekeeping."

This will have a racist impact on Black and other workers of color who, due to a century of discrimination, have a disproportionate presence in the lowest-paying departments.

The language binding GM to replace any worker who leaves comes with a major catch. A solidarity-wrecking multi-tier wage structure has new hires in "noncore" classifications starting at half the average

hourly rate of current and "traditional" employees. "Non-core" work is so broadly defined it includes forklift operators and many parts plant jobs. In a stamping plant a line worker making outer body panels such as doors and roofs would make "traditional" wages, while a worker on the next line over who makes "noncore" stampings would get "entry level" wages.

New hires cannot enroll their dependents in the health insurance plans. The traditional defined-benefit pension is eliminated for all new hires, along with "30 and out"—retirement with full benefits after 30 years, regardless of age. New hires also lose their health benefits upon retirement.

Much has been made of the fact that 3,000 current temporary workers will be made permanent and receive top wages. However, the agreement makes room for untold numbers of new workers to be hired as "long-term temporary employees" to replace workers who retire with buyout packages.

Doesn't it undermine union solidarity when workers laboring side by side, doing the exact same work, have two or three different pay scales? All the tremendous camaraderie and unity that developed on the picket line—what are tiered wages if not the antithesis of that solidarity?

Even for the highest-paid workers the contract offers little. There are no annual raises in the four-year agreement and most of the Cost of Living Allowance is being diverted to pay for increased health care costs. The union's estimated 68-cent increase in hourly pay over four years will be more than eaten up by inflation. A Cleveland State University study just released found that Ohio autoworkers' wages had already fallen 6 percent between 2000 and 2006. (Cleveland Plain Dealer, Oct. 1)

In the same time period, plant managers' salaries increased 29 percent, even as the number of workers they supervised

dropped significantly. Of course, they supervise more robots than ever before. Auto executive salaries are at an all-time high.

Along with allowing new hires to be paid substandard wages, the moratorium on plant closings itself is subject to revision if conditions such as a "market-related volume decline" demand it.

Retiree health care guaranteed?

The other key feature of the contract is the shifting of all future retiree health care costs to a Voluntary Employee Beneficiary Association (VEBA). Gettelfinger has promised that with GM's contributions totaling around \$30 billion, investments will make the VEBA last 80 years. "Our retirees will be protected under this VEBA," he said.

However, the stock market's current volatility calls any guarantee of solvency into question. The VEBA shifts the burden of retirees' health care from the shoulders of the company where they gave their lives to the roulette wheel of Wall Street finance capital. Even a mild recession could put the health of some half million UAW members in jeopardy. A stock market crash could leave veterans of the long strikes of years past without the benefits for which they fought so hard.

All these wage and benefit cuts will shift billions of dollars in wealth from the workers, who produce everything, to the bosses, who contribute nothing. That's what capitalists love more than anything. The news of the settlement sent GM stock prices soaring.

While many workers seem to be welcoming the stated commitment to job and health care security—two issues that have generated much anxiety during months of negotiation—the promise is a false one if tied to the fortunes of capital. To make that gamble is to replace a traditional contract with a market-driven agreement that promises the world and guarantees

nothing.

Rank and file militants who make up Soldiers of Solidarity are leafleting inside the plants, calling for a "No" vote on the contract.

Regardless of how the ratification vote goes, the power of the strike should not be underestimated. Whether or not it yielded gains at the bargaining table, its impact is palpable.

Once the strike began it was the rank and file who took ownership of their picket lines. Without prompting, many came out to picket when it wasn't their scheduled shift. Workers stood in the gates and blocked vehicles, some linking arms, until finally the police ordered them to allow management vehicles to pass.

On the picket line union sisters and brothers from different shifts and departments met and talked for the first time. The picket line was the great equalizer, bringing together in common cause the highest-paid skilled trades workers and the lowest-paid janitors.

Workers saw their communities decidedly on their side. On the line they had to shout above continuous supportive honking by passing cars just to make conversation. Workers at Chrysler and Ford came to the picket lines and offered financial support. The Teamsters union immediately pledged to honor the picket lines and not make deliveries to struck plants or haul GM vehicles.

For two life-altering days 73,000 workers were in control of the productive process.

The militancy and solidarity the rank and file demonstrated in the strike will be the key to defending the jobs of the workers in the future, notwithstanding any contract language. The rank and file must continue to organize for the struggles that are sure to come.

Martha Grevatt has worked at a Chrysler plant in Ohio for 20 years.
E-mail: mgrevatt@workers.org

ICE raids provoke fear—and outrage

By Heather Cottin
Freeport, N.Y.

"They came in the night. We heard the voices, the door being broken, and they took our neighbor away."

Residents of 45 Broadway in Freeport told Workers World of the latest government abduction of an immigrant worker in the pre-dawn hours of Sept. 29. The victim was the 83rd worker to be arrested on Long Island that week, according to the Workplace Project, an immigrant rights group in nearby Hempstead.

Workers who gathered at a deli across from the house were angry at the reign of terror carried out by the Immigration and Customs Enforcement branch of the Department of Homeland Security, still called La Migra by immigrants. "It was right after the governor announced that undocumented workers could get licenses in New York. That is when La Migra came after us." In all, there were 186 arrests.

In Hempstead, ICE arrested a man who was home with his infant daughter. They took him away, leaving the baby alone on the bed.

Homeland Security, which has deported more than 600,000 people from the U.S. this year, raided at least seven Long Island communities with significant Latin@ populations. Workplace Project organizers are

Latin American contingent at Sept. 29 anti-war march urged support for immigrant rights.

WW PHOTO: LIZ GREEN

warning people not to open their doors. Immigrant rights activists are mounting campaigns aimed at alerting the public to the terror Latin@s face.

Even the Nassau County police have expressed outrage because Homeland Security told them the raids were to get members of gangs, but that turned out to be a lie.

The Puerto Rican Legal Defense and Education Fund filed a lawsuit in the same week arguing that authorities vio-



late Latin@ families' civil rights by raiding their homes without court warrants. (Newsday, Sept. 27) ICE's goal is to seize as many undocumented persons as possible as the agents try to meet increased arrest quotas recently imposed upon them by their superiors at ICE, according

to CBS-TV.

"We are organizing, taking testimonies, and reaching out across Long Island," said Carlos Canales of the Workplace Project, "but it is a very serious situation, and Washington and anti-immigrant forces are behind these raids." □

Protest hits FEMA, ICE

Continued from page 1

which Secretary of Defense Robert Gates requested an additional \$42 billion in funds for the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. Gates's appeal brings the 2008 request for war funds—above and beyond the even larger Pentagon budget—to a record high of almost \$190 billion.

Members of the cast of "SiCKO"—Michael Moore's movie exposing the exploitative for-profit health care system—arrived on Sept. 28 to augment the demand for "Health care, not warfare."

Other events in the last three days of the Encampment included a meeting on the struggle of survivors for justice in the wake of Hurricane/Rita, and immigrant rights; a delegation that called on the acting Attorney General to free the Cuban Five; a health care vigil; a militant youth action with several targets; and a concert to demand an end to martial law in the Philippines. Rock the Rulers, the week-long concert series of the Encampment, brought cultural inspiration and resistance every night.

Mass march ties issues together

A preliminary report issued by the Troops Out Now Coalition states: "The march on Saturday, Sept. 29 was a departure in tone and make-up from many past anti-war demonstrations. It was a serious and highly successful effort to involve more community-based organizations and issues and to link the struggle against the war with the struggles against racism, oppression and economic injustice at home." A multinational crowd of some 10,000 to 15,000 included contingents from organized labor; lesbian, gay, bi and trans activists; Katrina survivors; International Concerned Family and Friends of Mumia Abu-Jamal; the Peoples Organization for Progress; Iraq Veterans Against the War; the Green Party of the U.S., BAYAN USA; and more.

The march route included stops to protest at the offices of FEMA, where Katrina survivors accused the agency of neglect; Immigration and Customs Enforcement, where protesters shouted "Melt ICE"

and "Stop the raids;" the Department of Social Services; and the Department of Education, where Code Pink, chanting "Books not bombs," covered up part of the "No child left behind" slogan to read "Every child left behind."

Speakers and performers at the rally all drew clear links between the war in Iraq and the war at home, including a labor delegation with Brenda Stokely of the Million Worker March Movement, Charles Jenkins and Larry Adams of the New York City Labor Against the War, and members of District Council 37; political prisoner Mumia Abu-Jamal, via a recorded greeting from death row; Malik Rahim, Common Ground Collective; Medea Benjamin, Code Pink; Bernadette Ellorin and Christine Hilo, BAYAN USA; Larry Hamm, People's Organization for Progress; and David Swanson, After Downing Street.

Also speaking were Ardeshir Ommani of the Stop the War On Iran Campaign and American Iranian Friendship Committee; Ignacio Meneses, National Network on Cuba; Walter Sinche, May 1st Immigrant Rights Coalition; Rosita Romero, Dominican Women's Development Center; Rev. Lennox Yearwood, Hip Hop Caucus; Adam Kokesh, Iraq Veterans Against the War; Ann Wright, retired U.S. Army veteran and 16-year diplomat who resigned in opposition to the Iraq war; Victor Toro, Chilean leader of MIR being threatened with deportation; Debra Sweet of World Can't Wait; and Teresita Jacinto Oliva of Mexicanos Sin Fronteras.

Continuing the short, punchy talks were Jared Ball, and Sara "Echo" Steiner, Green Party members; Charlotte Kates of Al-Awda New York, the Palestine Right to Return Coalition; Pam Africa, International Concerned Family and Friends of Mumia Abu-Jamal; political prisoner Leonard Peltier, via a statement; Sonia Umanzon of the FMLN (Faribundo Martí National Liberation Front); Katrina survivors Ivey Parker and Christine Gavin-Lathan; Mohammad Awdallah, U.S. Popular Palestine Conference Network; Ricardo Prado of the Colombian political party Democratic Pole; Tyneisha Bowns of



WW PHOTO: G. DUNKEL

Labor contingent, Sept. 29.

FIST—Fight Imperialism, Stand Together; Larry Holmes, Teresa Gutierrez and Sara Flounders for TONC and the International Action Center; Omowale Clay, December 12 Movement and Friends of Zimbabwe; and Milton St. Germaine, New England Human Rights Organization for Haiti.

Independent media part of movement

While the capitalist media practically boycotted the marches on Sept. 29 and provided limited coverage of the Encampments, independent media was there in force to convey the event's message to the world. In Your Face radio broadcast daily interviews from the Encampment throughout the week. Pacifica's KPDK radio was the media sponsor for the Los Angeles march and Encampment.

An enthusiastic report on the march in Washington, D.C., can be heard on the local Indymedia affiliate (dc.indymedia.org/newswire/display/141002/). The commentator states: "On the 29th of September, the campaign against the war in occupied Iraq once again took to the streets ... demanding an end not only to the war in occupied Iraq, but the global war on the poor, as fought in New Orleans, fought in Jena, fought on the Mexican border. This was a surprisingly militant march that tied the different aspects of

George Bush's crimes together.

"Apparently Troops Out Now understands that this is not just about Iraq; the same regime that wages war on the people of Iraq is also the regime that sponsors gentrification in our cities and the wholesale incarceration of African-American youth, the vicious fascist crackdown on Latin@ immigrants, and so many other evils. ... All this noise can certainly be heard in Central Cell Block where prisoners are being held."

The report quoted Larry Adams, who expressed "solidarity with the historic Iraqi resistance, who are on the frontlines of the fight against our common enemy, which is U.S. imperialism."

Describing the youth action that took place at the end of the rally—which blocked the streets in front of the Capitol until 10 p.m. that night—the reporter concluded: "You can think of the long occupation of Pennsylvania and Constitution Avenues as target practice for things that are surely going to come as people get more and more pissed off about this war that is one war from occupied Iraq, to occupied New Orleans, from occupied Palestine to Jena, to the neighborhoods right here in occupied Washington. ... George Bush says 'Bring it on'; well that's exactly what we're gonna do!" □

How the Troops Out Now rally rocked!



Larry Holmes, Dani Gale, Nana Soul and Pam Parker at D.C. Sept. 29 rally.



Encampment organizers Imani Henry and Nana Soul, far left; U-Savior and Sharon Eolis, below.

WW PHOTOS: DUSTIN LANGLEY AND LIZ GREEN

By U-Savior and Nana Soul

If polls showed the average person saying that the traditional protest—complete with marches, placards, chants and permits—no longer has a potent effect on an apathetic government and that bureaucrats simply bide their time until the rabid moon bats that have descended upon their provinces return to the trailer parks, projects, flooded wards and mortar-ravaged ghettos that they came from, most activists would be hard pressed to prove them wrong.

But on Sept. 22, something magical began to happen.

The Troops Out Now Coalition began a weeklong Encampment in front of the reflecting pool at the Capitol building. In contrast to the one it held last March, the Encampment would be infused with music. Unlike every other demonstration that took place this year, culture would not simply be a careless afterthought, but rather would provide the fuel needed to draw thousands of people to the demonstration.

Each day, activists spread through the neighborhood, engaging the community, and each night the Encampment grounds sprouted more tents and music filled the

hearts of everyone who heard it.

From punk rock to poetry to hip hop, the Troops Out Now Coalition rocked the rulers—hence the name of the weeklong concert, reminiscent of Woodstock minus the psychedelic mushrooms (in most cases).

On Sept. 29, a rally featuring dozens of speakers from across the world addressed several issues, including the right to return for Palestinians and Katrina survivors alike, freedom for political prisoners, the need for health care, housing, better education, an end to the war in Iraq and a halt of plans of impending conquest in Iran, women's rights, police brutality and more.

Punctuated by live music performances, the gathering alternated between lulling people and firing them up. By 2 p.m. thousands were ready to march on Washington. But the people didn't walk alone. Thanks to a sound truck that cranked out not only chants and slogans, but anti war anthems like "War" by Edwin Starr and "I'm Black and I'm Proud" by James Brown, marchers couldn't help but dance their way down the route.

What resulted was a parade with fire, an energetic display of dissent and culture that had people who observed it hanging

Continued on page 8

Youth and students cut artery to Capitol

By Peter Gilbert
Washington, D.C.

For more than six hours following the Troops Out Now Coalition's march on Sept. 29 to cut off the funds for the Iraq and Afghanistan wars, more than 100 youth and students from across the country blockaded Constitution and Pennsylvania avenues, the major roads leading to the Capitol building. They demanded an end to war funding and vowed that if the people's resources continue to be used to wage imperialist war, the government will be prevented from operating.

Youth from as far away as Oregon, Florida and Vermont, and representing chapters of Students for a Democratic Society (SDS), Fight Imperialism, Stand Together (FIST), Campus Anti-War Network (CAN), Iraq Veterans Against the War (IVAW) and others, together with TONC leaders, united in the streets around a common demand of "Troops Out Now!"

As the march approached its destination at the Capitol building, hundreds of youth ran forward to block Constitution Avenue, and as the main body of the march passed the action many more joined in. Despite the willingness of many of the youth to risk arrest in order to close access to the Capitol, D.C. police were apparently overwhelmed by the size and militancy of the action.



Protesters occupy the intersection on Constitution and Pennsylvania Avenues

WW PHOTO: PETER GILBERT

On Friday afternoon, in another display of student power, the same youth had taken over the busy D.C. streets in an unpermitted march to unmask the hypocrisy of the government and point out the effects the war has had even on

After holding Constitution for an hour, the youth moved one block to take over the busier intersection where Constitution and Pennsylvania avenues meet. All six lanes of Constitution were blockaded so successfully that youth felt free to dance, string up banners and signs from the traffic lights, and even order pizza.

After several hours it became clear that the police did not have the political will to take back the streets, so youth erected tents and organized themselves into security and logistical teams, preparing for a long stay. Around 10 p.m., after more than six hours, all the activists triumphantly marched back to the Encampment, chanting "Whose streets? Our streets" with a whole new meaning.

youth at home in the U.S.

Marching first on the Department of Education, they blocked the entrances which ironically proclaim "No child left behind," and demanded money for adequate education and college loans, rather than the current policy of increasing education costs to force youth into the military.

At the Department of Injustice, Tyneisha Bowens of Raleigh FIST proclaimed the closing of the building, demanding "Free the Cuban Five! Free the Jena Six! Free Mumia Abu-Jamal! Free all political prisoners! No longer will we allow this government to criminalize the resistance. We must have a People's Department of Justice to bring justice to the war crimi-

nals in government."

Friday's youth march went next to the local military recruiting station, blocking traffic the whole way, where students blocked the streets, poured into the recruiting station, and used the military's printed lies as confetti. After successfully closing the recruiting station, and announcing the need to instead recruit more youth to the movement, the young revolutionaries turned their attention to the Capitol itself. Arriving at the Capitol with a tail of at least 15 police cars of various departments, the youth made their final stand on the Capitol lawn and tied all their grievances together at the seat of this government.

Both actions reflected a progression from earlier tactics in the youth movement, a move from protest to resistance. In addition to marching and vocalizing their demands, youth showed their ability to actually occupy the oppressive institutions. Due to their high level of discipline, organization and unity, all of the activists were uninjured and avoided arrest, even though they were willing to face these consequences if necessary.

As Bowens summarized, "This was more than a symbolic action of civil disobedience. We actually showed our ability to occupy territory and make it serve our needs, not to oppress us."

Gilbert is an organizer with Raleigh FIST.

Katrina survivors speak out

By Ellen Catalinotto
Washington, D.C.

As part of the weeklong Encampment in front of the Capitol building, a lively political discussion on the current situation for Katrina and Rita survivors as well as immigrant workers in New Orleans and the Gulf Coast took place Sept. 27.

The meeting was organized by the Troops Out Now Coalition.

The meeting took place in a large tent and featured Katrina survivors Ivey Parker and Christine Gavin-Lathan, Brenda Stokely from the New York Solidarity Committee for Katrina/Rita Survivors, and Teresa Gutierrez from the May 1st Immigrant Rights Coalition. Monica Moorehead from the International Action Center chaired the meeting. A video, "Welcome to New Orleans" directed by Rasmus Helm, was shown. Filmed in New Orleans in 2005, days after Hurricane Katrina, the film showed Malik Rahim, co-founder of the New Orleans-based Common Ground Collective, help-



Ivey Parker, Christine Gavin-Lathan and Brenda Stokely of the New York Solidarity Committee for Katrina/Rita Survivors.

WW PHOTO: DEIRDRE GRISWOLD

The need for Black/Brown unity

Brenda Stokely remarked that much of the money that was earmarked for Gulf Coast reconstruction has been diverted into gambling casinos.

The lower Ninth Ward, where Black people had lived in their own homes for generations, now looks like a big empty field. While Bush plans to bulldoze public housing in New Orleans, any new buildings that go up cannot be constructed with equal quality. Public housing tenants are organizing to save their homes.

Stokely said that mental health facilities are virtually nonexistent in New Orleans. There are an estimated 122 psychiatric beds left in the whole city.

Teresa Gutierrez spoke on her humanitarian trip to New Orleans with activist Johnnie Stevens right after Hurricane Katrina, in August 2005. They were unable to deliver water and other supplies to people in New Orleans because the area was militarily occupied. The police turned them away.

In Houston they saw many broken-down cars on the road and refugees from the storm searching for loved ones. But on May 1, 2006, a million people marched for immigrant rights.

Gutierrez stated, "Black and Brown must work together. Let's raise Katrina at every immigrant rights event and immigrant rights at every Katrina event. These struggles and the anti-war struggle must be linked. The Sept. 29 demo welcomes Katrina survivors and immigrants."

Kali Akuno, a leader of the People's Hurricane Relief Fund in New Orleans, attended this meeting and made remarks. □

ing to organize relief and medical care for the survivors and talking of his history in the Black Panther Party, of being in prison and of organizing ex-offenders.

The documentary also shows racist white vigilantes, including a firefighter, brandishing their weapons and using catch phrases such as "We shot 'em" and "In this neighborhood we take care of our own" in reference to targeting mainly Black men.

Injustice in Louisiana

Parker, a native of New Orleans now living in New York, spoke on how she had to wait three months for a doctor's appointment. Charity, a public hospital, was closed down although it was not physically damaged by the hurricane. Parker mentioned how private hospitals are too expensive for the poor, who have no resources to deal with depression—now rampant there.

Parker commented, "The federal government wants to tear down the projects. Projects need pools, recreation areas, not to be torn down. People who own homes get just a fraction of the money needed for repairs. Rents have gone up. The 'Road Home' program is a failure."

Christine Gavin-Lathan of Gulfport, Miss., who also resides in New York now, attended the International Tribunal on Katrina and Rita in New Orleans in August. People came from all over the world to serve as judges and to hear testimony of people impacted by the disasters. She pointed out how unionized teachers in New Orleans were replaced with inexperienced, often unlicensed teachers for charter schools. Lathan said that there should be attention focused on the devastation that still affects Mississippi.



WW PHOTO: DEIRDRE GRISWOLD

Activists build unity

Continued from page 1

march and rally on the 29th.

Each day and evening at these very visible encampments informative workshops, discussions and anti-war films focused on how to build a movement to stop U.S. imperialist aggression around the world. Although there were different views on how to make that happen, everyone learned from each other and drew strength and optimism from the unity that was built with individuals and organizations that hadn't worked so closely together before.

Organizations led workshops that included the history of struggles in the Philippines by BAYAN USA and in El Salvador by the FMLN. Life in present-day Cuba and the struggle to free the Cuban Five was presented by FIST (Fight Imperialism, Stand Together) along with the Coalition in Solidarity with Cuba and the American Friends Service Committee.

U.S. Labor Against the War organized a discussion on the trade union movement. The Garment Workers Center led a discussion on labor rights and immigration. A very exciting multimedia presentation was done by members of the March 25th Coalition, Students for a Democratic Society and Latinos Against the War on Venezuela and Colombia that included the immigrant rights struggle. Workers World Party held a teach-in on building unity to stop the war, using the book "Bolsheviks and War" by Sam Marcy.



WW PHOTO: JULIA LA RIVA

John Parker talks with Ron Kovic

Presenters at the Encampment included Ron Kovic, author of "Born on the Fourth of July"; Eisha Mason of AFSC; Namibia Donadio of FIST; Don Bustany of Pacifica Radio's Middle East in Focus; Carol Frances Likins of the Coalition in Solidarity with Cuba; Andy Griggs and Tom McKenzie of USLAW; Carlos Montes of Latinos Against the War; Martha Rojas of the March 25th Coalition; Eric Gardner of SDS and the Freedom Road Socialist Organization; Berny Motto of the FMLN; Mazen Almoukdad, member of Al-Awda; Terrie Cervas, Bev Tang and Apollo Victoria of BAYAN USA; and Larry Hales of Workers World Party and FIST.

One of the most powerful and moving films shown at the Encampment was "Occupation 101," exposing the horrific nature of the illegal Israeli occupation of Palestine.

At the demonstration on the 29th, Palestine was a prominent focus. Mahmud Ahmad, representing Al-Awda Los Angeles, was one of the first speakers at the main rally who made the connection between



L.A.

L.A. Sept. 29 March.

WW PHOTO: CHERYL LABASH

U.S. wars of aggression and their unbreakable link to the struggle in Palestine.

Although some in the anti-war movement advocate dropping all other issues, which has minimized participation of those affected by such issues, the TONC demonstrations in both Washington and L.A. included not only the struggle for Palestine but the fight against racism. The large lead banners in the demonstration in L.A. said: "Cut all war funding for Iraq and Afghanistan—No war on Iran" next to "Stop the war—No war on immigrants—Fight racism—Free the Jena 6."

Those slogans were reflected in the makeup of the very militant demonstration, which included many more people of color with more official union participation than previous anti-war protests. In fact, SEIU's banner was moved up alongside the lead banners. UNITE HERE and USLAW also had official delegations on the march.

Speakers at the main rally included actor Mimi Kennedy; Fernando Suárez del Solar of Military Families Speak Out; Hamid Kahn of South Asian Network;

Omar Jubran of CAIR; Jasimen Syler of United Liberation Army; Cheryl LaBash of U.S./Cuba Labor Exchange; Andy Griggs of USLAW; Deanna Taylor, national co-chair Peace Action Committee—Green Party USA; Gloria Verdieu of San Diego International Action Center; Eric Gardner of UCLA SDS; Carlos Montes of Latinos Against the War; Hwa Young Lee of Korea Truth Commission; and Terrie Cervas of BAYAN USA, who gave a rousing speech about the significance of the week's events.

Jasimen Syler had organized a large rally of college and high school Black youth for the Jena 6 in Los Angeles on Sept. 20.

The main rally was co-chaired by Namibia Donadio of FIST and Berny Motto of FMLN.

The entire week from Sept. 22 to 29 proved to be a very unifying experience for the movement for social justice and against war. TONC organizers here are anxious to begin work on the grassroots level around all the issues that affect the working class in this country, like housing, health care, and the fight against racism and repression. □

Vigil calls for universal health care

By Ellen Catalinotto
Washington, D.C.

A vigil in memory of those who have died due to denial of health care was held on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial at sunset on Sept. 28. Vigils were also held in Chicago, Kansas City, Mo., and Louisville, Ky.

Members of the cast of Michael Moore's movie "SiCKO" organized the vigils as part of a campaign for universal, single-payer health care. Donna Smith opened the one in D.C., calling for just and compassionate health care for all as part of the vision of

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., who spoke from the same steps to denounce racism many years ago.

Naming some of the people whose stories were featured in the film, Smith said, "We grieve for Tracey Pierce, who died not from kidney cancer but from inhumanity" when treatment was denied. She also told of Mychelle Keyes, a baby denied care by an "out of network" emergency room and whose mother was escorted out while begging for someone to see her 18-month-old daughter.

Adrian Campbell, who went to Canada seeking care denied by her health insurance company in the U.S., said she hoped that her father, a recently retired member of the Auto Workers union, whose contract has been under assault by General Motors, would not find himself plagued by health bills. She called for passage of HR 676, known as Medicare For All, which has been introduced in the House of Representatives by Rep. John Conyers of Michigan.

A disabled 9/11 first responder, John Graham, pointed out that 50,000 rescuers have lost their health care benefits after they became too sick to work, and that every year 18,000 people die for lack of health care.

Julie Pierce was a nurse at Catholic Medical Center where her husband Tracey was denied many treatments for kidney cancer—even morphine when



WW PHOTO: DEIRDRE GRISWOLD

SiCKO cast members carry health care banner Sept. 29.

he was in a coma. She thanked Michael Moore for showing the truth in "SiCKO" and the California Nurses Association for supporting the vigil. Pierce urged people to stand up and fight for universal coverage.

A representative of the CNA pointed out that under Medicare, administrative costs are only 3 percent, compared to 30 percent in private insurance plans—part of the reason health care is so expensive in this country.

Smith denounced the proposals for mandatory health insurance being offered by the leading Democratic presidential candidates because they benefit the insurance companies but not the patients. Expressing her horror at the

lack of care for people after Hurricane Katrina, she introduced Ivey Parker, a New Orleans resident now organizing survivors fighting for their rights. Parker took President George W. Bush to task for his speech insulting Cuba at the U.N. just days before. "Cuba has free health care, free education. ... He has a nerve to talk about Cuba being cruel to its people when mothers with sick babies are turned away from hospitals" right here, she said.

People from the Encampment at the Capitol took part in the vigil with signs reading "Health care, not warfare." The next day, the "SiCKO" forces participated in the Troops Out Now Coalition's rally and march to end the war at home and abroad. □



WW PHOTO: LIZ GREEN

Carlos Arredondo holds photo of his son, Alexander, killed in Iraq.

Anti-imperialist keynotes Ariz. LGBT event

Special to Workers World
Tucson, Ariz.

"Unlike the president of the United States," Leslie Feinberg reminded an audience of more than 1,000 in Tucson on Sept. 28, "the president of Iran was elected by a majority vote."

Feinberg, whose series "Lavender and Red" appears in Workers World newspaper, keynoted this year's annual event for Wingspan—Southern Arizona's Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Community Center. The event at the Tucson Convention Center was sold out.

Feinberg called the hateful hoopla around Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad "a political ambush." She said, "The media frenzy around the Iranian president's talk at Columbia University coincides with what are openly discussed plans by the Pentagon to unleash war against Iran. This pro-war propaganda," she stressed, "is aimed at diverting the lesbian, gay, bi and trans movement, and other progressive movements, against

Iran and in doing so, disarm anti-war opposition."

She explained, "The Iranian people know painfully well what imperialist 'regime change' means for their country. They recall the nightmare of terror and torture that the U.S. and Britain imposed when they installed a king—the Shah of Iran."

Rebutting Washington's pretexts for wars of aggression, Feinberg stated, "The Pentagon is no vehicle for women's or sexual liberation. It has in fact incorporated anti-woman, anti-homosexual and anti-trans humiliation and rape into its science of torture, from Abu-Ghraid to Guantanamo."

She called for an end to Washington's covert war against Cuba and freedom for the Cuban 5.

Feinberg emphasized that the strength and dynamism of the LGBT movement in the U.S. can be measured by its independence from its own ruling class.

Feinberg's message, including "No war against Iran!" was applauded by many in



PHOTO: SARA BALBUENA

Leslie Feinberg (right) at Wingspan

the audience, but not all. The gala event, attended by many activists of all ages and nationalities, also included corporate sponsors, state and local politicians, and police.

She called for solidarity against police brutality, "from the Jena battle against apartheid injustice, to the Jersey Four—young Black lesbians facing long years in prison for defending themselves against a street attack in Greenwich Village—to the Sylvia Rivera Law Project activists groundlessly brutalized and arrested by police this week outside a fundraising event." Feinberg also called for defense of

political prisoners Mumia Abu-Jamal and Leonard Peltier.

Pockets of grumbling were audible when Feinberg stated that Tucson is on part of the vast lands that the U.S. stole from Mexico. She lauded Wingspan for its solidarity with the May 1 immigrant rights movement. She called for "Spirit of Stonewall" contingents in upcoming immigrant rights marches across the U.S.

"We need street heat," she concluded. "As the economic situation worsens for so many workers and oppressed peoples, class struggles will break out. Our movement needs to be in the streets wherever and whenever people are repressed and oppressed. That's the spirit of Stonewall."

Feinberg told Workers World, "I handed out sign-up sheets for Rainbow Solidarity for the Cuban 5. By the time I got to the door, 50 people had filled theirs out and pressed them into my hands, including renowned Latin@ lesbian comedian Marga Gomez, who was the emcee of the event." □

DAVE CLINE Organizer of anti-war veterans

By Michael Kramer

"They had a GI coffeehouse at Fort Hood, a place called the Oleo Strut. ... The GI movement started at Fort Hood—the Fort Hood Three, three years before I got there, guys who refused to go to Vietnam. That began to plant the seed. The soil was fertile because the reality was that the government was lying to us. Most people are decent people. They don't want to go kill people and engage in brutality.... I went down there and got involved in publishing an underground newspaper called the Fatigue Press. We were putting out literature against the war and against the military and for GI rights and against racism."

— Dave Cline on organizing inside the U.S. Army, from the book "Winter Soldier: An Oral History of the Vietnam Veterans Against the War"

Dave Cline, an anti-war soldier and military veteran activist, trade unionist and anti-racist, died at his Jersey City home on Sept. 15—another hidden casualty of the Vietnam War. He had been quite ill for the last few months but continued to orga-

nize for veterans' rights, against the Iraq War and on behalf of Vietnamese victims of Agent Orange up until his death.

Dave grew up in a working class family in Buffalo, N.Y., and was drafted into the U.S. Army in 1967. Later that year, while serving with the 25th Infantry Division, he was wounded in a kill-or-be-killed situation near the Cambodian border and became permanently disabled. The incident affected him politically, physically and emotionally every day for the rest of his life.

In 1968 while on convalescent leave at home, Dave got involved with the Buffalo Draft Resistance Union and began speaking out publicly against the war. His political activism took off from there.

He helped run the Oleo Strut GI coffee house in Killeen, Texas, outside Fort Hood, which is still today a U.S. Army megabase. In 1970 he joined Vietnam Veterans Against the War (VVAW) and became one of its early leaders. In the 1980s he helped resurrect the organization.

In the 1970s he worked at the Jersey City bulk mail facility of the U.S. Postal

Service. Cline led a number of wildcat strikes as an elected shop steward of the New York Metro Local of the American Postal Workers Union, which led to his being fired. He also led co-workers in a militant confrontation with a racist

Klan-type organization that was terrorizing people of color in Jersey City.

In the 1980s Dave was a vice president of Transportation Workers Union Local 600 while employed by the New York-New Jersey Port Authority.

He was president of Veterans for Peace when 9/11 happened and worked tirelessly against the wars and occupations of Iraq and Afghanistan that followed. He always pushed hard for diversity in the organization, especially encouraging African-American membership and leadership. Cline met with veterans of the current wars and assisted and encouraged them in their formation of Iraq Veterans



Against the War.

In 2003 he led a delegation of military veterans to the island of Vieques, Puerto Rico, supporting the local struggle in actions that resulted in the U.S. Navy closing down its bombing range there.

In 2006 he traveled to Vietnam and took

part in the historic International Agent Orange Conference. When a delegation of Vietnamese Agent Orange victims toured the U.S. earlier this year as part of a legal campaign for reparations, Cline gave his Purple Heart medal to one of the delegation's members during a public meeting in New York City.

He was motivated by the struggle for peace and justice. He will be missed by all who worked with him, as evidenced by the overflow crowd that attended his funeral.

Michael Kramer is a member of Veterans For Peace, Chapter 021, in Jersey City.

How the Troops Out Now rally rocked!

Continued from page 5

from their windows waving and cheering and passing cars blaring horns in solidarity. In the front holding the lead banner were elders, youth, whites, Blacks, Latin@s, women and men. On the sidelines women went shirtless, hefting signs

that said "Breasts Not Bombs!" When the throng snaked its way around a construction site, labor activists immediately began to flier and converse with the workers. And when those in front made a turn and caught sight of the tail end of the march, complete with a bus proclaiming "Iraq

Veterans Against the War," they were sent into a triumphant frenzy. The sound was deafening, empowering and mighty.

But none of this would compare to the moment when the march reached an underpass close to Third Street and Constitution Avenue. Taking advantage of

the natural echo, the protestors began to bellow, letting loose all the rage and frustration against the inept and corrupt U.S. government. They mourned dead soldiers, Iraqi civilians and victims of police brutality and FEMA. They celebrated their own

Continued on next page



BAYAN USA says, 'Stop U.S. military aid to death squads.'

Senate proposal: another bad plan

By John Catalinotto

During the last four-and-a-half years the U.S. occupation has murdered a million Iraqi people and destroyed Iraqi social life, producing a humanitarian crisis that in a just world would have already earned the Bush gang a conviction for war crimes.

Now, with the Pentagon on the brink of defeat, the U.S. Senate is offering its own bad idea for a U.S. "victory." Instead of cutting off war funds or even setting a timetable for withdrawal, the Senate had the unbounded arrogance to propose that Iraq be divided into three parts—Shiite, Sunni and Kurd—with an umbrella federal government in Baghdad. Sen. Joseph Biden, a Democrat from Delaware, has been pushing this partition of Iraq since late 2003, when it became apparent that the Iraqi occupation would not be cheap, clean or easy. On Sept. 26 the measure passed 75-23.

Partition has always been a weapon in the imperialist arsenal. All the actions of the occupation have provoked differences among those in the population who identify as Shiite or Sunni, causing much death and suffering, while also encouraging the separation of the Kurdish region.

In the Balkans, partition was a central feature of the NATO strategy to recolonize Yugoslavia. Some senators said they based their support for Biden's Iraq proposal on the Bosnia experience. The NATO strategy, backed by a U.S. air war, turned the former socialist Yugoslavia into half a dozen semicolonial ministates.

The U.S. occupation of Iraq, on the other hand, has been an unmitigated disaster for the U.S., as well as inflicting misery on the Iraqis. Ever since the Iraqi resistance first sprang up in the summer of 2003 and started creating a quagmire

for U.S. troops, Biden and others have pushed their program for the division of the country.

Until recently this idea of division had received little public support in the U.S. imperialist establishment. There is no doubt, however, that now many look to division or partition as a way out of the quagmire. But judging by the first public reactions out of Iraq, there is no grouping, party or political leaders, with the possible exception of some of the Kurdish parties and the Supreme Islamic Iraqi Council, who will openly support it.

Even the U.S. Embassy there had to criticize the Senate. Also, the U.S.-installed puppet regime led by Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki attacked the plan. Moqtada al-Sadr, the head of the Shiite-based Mahdi Army, which is part of the puppet government but which also has clashes with

the occupation, has also denounced it, as has Grand Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani. All the Sunni-based parties that participate in the puppet government are also against it.

Whether one takes these groups at their word or not, their opposition means they know the mass of the Iraqi people insist on remaining in a single country. And they vehemently oppose any scheme or plan imposed on them by a hated U.S. occupation force.

For varied reasons, the governments of Iraq's neighboring states of Turkey, Iran and Saudi Arabia have also denounced the U.S. Senate's plan.

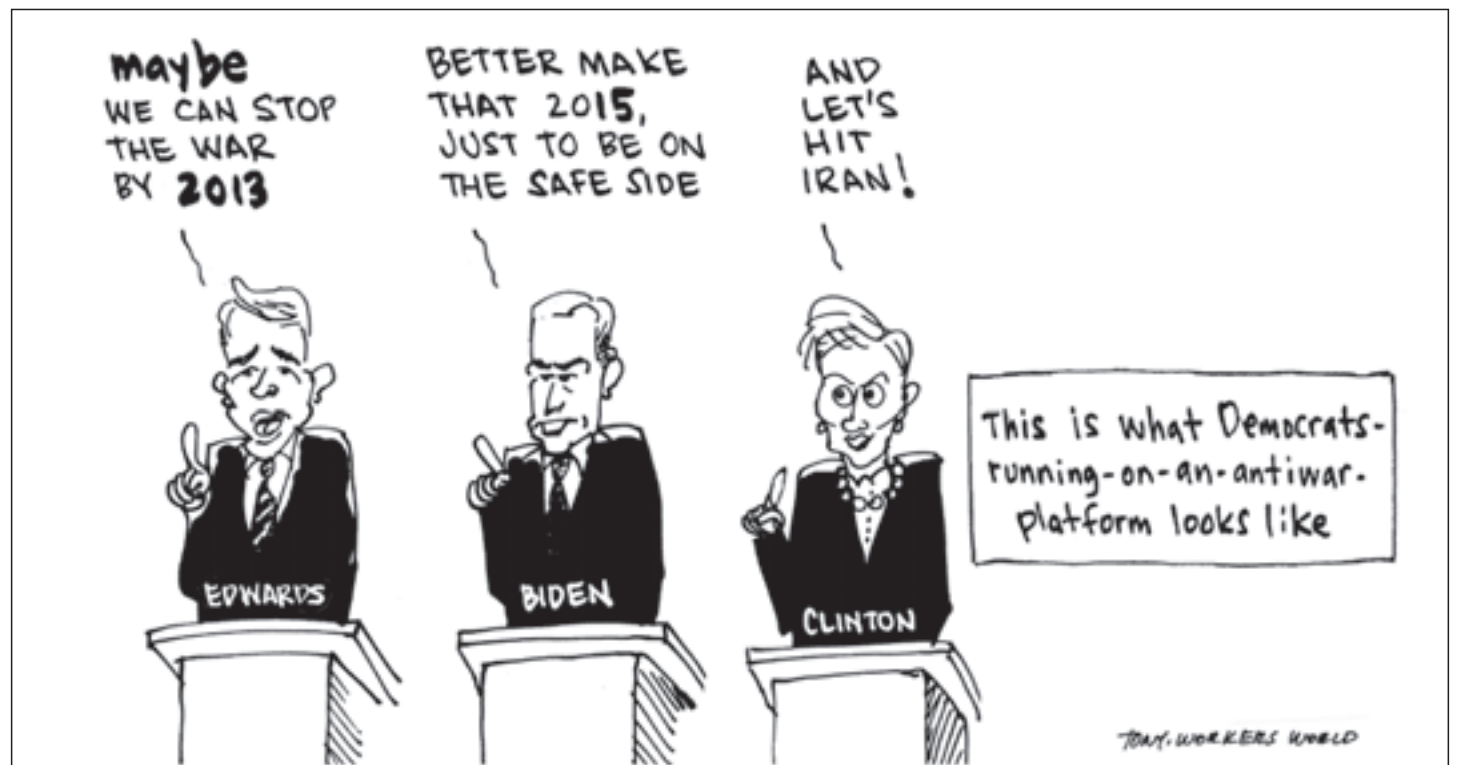
What is more important than the reaction of the neighboring states and of these forces allied with the puppet regime is the reaction of the Iraqi resistance. A hint of this comes from the Sunni Association of

Muslim Scholars, which opposes the U.S. occupation. It condemned the U.S. Senate plan, saying that anyone who backed it would be "a traitor of the nation and faith."

There is no doubt that the Iraqi Ba'ath Party, the Iraqi Patriotic Alliance and the other organizations of the resistance, who have pinned down the Pentagon for the past 54 months, will refuse any "solution" imposed by the U.S. occupation forces, be it a puppet central government or a division of their country into three parts. And that is the most important reaction because, however long the struggle takes, Iraq's future belongs to the resistance, which is the only honest representative of the Iraqi people.

E-mail: jcat@workers.org

WWW
COMMENTARY



Sexual exploitation of Iraqi women

Another reason to bring the troops home

By Sue Davis

The U.S. government pretends to promote women's rights, especially in the Middle East, but the U.S. war and occupation of Iraq forced many women into prostitution within weeks of the U.S. invasion. Ever since, prostitution has spread like a ripple effect throughout the Middle East.

Continued from page 8

courage and the love with which they championed the people's rights.

Something spread through the crowd then, something that can never be explained. Whatever it was, it was beautiful and it called for action. And so, hundreds of youth tore away from the procession and commandeered a stretch of road and blocked city traffic claiming it in the name of Freedom for several hours. The more experienced activists responded by making sure they had food, water and legal representation.

Those who attended witnessed an important piece of history, where the gaps between the old and young were bridged, where all colors spoke in the same voice, danced to the same rhythms and carried the same banner.

Black Power! Revolution, then peace!
Power to the people!

The writers are artists and activists with Black Waxx Recordings.

"The rebirth of prostitution has generated fear that permeates all of Iraqi society," writes Debra McNutt in the essay "Privatizing Women: Military Prostitution and the Iraq Occupation," in Counterpunch. (July 11)

"Families keep their girls inside, not only to keep them from being assaulted or killed, but to prevent them from being kidnapped by organized prostitution rings. Gangs are also forcing some families to sell their children into sex slavery.

"The war has created an enormous number of homeless girls and boys who are most vulnerable to the sex trade. It has also created thousands of refugee women who try to escape danger but end up (out of economic desperation) being prostituted in Jordan, Syria, Yemen or the UAE.

"Brothels in Baghdad's Green Zone, disguised as a woman's shelter, hairdresser and Chinese restaurant, had to be closed after they were exposed by the media."

But, McNutt points out, "The prostitution rings keep their tracks very well hidden, and it is not in the interest of the military or its private contractors to reveal any information that may damage the war effort."

Independent journalist David Phinney has documented how a Kuwaiti contract company that imported workers to build the U.S. Embassy compound in Baghdad's Green Zone—where they were terribly exploited—also smuggled women into the construction site.

McNutt suspects that 180,000 private

contractors, who now outnumber U.S. troops by 20,000 and who are not subject to military law, are promoting prostitution of local women or importing women under the guise of cooks, maids or office workers.

The best-known case of private contractors engaging in military prostitution was when DynCorp employees were caught trafficking women in Bosnia in the 1990s.

Postings by private contractors on sex websites indicate that prostitution exists around U.S. military bases in Iraq, though it's increasingly dangerous for Westerners to leave military bases on their own.

"Contractors are now advising each other to do their 'R & R' in the safer northern Kurdish region, or the bars and hotels of Dubai, the UAE emirate that has become the most open center of prostitution in the Persian Gulf. Meanwhile prostitution rings in Iraq have to go deeper underground to hide from Iraqi militias," reports McNutt.

Another casualty of the U.S. occupation not much in the news is that women GIs—one out of 10 U.S. soldiers in Iraq—are reporting rapes and sexual harassment in unprecedented numbers.

Sara Corbett wrote in a March 18 New York Times Magazine article headlined "The Women's War" that a report financed by the Defense Department showed "nearly a third of a nationwide sample of female veterans seeking health care through the VA said they experienced rape or attempted rape during the service."

Of those, 37 percent said they were raped multiple times, while 14 percent said they were gang raped.

'End the occupation!'

Military prostitution has a long history. Perhaps the most infamous case occurred during World War II when the Japanese military forced 100,000 to 200,000 Korean women to "service" their soldiers.

These "comfort women," now in their eighties, are still demanding reparations for sexual enslavement.

Those who oppose U.S. military bases in the Philippines, South Korea and Thailand have long drawn attention to brothels clustered around bases in those countries. The nonprofit group Prostitution Research and Education estimates 400,000 prostitutes worked in Thailand in 1974 when GIs went there from Vietnam on furlough.

The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime estimated in 2006 that more than 2 million people are trafficked in the global sex trade, though it noted the number could be as high as 10 million.

The U.S. military has never admitted its role in promoting prostitution in this or any other war. But sooner or later, the Pentagon must be held accountable for this severe violation of women's rights.

McNutt concludes that it is the responsibility of those in the United States "to stop our military's abuses of women by ending the occupation." □



Defend longshore workers!

Sometimes the news about a struggle is so distorted or the struggle so complicated that it's hard to know what is happening. Other times you don't need much information to know which side to take.

That's the case in the brutal and gratuitous assault by cops in the Port of Sacramento, Calif., against two longshore workers, members of ILWU Local 10, last Aug. 23. Using the lame excuse of "port security," these cops first harassed and then attacked workers who had all the ID necessary for their presence at the port. In short, it was a cop attempt to apply the rules of Abu-Ghraib and Guantanamo to the U.S.'s western ports.

Fortunately, the Local 10 leadership isn't leaving this attack unanswered, nor is it relying on court legality alone to protect and defend the two union brothers,

Aaron Harrison and Jason Ruffin. Local 10 is organizing a protest rally for Oct. 4 at the Yolo County Superior Court, at 213 Third St., Woodland, Calif., to make sure that all charges are dropped against its two members.

This local union has been an example of progressive unionism for the entire U.S. working class, and has carried out important struggles showing international solidarity—helping to bring down the apartheid regime in South Africa, protesting the war against Iraq, fighting racism inside the United States. Anyone in solidarity with these issues should find a way to show solidarity with Local 10 on Oct. 4.

As the union wrote in its statement announcing the demonstration, "This is our Jena—be there." Anyone who can should be there with them. □

Pakistan and Myanmar

In its crisis, the military regime in Myanmar appears to have no popular support. Nevertheless, there are warning signs in the corporate media's handling of the reporting about Myanmar—a country the former colonial power, Britain, still calls Burma—that should put any progressive and anti-imperialist person on guard.

It is enlightening to compare the media treatment of the generals running Myanmar with that of the generals running Pakistan, a U.S. client state. Both these regimes have taken bloody action against opposition religious figures, but without the same response in the Western corporate media.

Pakistan's shaky president, Gen. Pervez Musharraf, like the military grouping in Myanmar, faces both lay and religious opponents. Like them, he ordered troops to fire on religious figures in rebellion. On July 10, he launched a bloody military attack on a mosque in the center of the city of Islamabad. There is no doubt that Musharraf is a dictator ready to use naked force if he thinks it will keep him in power.

The reaction of the corporate media to Musharraf was, if not sympathetic, at least understanding. Here is a recent Reuter report in a chronology: "After a week-long siege, Musharraf orders troops to storm the Red Mosque in Islamabad to crush a Taliban-style movement. At least 105 people are killed." This was typical, to characterize the victims as similar to the Taliban—in other words, as Islamic fundamentalist extremists, and thus

unworthy of sympathy. No photos or film appeared in the media of the tanks and soldiers shooting people down.

Newsday takes a different bent on Myanmar: "But the military junta in Myanmar, also known as Burma, seems to know only one way to resolve this crisis: brutal, bloody force."

This approach was typical of the corporate media throughout North America, Western Europe and Australia. Scenes of Buddhist monks being fired on dominated the coverage. The media hurl the heaviest invective at the Myanmar generals and anyone who might support them. They treat the civilian opposition, especially those forces with close connections and support from the imperialist countries, as popular heroes, as they do Buddhist monks.

Our message is: Watch out. Such coverage is aimed at justifying imperialist intervention. In Pakistan, which borders Iran and Afghanistan, that could mean military intervention if the mass struggle there threatens to remove the generals now under U.S. control.

U.S. or British imperialism, or for that matter any of the NATO allies or Australia or Japan, never intervene with money and/or arms in order to aid a struggle for freedom or independence. If these imperialist forces are involved, you can be sure there are resources at stake or geostrategic interests in play.

As for Myanmar, however the struggle of the people of that Southeast Asian country plays out, U.S. and NATO imperialists have no right to intervene. □



PHOTO: AL-MASRY AL-YOUM

Egyptian textile workers win strike

By G. Dunkel

Some 27,000 textile workers in Egypt won a resounding victory on Sept. 29, following a one-week strike at El Misr Spinning and Weaving Factory in Mahalla el-Kobra, an industrial city in the Nile Delta north of Cairo.

The workers occupied the plant and set up their own security.

Following this action, the company and the state-run union agreed to give the workers an immediate bonus equivalent to 90-days' pay; workers' days on strike will be treated as paid vacation days; the corrupt and wasteful company president will be fired; there will be an annual 7-percent increase in pay, and the Ministry of Investment will set up a commission to study granting an additional 40-day bonus.

The workers were extremely militant and had prepared for a long fight. Video clips show Mahalla workers chanting, "We will not be ruled by the World Bank! We will not be ruled by colonialism!" Sayyid Habib, a veteran union leader, told the Voice of America on Sept. 28, "We are challenging the regime."

According to Joel Beinin, director of Middle East Studies at the American University in Cairo, the textile workers' challenge to the economic policies of the regime drew widespread support from the people of Mahalla, other textile workers in the area, railroad workers, and teachers and other intellectuals.

The World Bank on Sept. 26 ranked Egypt as the most improved investment economy in the world, just a few days after U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice dined in New York with Egypt's foreign minister. Washington has criticized the civil rights record of Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak's regime in words, but

considers Egypt its main ally in the Middle East outside of Israel.

There have been more than 200 major strikes in Egypt since 2004. The day the Mahalla workers went back to their jobs, hundreds of workers from the Tanta Linseed and Oils Co. in the same province as El Misr Spinning went out over very similar issues. The whip of inflation has lashed Egyptian workers hard. The official rate is 12 percent but many economists consider this half the real figure. The price of fresh vegetables, cultivated widely within Egypt, went up by 38 percent, which is a shock to people trying to feed their families.

In a news release, the Coordinating Committee of the Mahalla workers says international solidarity was one of the most important components of their victory.

The first solidarity letter came from the General Federation of Trade Unions of South Africa on Sept. 26, followed by one from the International Confederation of Arab Trade Unions, which criticized the role of the official state-controlled union in the struggle. Then the National Trade Union of Education Workers of South Africa, one of the largest unions in that country, chimed in, supporting the Mahalla workers' right "to organize, to associate and to strike." Italian unions sent a message of steadfast support. The International Textile, Garment and Leather Workers wrote a letter to President Mubarak criticizing his attempts to put leaders of the strike in jail. The International Trade Union Confederation also protested the arrest and detention of strike leaders.

As globalization spreads industrial activity throughout the world, international solidarity is going to grow ever more

The crises deepen—What is to be done?

- Issues to be discussed:
- Washington's threat to expand imperialist war to Iran
 - Jena 6 case: potential for a new movement
 - Immigrant workers intensify fight for rights
 - Katrina/Rita survivors still seek right to return
 - First U.S. Social Forum
 - Capitalist globalization creates new conditions for workers here & worldwide
 - Workers hit with mortgage foreclosures as capitalist economy sinks
 - The overall erosion of conditions for the working class and labor's right to organize
 - Racist repression and gentrification are on the rise
 - The '08 Presidential Election—How can the movement best intervene?
 - Struggle for women and LGBT rights
- What do activists need to do to forge working class solidarity in the fight against capitalism & imperialism?

An independent, fightback, socialist perspective will be presented and discussed.

Call 212-627-2994 for updated information on conference venue. www.workers.org

Workers World Party NATIONAL CONFERENCE

NEW YORK CITY
NOV. 17-18
(Save the date)

Subscribe to WORKERS WORLD newspaper

4 weeks trial subscription: \$2

One year subscription: \$25

NAME _____ PHONE _____

ADDRESS _____ EMAIL _____

CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____

Workers World 55 W. 17 St. 5 Fl., NY, NY 10011 212-627-2994 www.workers.org



Viet-amnesia: Bush's distortions of that dirty war

By Caleb T. Maupin

George W. Bush, in a recent address to the Veterans of Foreign Wars convention, bemoaned the fact that the U.S. "gave in" and "cut and ran" out of Vietnam. He made it clear that he thought that war should have continued.

"Whatever your position is on that debate, one unmistakable legacy of Vietnam is that the price of America's withdrawal was paid by millions of innocent citizens whose agonies would add to our vocabulary new terms like 'boat people,' 're-education camps' and 'killing fields,'" said Bush.

Like most of the words that come out of Bush's mouth, this is a big mischaracterization—basically, a lie.

Since the U.S. left Vietnam, the life of the Vietnamese people has steadily gotten better, mainly due to the removal of foreign domination and the introduction of socialist planning.

It is the first freedom and peace the Vietnamese people have known in over a century.

The French conquered Vietnam in the

1860s and made it their colony. In 1940, during World War II, Japan invaded Vietnam but kept the French administrators on as part of their colonial regime. By 1941, a national liberation front led by Ho Chi Minh, a communist, began fighting both the French and Japanese imperialists.

When the world war ended with the defeat of Japan, the Vietnamese liberators declared an independent government but French and British troops rushed in to try to crush them. The French didn't leave until 1954, after they suffered a huge defeat at Dien Bien Phu.

But the big corporations and banks in the U.S. had their eyes on Vietnam, too. Washington took the place of France as colonial overlord. Troops were sent to prop up a puppet government in the south of Vietnam. This soon escalated into the huge invasion of that country known as the Vietnam War.

In that war, the U.S. dropped 6.7 million tons of explosives on the Vietnamese people. Some estimate that as many as 4 million Vietnamese were killed in the brutal bombing that Gen. Curtis LeMay of the Air Force cheered on with the cry, "Bomb

them back to the Stone Age!"

Millions of gallons of the deadly chemical Agent Orange were sprayed from planes; much of the land in Vietnam is still poisoned. Vietnam estimates that even today, a million people suffer health problems because of this chemical that Bush says was to "defend freedom and democracy" in Southeast Asia.

A movement of popular resistance, in Vietnam and then the United States, forced the U.S. to withdraw from Vietnam in 1975.

The Vietnamese finally had their own country back, and they set out to build it in a way that served them, not U.S. corporations and Wall Street bankers. Child care programs, schools and hospitals were set up all across the Vietnamese countryside.

The old rulers of Vietnam who aided the United States in brutalizing the Vietnamese people were punished. Most were not executed, but rather given a chance to reform themselves after doing productive labor for society. Some fled Vietnam to the United States, where they were given automatic citizenship.

So were the Vietnamese government's policies truly "agony" for the millions of Vietnamese people? Hardly.

According to the United Nations, since 1980 the life expectancy of the average Vietnamese has risen by 14.7 years. The U.N. also reports that infant mortality rates have been reduced to well below half

what they were before 1980. Vietnamese children are now guaranteed education at community-run schools. Healthcare is now available to all Vietnamese citizens. Literacy rates have gone up.

In 1980, the new Socialist Vietnam had the honor of seeing Pham Tuan, a hero of the resistance to the U.S., become the first Asian to be launched into outer space, by a Soviet rocket. It was trying to build a socialist society based on social ownership of the land and all production.

But in 1986, the government of Vietnam, faced with weakened support from the larger socialist countries, stepped back from its planned socialist economy and allowed private ownership of land and businesses. However, the Communist Party remains in charge.

Since the thousands of U.S. troops, the B-52 bombers, and the Agent Orange dispensers were driven from Vietnam, along with the U.S. corporations and wealthy capitalists who these forces were defending, life has greatly improved for the Vietnamese people.

If the U.S. had remained in Vietnam, continuing to bomb, pillage and repress the people, it would have meant more and more death and destruction. The heroism and might of the Vietnamese in both north and south, combined with the strength of the U.S. anti-war movement, which spread to the military itself, enabled the Vietnamese to win back their country. □

Delegation delivers petitions to free Cuban 5

By Deirdre Griswold
Washington, D.C.

A delegation of representatives from many progressive communities in the United States held a press conference outside the Department of Justice here on Sept. 28 and then delivered a letter and a petition to Acting U.S. Attorney General Peter Keisler demanding the release of the Cuban 5, who have been held in U.S. prisons for almost 10 years.

The petition was signed by more than 1,000 organizations and individuals.

The delegation of several dozen people tried to present the documents personally to Keisler. They were stopped by a phalanx of guards at the door, even though Teresa Gutierrez of the New York Free the Five Committee and organizer of the press conference had made numerous attempts beforehand to set up a meeting.

Finally, a representative of the department who would identify himself only as "Dean" accepted the petition and a packet of information about the case of the Five, saying it would be passed on to the relevant DOJ officials.

In a press conference outside the building, representatives of anti-war, labor, women's, lesbian, gay, bi and trans, survivors of Hurricanes Rita/Katrina, and Cuba solidarity groups spoke out about why freedom for the Cuban 5 was an important demand being taken up by their communities.

The petition had been initiated by Rainbow Solidarity for the Cuban 5, and the speakers themselves came from a broad range of diverse organizations. Many were in D.C. for a week-long Encampment outside the U.S. Capitol, leading up to an anti-war march on Sept. 29 with the theme of "Stop the war in Iraq and the war at home—fund people's needs, not the Pentagon."

A Latin American contingent at the march included signs supporting the Five.

Speakers at the press conference included Berta Joubert-Ceci of the Women's Fightback Network; Brenda Stokely of the Million Worker March Movement; Ivey Parker of the New York Solidarity Coalition with Katrina/Rita Survivors;

Ignacio Meneses of the National Network on Cuba and the U.S./Cuba Labor Exchange; Imani Henry of Rainbow Solidarity for the Cuban Five; Mia Campbell of FIST (Fight Imperialism—Stand Together); and Sara Flounders of the Troops Out Now Coalition, sponsor of the related anti-war activities.

Speakers stressed that the U.S. government hypocritically calls the Cuban 5 "terrorists," when in fact they were in the U.S. trying to prevent terrorist attacks on their country. Their case is now on appeal.

Several represented organizations of poor people struggling in the U.S. for justice, such as Katrina/Rita survivors, who are inspired by Cuba's record of providing medical workers and teachers free to many countries in need.

More information about the Cuban 5 can be found at www.freethethefive.org. □



Banner of the American-Iranian Friendship Committee.



WW PHOTO: DEIRDRE GRISWOLD

Many groups sent representatives to press conference at Justice Department.



WW PHOTOS: GARY WILSON, DUSTIN LANGLEY AND LIZ GREEN

Banner demands: U.S. Hands off Zimbabwe.

D.C. SEPT. 29 PROTEST

U.S. out of the Middle East, Africa



Above, Palestinian speaker Mohammad Awdallah, Sept. 29th rally D.C. Behind, Nana Soul holds Palestinian flag.

EDITORIAL

Crímenes de guerra contra Gaza

Desde que el colonizador estado israelí tomó la tierra palestina de Cisjordania y la Franja de Gaza en 1967, ha tratado a los dos territorios poblados por palestinos con la tradición de un poder colonial. Les impone reglas israelíes, trata a los habitantes como si no tuvieron derechos, reacciona con violencia contra los que resisten ser un pueblo colonizado, detiene a miles sin distinción y a otros miles les encarcela sin juicio. Asesina a gran número de líderes.

Tel Aviv ha roto todos sus acuerdos internos con los palestinos. Ha construido una muralla de más de 430 millas que se extiende por Cisjordania y divide los pueblos palestinos; disfrazada de “seguridad”, se ha utilizado para tomar otro 7 por ciento de ese pequeño territorio.

Ahora ha añadido más crímenes contra la humanidad a su larga lista. El estado israelí ha impuesto un bloqueo contra Gaza, dejando entrar en el territorio sólo cantidades muy pequeñas de alimentos y agua. Y más aún: ha declarado que Gaza es una “entidad enemiga” lo cual promete aún más sufrimiento para los palestinos allí porque los israelíes restringen toda asistencia, hasta la ayuda humanitaria.

Israel promulgó esta nueva definición cuando la Secretaria de Estado estadounidense Condoleezza Rice estaba visitando el Oriente Medio con el supuesto objetivo de organizar una “Conferencia Internacional de Paz”. Es todo parte de los planes estadounidenses para reorganizar esa parte del mundo para servir a los intereses del capital monopolístico estadounidense. Washington y Wall Street, centro financiero del mundo occidental, dependen de Israel como una fuerza militar auxiliar en la región que siempre ha estado al lado de los imperialistas contra los esfuerzos de los árabes y otros pueblos musulmanes de liberar su territorio nacional y sus recursos, especialmente el petróleo, de la dominación occidental.

Rice incluso repite la definición israelí de Gaza como una “entidad enemiga”. Ella llamó a Hamas, el partido elegido por los palestinos a encabezar su gobierno, una “organización terrorista”.

Esta nueva acción estadounidense-israelí de definir a 1.5 millones de palestinos en Gaza como enemigos es una forma de castigo colectivo, la cual fue condenada por foros mundiales cuando lo hicieron los imperialistas nazis. Esto sólo puede aumentar el sufrimiento de este pueblo, el cual hoy está forzado a vivir con restricciones cotidianas de luz, agua potable, medicinas y combustible. La política israelí también priva a los agricultores palestinos de productos esenciales para la producción de alimentos.

Éste es un crimen contra la humanidad y es también parte de la estrategia de EEUU, la Unión Europea y las fuerzas israelíes de dividir al pueblo palestino. Ahora la táctica es promover a Fatah, la cual no hace mucho fue tildada de “terrorista” por Washington, en contra de Hamas, mientras trata de doblegar el espíritu del pueblo a través del hambre.

El pueblo palestino necesita del apoyo de todos los pueblos del mundo ahora más que nunca. ¡Fuera Estados Unidos y la Unión Europea del Medio Oriente! ¡Que viva Palestina! □

¿Invitación o emboscada? Presidente de Irán se defiende en Columbia

Por Deirdre Griswold
Nueva York

Si la aparición del presidente de Irán, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, en la Universidad de Columbia en Nueva York el 24 de septiembre comprobó algo, es que las instituciones altamente costosas de los EEUU son parte integral del establecimiento político que dirige la política exterior imperialista de este país.

El evento tuvo la intención de ser una trampa, una oportunidad para sacar fotos y promocionar la propaganda anti-iraní, llevándola a un punto incandescente y dar al presidente George W. Bush un pretexto, encubriendo los planes del Pentágono de atacar a ese país rico en recursos petroleros.

Los periódicos sensacionalistas de Nueva York intentaron provocar un espíritu de linchamiento. “El mal ha aterrizado”, fue el enorme titular de la portada del Daily News, junto a una foto que mostró a Ahmadinejad con los ojos medio cerrados.

El presidente de Columbia, Lee Bollinger, había sido criticado severamente, especialmente por partidarios de Israel por haber extendido la invitación al presidente de Irán. Pero quedaron encantados cuando pasó 14 minutos insultando a Ahmadinejad en lo que supuestamente era una introducción del orador invitado. Disfrazada de bienvenida, Bollinger cruzó por completo la frontera del comportamiento civil, llamando al presidente de Irán un “dictador mezquino y cruel” que era “descaradamente provocador o increíblemente ignorante”.

Afuera se llevaba a cabo en el campo universitario de Columbia lo que en efecto era una manifestación en contra de Irán, para el deleite de todos los medios de comunicación corporativos.

¿Funcionó? Sólo si se acepta lo que dijeron los medios noticieros sobre la reunión. Y eso, por supuesto, es todo lo que la mayoría de la población en los EEUU llega a escuchar.

Pero la transcripción y el video que llegaron al Internet demuestran que Ahmadinejad fue astuto, calmado pero combativo, y restauró una medida de realidad al evento cuando por fin tuvo la oportunidad de hablar. También recibió apoyo de algunos alumnos.

Después de ser repudiado por el jefe de la universidad –quien es también miembro de la Junta de la Reserva Federal de Nueva York, un índice de su posición de prestigio entre las élites financieras– Ahmadinejad replicó, despertando aplausos, que en Irán, una persona invitada jamás sería maltratada de esa forma: “Realmente respetamos a nuestros alumnos y a los profesores, dejándoles formar su propio juicio, y no consideramos necesario que antes de una presentación se intervenga con una serie de afirmaciones e intentar proveer una vacuna de alguna clase a nuestros estudiantes y a nuestra facultad”.

Prosiguió respondiendo a las cuestiones presentadas –algo que pocos jefes de estado, especialmente aquellos en las potencias imperialistas, nunca hacen. Ahmadinejad e Irán han sido acusados de negar que el Holocausto ocurrió, y de intentar fabricar armas nucleares. Las potencias imperialistas, encabezadas por EEUU pero incluso Bretaña y ahora Francia, están actualmente amenazando una guerra contra Irán, supuestamente por su programa nuclear. Hay una enorme armada naval de los EEUU en los mares frente a sus costas.

Preguntado sobre su posición con respecto al Holocausto, Ahmadinejad no negó que ocurriera, pero cuestionó lo que ha pasado en su nombre desde entonces en el Medio Oriente. “Eso ocurrió en Europa. El pueblo palestino no tuvo nada que ver con eso. ...¿Entonces, por qué son los palestinos los que tienen que pagar, palestinos inocentes?” preguntó. “¿Si 5 millones de refugiados quedan desplazados o refugiados en el exterior por 60 años—no es esto un crimen? ¿Es preguntar sobre eso en sí un crimen?”

Preguntado sobre si él quería ver a Israel destruido, siendo la implicación que Irán está listo para lanzar una guerra contra el estado colonial sionista, Ahmadinejad se refirió al territorio como Palestina, y replicó, “Dejemos que el pueblo palestino escoja libremente lo que quiere para su futuro”.

El régimen israelí ha expulsado a millones de palestinos y no les deja regresar a su patria, donde serían la mayoría. Si realmente la democracia existiera allá para todo el mundo, incluso para los palestinos actualmente forzados a vivir en miserables campos para refugiados, hace años un estado secular de árabes y judíos podría haber remplazado al estado teocrático de Israel.

Sobre el desarrollo nuclear de Irán, Ahmadinejad enfatizó que su meta es la de producir energía pacíficamente; y que su país ha sido miembro de la Agencia Internacional de Energía

Atómica por más de 33 años y que los estados miembros tienen el derecho a la tecnología pacífica de combustible nuclear. Pero también destacó la extrema hipocresía de Washington sobre esta cuestión. “Si ustedes han creado la quinta generación de bombas atómicas”, dijo, “y ya las están probando, en qué posición están para cuestionar la meta pacífica de otros que quieren energía nuclear?”

La próxima mañana, en su discurso a la Asamblea General de la ONU, Ahmadinejad criticó severamente a “ciertas potencias” que pretenden ser los defensores exclusivos de los derechos humanos mientras “establecen prisiones secretas, secuestran personas, manejan procesos judiciales y castigos sin consideración alguna al proceso legal, interceptan extensivamente conversaciones telefónicas y correos privados, y donde las citaciones frecuentes a centros policiales y de seguridad se han vuelto comunes y generalizadas”. Todo el mundo entendió de quién estaba hablando; los delegados de EEUU e Israel boicotearon el discurso.

No hace mucho que la amenazante demostración de fuerza militar del Pentágono era temida tanto que pocos de los países del mundo anteriormente colonizados y que buscan su soberanía y el desarrollo pacífico, se atrevían a desafiar al imperialismo estadounidense públicamente. Como la resistencia en Irak y el surgimiento de regímenes nacionalistas en Latinoamérica, la visita del líder de Irán a EEUU enfatizó que los tiempos de verdad están cambiando.

Y están cambiando dentro de los EEUU también. El lugar del Internet, commondreams.org publicó un artículo corto el 25 de septiembre sobre la visita de Ahmadinejad por Ru Freeman que denunció a Bollinger por comportarse “terrible y bochornosamente” y concluyó que “el presidente de Irán tiene una gracia que ni su anfitrión, ni las personas que intentaron interrumpir su charla gritando en la Universidad de Columbia, ni los medios de comunicación en este país, ni tampoco, y debo declarar lo obvio, el mismo presidente de este país puede reclamar”.

Esa tarde 116 mensajes de correo electrónico habían sido publicados comentando sobre el artículo de Freeman—y en forma abrumadora criticaron el tratamiento de Bollinger hacia el presidente de Irán y la arrogancia de las autoridades de los EEUU en general. Un escritor resumió todo: “Cómo es que Bollinger nunca ha podido tener el valor para dirigir esas palabras hacia nuestro propio mezquino y cruel dictador?” □

Subscribete a Mundo Obrero

□ \$2 por 8 semanas de prueba □ \$25 por un año

Nombre

Teléfono

Dirección

Ciudad / Estado / Código Postal

E-mail

Workers World 55 W. 17 St, NY, NY 10033

www.workers.org

212.627.2994