

MUNDO OBRERO

Chávez y el referéndum 12

MORTGAGE CRISIS

3

■ Detroit workers: 'No foreclosures!'

■ Bush to banks: 'I feel your pain'

HIV-AIDS

Proof positive of injustice 5

IRAN & NUKES

Behind the NIE report 9

MISSING TAPES

More CIA crimes surface 9

NBC airs suppressed evidence in Mumia case

By Betsey Piette
Philadelphia

Supporters of Mumia Abu-Jamal, a revolutionary Black journalist on Pennsylvania's death row, rallied outside Philadelphia's City Hall Dec. 8. They challenged outgoing Mayor John Street to "do the right thing" and not cave in to pressure from the Fraternal Order of Police to withdraw his support for a new trial for the world-renowned political prisoner.

Mumia supporters also celebrated a hard-won victory. On Dec. 6 NBC's Today Show aired evidence pointing to an unfair trial and Mumia's innocence. The occasion was an appearance by right-wing commentator Michael Smerconish and Maureen Faulkner, widow of slain Philadelphia police officer Daniel Faulkner. They were promoting their new book "Murdered by Mumia." The program quickly cut to pickets in support of Mumia outside the NBC studios in New York.

This broadcast of the Today Show, the highest-rated morning news show in the country with an audience of millions, featured archival footage in which Mumia affirmed his innocence, as well as newly discovered original crime scene photos taken by press photographer Pedro P. Polakoff on Dec. 9, 1981.

The photos contradict the testimony of key prosecution witnesses during Mumia's 1982 trial and 1995 Post Conviction Relief Act hearing. They have been ignored by the commercial media, with the exception of a Reuters article that appeared earlier in the week and an article in the San Francisco Bay View this past October.

Even after the Today Show brought these photos to light, none of the corporate Philadelphia media mentioned them or the show. The Philadelphia Inquirer, which features a regular column by Smerconish, instead put out misinformation on the Philadelphia rally, claiming that "40 police officers monitored 30 supporters of a cop killer," while in reality over 100 supporters of Mumia staged a lively march and rally while a handful of police stood by.

Defense could 'have a field day'

Today Show co-host Matt Lauer asked Faulkner and Smerconish about the new photo evidence, saying the photos "show a

policeman holding two guns in his bare hand, contradicting the officer's (James Forbes) trial testimony that he had preserved ballistics evidence. Another photo shows your husband's hat on top of a car and not on the sidewalk as it is in the official police photo of the crime scene. A third shows a blood-stained sidewalk where the shooting took place, but does not show any signs of the marks in the concrete that might have occurred if your husband had been shot from above, as prosecutors contended. The defense attorney [Robert Bryan] says that he could 'have a field day' with these photographs if a new trial—"

At that point Smerconish, while not challenging any of the facts Lauer had raised, cut him off to accuse Mumia supporters of "manipulation of the process." Faulkner then asked, "Where have these pictures been for 26 years? Why hasn't this man come forth sooner than now?"

Faulkner's question goes to the heart of police manipulation of the evidence and crime scene in 1981. The authenticity of Polakoff's photos is not in question—several of the 31 photos he shot appeared in local newspapers at the time, and Polakoff offered them to the prosecution. However, the Philadelphia District Attorney's office deep-sixed them.

The photos clearly contradicted the official lies and exposed the incredibly sloppy and manipulative police investigation. Philadelphia journalist Linn Washington, speaking at a Dec. 4 press conference, noted that the DA's "lack of interest, and the fact that they didn't inform the defense, alone might be reason for a new trial."

The photos also presented a problem for the prosecution because they knew that Polakoff was under the erroneous impression that Mumia was the passenger in a car belonging to his brother, Billy Cook, that Faulkner had pulled over. Polakoff, who was at the scene within 12 minutes of the shooting, heard witnesses tell police that the passenger in Cook's car had shot Faulkner and fled the scene. Polakoff's photos can be seen on the Journalists for Mumia website, www.Abu-Jamal-News.com.

The timing of the Today Show interview comes at a critical juncture for Abu-Jamal, who is awaiting a ruling by the Third Circuit Court on several appeals filed by his attorneys in May. Smerconish and Faulkner planned to use the interview to pro-

Continued on page 5



WW PHOTO: GARY WILSON

March in Philadelphia demands freedom for Mumia Abu-Jamal, on death row for 26 years.



EYEWITNESS INDIA

■ Peasants resist SEZs 6

■ Anti-imperialists confer & act 7

WW PHOTO: SARA FLOWERS

Subscribe to Workers World

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

NAME PHONE EMAIL

ADDRESS CITY/STATE/ZIP

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

INTERVIEW WITH THA TRUTH

An anthem for the poor & dispossessed

By Larry Hales

Tha Truth has been rapping for nine years. Like many underground rap artists, he honed his skills by battle rapping. At the time his rhymes were filled with braggadocio and laced with what he saw and heard in everyday life. But he was approached by another artist who influenced him and impressed upon him to use his talent to question the things happening around him and to espouse the positive.

Tha Truth set upon a sojourn and from this journey came his moniker and the realization that he affirms in the song “Universal Healthcare,” which is really an anthem for the poor and dispossessed. In the song the artist states, “It’s time for revolution/ we know the real terrorists/ war, greed, no healthcare and air pollution/ there is a solution ... it don’t matter who/ what, why or where/ all people need universal healthcare.”

The entire CD, titled “**Tha Civil Rights Movement Part II**,” is a composition—written, produced and performed to inform and educate. The CD is quite a revelation. It is rare that an artist is able to display a full political vision and entertain. This is because the arts under capitalist society are a commodity and artists are made to bend to what is popular, which is manufactured by constant inundation by bourgeois media outlets of the superficial and distracting that affirm the capitalist system.

Tha Truth begins with a quote by Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.: “The time has come for America to hear the truth.”

Tha Truth highlights the case of the Camden 28, Catholic anti-war activists who attempted to destroy draft cards at the Camden, N.J., draft board in 1971. The group had been set up by Bob Hardy, who was working with the FBI, which watched and raided the brave attempt by the activists to resist the draft and the imperialist war against the Vietnamese people.

In the CD the listener will find purely political music, dealing with corporate media, anti-LGBTQ hatred and global warming. Tha Truth uncovers widely held falsehoods.

This reporter was able to interview the artist, who performed at the Nov. 17 Workers World Party Conference on worldwide solidarity.

Larry Hales, WWP: Who were some of the artists you were listening to when you first began rapping?

Tha Truth: Group Home, Jeru Da Damaja. I pretty much just listened to hip hop and listened to mainstream stuff too.

WWP: How long have you been performing?

Tha Truth: I’ve been performing for a year but been rapping for nine years.

WWP: When did you start changing your content?

Tha Truth: It was around 1999-2000 when I met a conscious rapper who influenced me. I was trying to deal with a lot of leftover anger I had from a really messed up childhood that was filled with violence toward me. I never really had a father. And, at this time in my life, I guess I was looking for intelligent, strong male role models to look up to and I felt like I found that in reading books by and about Martin Luther King Jr., Gandhi, Bobby Seale and Huey Newton. I was also inspired by reading about Jane Addams. I felt like I was starting to find a higher purpose for my life at this time



WW PHOTO: JOHN CATALINOTTO

Hip hop artists Jay aka Tha Truth and Colleen Hall.

... I started questioning stuff around me and the hypocrisy of some hip hop artists.

WWP: How did you start getting involved in the political struggle?

Tha Truth: My partner sparked political change in me. She was always protesting and being in the streets. I met her in 2003 as the war was starting in Iraq. I had kind of given up on trying to see change in the system and I was really jaded.... A lot of that was because of this job I had at that time.... I was trying to do something positive in working for a non-profit but the one I worked at for a couple years seemed to be more about exploitation of children and fund-raising than actually making kids’ lives better. Then I was working as a security guard at a hotel, aiming to protect people individually.... My fiancée kept encouraging me to get more involved politically because she liked my ideas and general principles I had shared with her from our conversations.... From there I started to get a lot more involved in the struggle and that influenced my music to get to the point of being as political as it is now. I left the security job and started teaching in a middle school for some time but felt limited by the curriculum, of course. I felt like I could combine my passion for wanting to teach about what’s really important with my passion for music and that led me toward my first album. I started watching documentaries. I began reading Workers World a year ago.

WWP: What do you think of the state of hip hop now, especially with all the criticism that has re-emerged after Don Imus’s racist and sexist comments?

Tha Truth: I think there is a lot of wasted potential in hip hop music. It could be a powerful force in the struggle for change. Now it’s guided by a corporate formula to make money. I think education needs to be interesting and creative to hold interest and that music can do that. It could be a huge catalyst.

WWP: Do you associate any artists of a different era to the era they performed and lived in?

Tha Truth: This is the only period I’ve lived in, but from history I think John Lennon was important in his time and Gil Scott-Heron.

WWP: You performed at a socialist conference. Do you consider yourself a socialist?

Tha Truth: Well, I haven’t, but I think with anything the intentions of the leaders are what is important. □

★ In the U.S.

NBC airs suppressed evidence in Mumia case	1
Interview with Tha Truth	2
Fight-back meeting maps plans to stop foreclosures . . .	3
Bush lets banks write rules for mortgage relief	3
New Orleans fight for affordable housing	4
Labor Council backs Gulf Coast program	4
Audience sets up Free the Cuban 5 group	4
On the picket line	4
Spread of HIV/AIDS: ‘Proof positive of injustice’	5
Bush gang's plan to attack Iran undercut by NIE report	9
CIA destroys tapes in prisoner torture case	9
Bob Kohler: Stonewall vet, AIDS activist, anti-racist fighter	10

★ Around the world

Nandigram says ‘No!’ to Dow’s chemical hub	6
Repression and a false policy	6
Anti-imperialists meet to discuss and act	7
Civil servants strike, protest in Egypt	8
Lavender & red, part 117	8
Victory for U.S. war resisters in Canada	8
Workers discuss U.S.-Latin America relations	11
Zimbabwe march supports a defiant gov’t	11
Palestinians denounce Annapolis conference	11

★ Editorials

A rotten new bill	10
-----------------------------	----

★ Noticias En Español

Chávez y el referéndum	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. 50 • Dec. 20, 2007
Closing date: Dec. 12, 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



Amid acute housing crisis

Fight-back meeting maps plans to stop foreclosures

By Bryan G. Pfeifer
Detroit

After being hammered by an economic crisis of unprecedented proportions, some 75 poor and working people from Detroit and southeastern Michigan packed a Dec. 8 organizing meeting here. The meeting ended with unanimous approval for resolutions and actions demanding a moratorium on foreclosures and utility shutoffs.

The crowd included activists from a number of labor, community and student organizations, among them the Michigan Welfare Rights Organization, Green Party, Morningside Community Organization, Operation Rainbow/Push Coalition, the American Federation of Teachers, the Michigan Nurses Association, the United Auto Workers and Workers World Party.

Detroit City Council member Joann Watson attended and Rev. Ed Rowe of the historic Central United Methodist Church, a center for many progressive struggles, welcomed the participants to his church.

Meeting chair Abayomi Azikiwe of the Michigan Emergency Committee Against War and Injustice (MECAWI), sponsor of the meeting, stated: “What’s actually being advocated by the mortgage companies, what’s being published in the Wall Street Journal, what’s being talked about by the federal government through President Bush, is far too little, far too late. What they’re talking about is allowing these same bankers, these same financial interests who are responsible for this crisis, to determine who is to get a fixed interest rate, who is to get some semblance of relief.

“The only real solution to this crisis is a moratorium. We are in depression-like conditions in the state of Michigan. We have to put a stop to this. This is what we’re here for today,” added Azikiwe.

Progressive attorney and MECAWI leader Jerry Goldberg explained that three separate Michigan laws—MCL 10.31, 10.85 and 30.401—mandate that the governor declare a state of emergency during periods of crisis, natural or “man-made,” and provide special powers to meet the crisis.

MECAWI is demanding that Michigan

Gov. Jennifer Granholm and governors throughout the country immediately declare states of emergency in their respective states and use their emergency powers under the law to invoke a moratorium halting all foreclosures. MECAWI organizers point out that such a moratorium on foreclosures was enacted in Michigan and 24 other states during the 1930s and upheld as constitutional by the U.S. Supreme Court.

“This crisis is an emergency and it’s only the tip of the iceberg. It affects everybody. The Bush plan this week has already been exposed as a joke. It’s a voluntary plan. Well, that’s great. It’s like the prey going to the vultures and asking them for relief. It’s going to barely touch the problem. This is an enormous crisis. It has been brought on by many factors, including the racist predatory lending, the fraudulent practices of virtually every finance company in Michigan,” said Goldberg.

A Nov. 27 Detroit News article documented that at least 72,000 homes went into foreclosure in metropolitan Detroit over the last two years. Some Detroit neighborhoods had foreclosure rates of 17 percent. Although Black homeowners have been hit the hardest, this devastation continues to slam the white working class as well.

In Detroit 85 percent of mortgages are subprime and charge higher rates. And this is only the beginning, as tens of thousands more subprime mortgages are going to reset in the next few months, even as plant shutdowns and layoffs continue.

About 400,000 jobs have been eliminated in Michigan in the last six years, according to a recent University of Michigan study. Forty thousand households in Detroit have had their water turned off due to inability to pay and thousands more have had their heat shut off. These shutoffs are ongoing.

“The banks don’t need to be bailed out and they are the ones this government wants to bail out. The banks are the problem and they need to be attacked. We’re not talking about anything to bail them out. We’re talking about bailing out the

Abayomi Azikiwe speaks at Detroit housing crisis meeting. Also pictured are Pat Johnson, Alfreda Weathers, Bryan Pfeifer (standing), Rev. Ed Rowe, Maureen Taylor, Jerry Goldberg and Vanessa Fluker.



working and poor people of Michigan and to hell with those banks,” said Goldberg.

“We say the people come before the corporations. The preamble to the state constitution says the health and welfare of the people are of primary concern. It doesn’t say the health and welfare of the rich. It doesn’t say the health and welfare of the banks. It doesn’t say the health and welfare of the corporations. It’s the people. And it’s time that the people get organized to assert our rights, that we come first.

“We have a right to housing. It’s a fundamental human right just like a job is a right. Just like food is a right. And the fact that we have to fight for these rights in the context of the U.S. today shows how criminal this system is and we better organize because it isn’t going to get any better unless we do,” concluded Goldberg.

During the comments section of the organizing meeting, many Black people described how, induced by racist predatory lenders and banks and largely through subprime loans, they or their loved ones had been foreclosed on and are now out on the street or subsisting as best they can. Those present heard of how seniors who had worked for decades to pay off their home are now out on the street or deep in debt.

Others, from predominantly white working class and multinational neighborhoods, described how foreclosures were also increasing daily in the suburbs

as well as in Detroit.

Community activist and former Detroit School Board candidate Sandra Hines described how she and her loved ones had been thrown out of their home just one week earlier because of a foreclosure. The movers callously threw her and her sister’s household items—many brand new—in a dumpster as the women were being removed from their deceased mother’s home, which has been in the family since 1969. This scenario is playing out every day in Michigan and throughout the country.

Hines, Maureen Taylor of the Michigan Welfare Rights Organization, MECAWI activists and many others called for bold actions to win the moratorium and utility shutoffs.

Proposals that passed unanimously included demonstrations to protest bankers’ and lenders’ meetings the week of Dec. 9; planning for other militant actions such as blocking sheriffs from throwing people out of their homes, disrupting home auctions and more.

This fightback movement will build for a statewide protest at Gov. Jennifer Granholm’s State of the State address on Jan. 29, 2008. Community outreach and media committees were created at the meeting for this work to move forward.

People’s attorney Vanessa Fluker closed the meeting with an educational presentation about using legal rights to challenge predatory loans. □

Bush lets banks write rules for mortgage relief

By Jaimeson Champion

President George W. Bush and Treasury Secretary Henry Paulson have unveiled their subprime mortgage relief plan, which they call the “New Hope Alliance.” The corporate media coverage of Bush’s Dec. 6 announcement was massive. Sadly, the number of families whom this plan will help is miniscule.

Subprime mortgage loans are characterized by interest rates that start at 1 percent to 2 percent but soon “reset” to much higher rates. The Bush administration claims its plan will help families avoid foreclosure by freezing interest rates on some subprime loans for the next five years.

The administration has attempted to portray its mortgage relief plan as a lifeline for at-risk borrowers. But the plan is more akin to a wish list for the very same banks and mortgage lenders whose insatiable greed helped create the currently unfolding economic crisis.

The Bush-Paulson plan includes a maze of eligibility requirements that are designed to disqualify all but a handful

of the more than 2 million households facing foreclosure. Housing advocacy groups estimate that less than 2 percent of subprime borrowers nationwide would qualify for a rate freeze under the administration’s plan. And it provides no help for the growing number of renters across the country who have been left homeless since their landlords entered foreclosure due to a subprime loan.

The Bush administration has ensured, however, that the plan is agreeable to mortgage lenders and Wall Street banks by making lender participation in the relief plan completely voluntary. In other words, the banks and mortgage lenders don’t have to freeze interest rates if they don’t want to. They are likely to do so only if they decide that the housing market is so glutted that going the foreclosure route could leave them stuck with property that can’t be sold.

This hollow “relief” plan stands in stark contrast to the hundreds of billions of dollars in bailout money that the Federal Reserve has handed the Wall Street banks and investment funds over the past few

months.

These bailout funds have come in the form of massive liquidity infusions and central bank purchases of collateralized debt obligations. CDOs are asset-backed securities that are tied to mortgage loans. Banks such as Citigroup and Bank of America hold this now-worthless paper in massive quantities. The Federal Reserve has been attempting to bail the major banks out of their crisis by essentially taking the worthless paper off the banks’ balance sheets.

Working-class households are entering into foreclosure and bankruptcy at levels not seen since the Great Depression, yet it is the rich capitalist investors and bankers who are given hundreds of billions of dollars in rescue funds.

Across the country, once-vibrant working-class communities have turned into near ghost towns as “For Sale” signs and boarded-up windows have become ubiquitous. Workers are also suffering under the weight of rising food and energy costs at the same time that the economic downturn is intensifying the bosses’ drive

to slash wages and cut jobs. Yet the only relief plan the president can conjure up is to tell workers to “hope” that banks will voluntarily freeze interest rates on some mortgages.

Recent polls suggest that the economy is fast becoming the number one issue on the minds of potential voters in the 2008 election. Eager to garner votes, the Democrats have also been outlining proposals for mortgage relief. It’s part of a debate within the ruling class over how to smooth over some of the massive fallout from the currently unfolding crisis.

“Relief” for the working class will not come through the empty proposals of ruling-class politicians. It takes the organized resistance of the multinational working class against the banks and swindlers on Wall Street who are robbing workers of their homes. Democrats and Republicans can debate back and forth endlessly over their mortgage plans, with little consequence. But millions of workers in the streets demanding a moratorium on foreclosures, layoffs and wage cuts would create the potential for truly lasting relief. □

New Orleans after Katrina

Residents fight demolition of affordable housing

By Brenda Ryan

New Orleans is about to be hit with another horrible disaster. This time the federal and city governments are not only sitting by and ignoring the tragedy but actually causing it.

On Dec. 15 bulldozers are scheduled to tear down all four of the city's major public housing developments, which consist of more than 4,500 units. The federal Department of Housing and Urban Development announced plans to demolish the sites last year and the Housing Authority of New Orleans recently approved \$30 million in contracts for the demolitions.

Former residents and other city activists have been waging a fierce battle to halt the destruction of these homes.

Protesters attended a New Orleans City Council meeting on Dec. 6 demanding that the council take action to stop the demolitions. When the council declined to vote on the issue, the crowd began shouting and chanting.

The media reported that a sheriff's deputy then grabbed and shoved civil

rights lawyer Bill Quigley against a wall and handcuffed him. Quigley represents former residents of the four developments in a lawsuit against HUD Secretary Alphonso Jackson that seeks to stop the demolitions and force the city to renovate the buildings. Last month a federal judge denied their request.

The people of New Orleans are not giving up. Stop the Demolition Coalition, a grassroots group, is calling on people around the country to join the residents of New Orleans to resist the destruction of the buildings. It declared Dec. 10 "Human Rights Day Come to New Orleans."

HUD intends to replace the four developments—St. Bernard, Lafitte, C.J. Peete and B.W. Cooper—with "mixed income" housing, which means many African Americans, the sole residents of these buildings, will be prevented from returning to the city. A Nov. 29 AP story quoted Quigley as saying the current 4,500 public housing units would be replaced with 1,841 apartments, of which only 744 would be fully subsidized.

The destruction of the four develop-

Units in this condemned housing project would cost far less money to fix than to tear down and rebuild.



ments is particularly outrageous given the homelessness and severe housing shortage in New Orleans since Hurricane Katrina devastated the city in 2005. Most of the units suffered minor damage that would require far less money to fix than it will cost to tear them down and rebuild.

John Fernandez, an associate professor of architecture at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, surveyed 140 of the units in the four projects. In a declaration filed on behalf of the plaintiffs in the suit against Alphonso Jackson, Fernandez said he found no structural or nonstructural damage that would reasonably warrant any building demolitions. In fact, he said the construction of these buildings is superior to contemporary buildings.

New York Times architecture critic Nicolai Ouroussoff also criticized the destruction of the housing developments, which he said are among the best public housing in the United States. "Solidly

built, the buildings' detailed brickwork, tile roofs and wrought-iron balustrades represent a level of craft more likely found on an Ivy League campus than in a contemporary housing complex," he wrote in a Nov. 19, 2006, article.

"The low red-brick housing blocks of the Lafitte Avenue project, in the historically Black neighborhood of Tremé, for example, are scaled to fit within the surrounding neighborhood of Creole cottages and shotgun houses," Ouroussoff continues. "As you move deeper into the complex, the buildings frame a series of communal courtyards sheltered by the canopies of enormous oak trees. Nature, here, was intended to foster spiritual as well as physical well-being."

Everyone has a right to such well-being as people around the country join in solidarity with the people of New Orleans who are fighting displacement and racist gentrification. □

Labor Council backs Gulf Coast program

Following are excerpts from a resolution submitted to the Central Labor Council of Alameda County, Calif., by Clarence Thomas, delegate from ILWU Local 10, and adopted by the delegates' meeting on Nov. 5. To read the resolution in its entirety, along with Thomas' introduction to it, go to www.workers.org.

WHEREAS, During the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina the world watched the United States government stand by and let thousands of African Americans and poor people in New Orleans and throughout the Gulf Coast suffer and hundreds die a most tragic and unnecessary death;

WHEREAS, ILWU Locals 10, 19, 52, and the International in conjunction with the African American Longshore Coalition sent several 40-foot containers of humanitarian and construction supplies, and vehicles along with financial support to the Gulf;

WHEREAS, Almost immediately after Katrina, President George W. Bush issued an executive order suspending prevailing wage requirements on federally funded projects; Bush and the Republican-controlled Congress suspended affirmative action requirements, relaxed environmental regulations, and started handing out privatized, no-bid contracts like they were bottled water;

WHEREAS, In the weeks after Katrina and Rita, New Orleans witnessed an influx of more than 150,000 workers from outside the region, many of them recruited from Mexico and Central America by temporary agencies; WHEREAS, Fifty percent of migrant day laborers were never paid for their work and the New Orleans Workers Center has countless stories of transient workers who showed up at a certain location to get paid, and instead were met by ICE agents and deported;

WHEREAS, Katrina brought about the largest displacement of African Americans in the U.S. South since the post-Reconstruction period at the end of the 19th century;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, The Gulf Coast Reconstruction Program include the right to return to the Gulf, a Gulf Coast Public Works Program, an end to state repression via police brutality and racial profiling, and building solidarity committees nationally to continue the struggle for a just reconstruction and an end to ethnic cleansing in the Gulf Coast. □

Dianne Mathiowetz, Monica Moorehead, Clarence Thomas and Delores Thomas visit New Orleans as part of a fact-finding delegation in August 2006.



WW PHOTO

After seeing 'The Trial'

Audience sets up Free the Cuban 5 group

By Sharon Black
Baltimore

After viewing the film "The Trial" at its Baltimore premiere, an enthusiastic crowd unanimously decided to set up a local "Free the Cuban 5 Committee." The film depicts the travesty of justice meted out to five Cuban heroes held in U.S. jails. Organizers had worried that the first snowstorm of the year would halt the meeting and dampen enthusiasm. Despite five inches of snow and icy conditions, the room was packed.

Andre Powell, with the All Peoples Congress, thanked the sponsors, which included the Baltimore-Matanzas Sister City Association, Generations for Peace and Democracy, Howard County Friends of Central America, Maryland-Cuba Friendship Coalition, Ken Morgan—com-



munity activist and educator, Troops Out Now Coalition, Uhuru Movement, Workers World Party and the Venceremos Brigade.

Teresa Gutierrez, a featured speaker from the NYC Committee to Free

the issues in the case of the Cuban 5 case to other political prisoners in the U.S., including Mumia Abu-Jamal and the fight against racism and immigrant bashing at home.

Supporters of the Cuban Five political prisoners pack a local Baltimore restaurant.

WW PHOTO: SHARON BLACK

the Cuban 5, answered questions from the floor explaining the case in detail. She also linked

Leslie Salgado from Howard County Friends of Central America stressed the need to fight against the ongoing U.S. war on Cuba, including the blockade, and Rosa Campos from the Bolivarian Circles gave an important update on Venezuela.

The film showing also commemorated the 40th anniversary of the assassination of Che Guevara. Steven Ceci, Baltimore Workers World Party representative, reported on Che's significance for today in the fight against imperialism. Several of the youth activists at the meeting commented on the need to follow Che's example and lessons.

The event was held Dec. 5 at the Yabba Pot, a local African-American restaurant that donated space. Everyone in the audience got a chance to participate by signing a large banner for the families of the Cuban 5 that will be sent to Cuba to show

Farmworkers target Burger King

As part of its continuing struggle to win higher wages and better working conditions for tomato pickers in south Florida, the Coalition of Immokalee Workers led a boisterous, colorful march on Dec. 1 to the Miami headquarters of Burger King. Students from many Florida colleges, union members, clergy and community activists took part in the nine-mile march.

All the workers want is a penny more for a bushel of tomatoes. Taco Bell agreed to that in 2005, all the affiliates owned by Yum Brands (such as KFC and A&W Restaurants) signed on in 2006, and MacDonald's got with the program earlier this year. But Burger King has been holding out.

To add insult to injury, the King's CEO recently started a public relations campaign charging that the farm workers don't need a raise—that there's no such thing as farmworker poverty. The slogan "Doubt our poverty, walk in our shoes" was prominent throughout the march and at the rally at BK headquarters. There, CIW reps presented a pair of worn-out work boots to a BK representative and then lined up dozens more on the lawn across from the building.

Also on Dec. 1, students at Cornell, Notre Dame and Calvin College staged solidarity actions at local BKs. CIW's six-year Campaign for Fair Food is supported by nearly 20 student groups, including the Student Farmworker Alliance. In London on "Thanksgiving" Day, CIW was given the 2007 Anti-Slavery Award by Anti-Slavery International, the oldest human rights organization.

AFL-CIO for moratorium on foreclosures

The AFL-CIO issued a call for an immediate moratorium on subprime mortgage foreclosures during congressional hearings on Dec. 6. It proposed that all loans with teaser rates be restructured for 30 years at the original low teaser rates. (<http://blog.aflcio.org>)

Noting that the mortgage market affects millions of working families, AFL-CIO attorney Damon Silvers testified: "Unless the government acts with urgency, hundreds of thousands of workers will lose their homes, millions of workers will suffer pension losses and further millions will lose their jobs." He linked the housing crisis to "falling or stagnant real wages" and the lack of good jobs that "have left tens of millions of Americans dependent on borrowing to sustain their standard of living." He called on Congress "to prevent millions of American families from losing their homes."

Stagehands ratify contract

Broadway stagehands voted to ratify a contract on Dec. 9 with much better terms than they were offered before their 19-day strike. In exchange for 4 to 4.5 percent raises over the next five years, the stagehands agreed to some rule changes. For instance, the number of workers needed to load a production into a theater will be set on a day-to-day basis, as long as it does not fall below 17 for a musical or 12 for a play.

"It was an overwhelming ratification," a union spokesperson told the New York Times. "Everyone's very happy." (Dec. 10) That just proves why striking is the most valuable tool in the workers' toolbox.

Don't use FedEx during holidays

As part of the ongoing campaign to unionize workers at FedEx Ground, supporters are asked to sign the "No Ship Pledge" at www.FedUpwithFedEx.org. □

Spread of HIV/AIDS:

'Proof positive of injustice'

By Dianne Mathiowetz
Atlanta

It happened as some 3,000 researchers, scientists, health professionals and agency administrators had gathered in Atlanta for the Centers for Disease Control national conference on HIV/AIDS prevention Dec. 2-5. A coalition of grass-roots AIDS organizations, the Prevention Justice Mobilization (PJM), intervened to bring a real solution to the epidemic that has killed millions around the world.

After more than two decades of research, the methods of transmission of HIV are well established. There are effective medical treatments to enhance and prolong the lives of those infected with the disease.

Why then, are the numbers of new infections rising among certain populations, specifically communities of color? Why are so many people not receiving medical treatment?

'AIDS doesn't discriminate—but society does'

In Georgia, for example, almost 80 percent of newly infected people are African-American or Latino. It is estimated that 50 percent of Black gay men in major urban areas are HIV-positive. The greatest increase in new infections is among people under 25. AIDS is the number one cause of death among Black women ages 18 to 49.

To the activists with Prevention Justice Mobilization, these facts are proof-positive of social injustice and social and economic disparities. They counter the traditional response to the AIDS epidemic—targeting an individual's "risky" behavior—by raising the structural "risks" of rates of homelessness, incarceration, domestic and other

gender-based violence, lack of access to healthcare, and inadequate wages or income that plague marginalized communities.

These factors are the greatest indicator of who will contract HIV and die of AIDS.

Years of "abstinence-only" sex education, the failure to provide condoms in prisons, and the rejection of needle-exchange programs have only confirmed that scientific and medical solutions are being ignored because of religious and right-wing ideology, class and social disparities, and racist and homophobic prejudice.

On the third day of the conference, PJM members poured out of the Hyatt Regency Hotel to take their message to the streets.

Some 300 people with whistles, flashlights, signs and banners brought the demand for a comprehensive and just prevention program to the many workers and tourists on Peachtree Street at rush hour on Dec. 4.

Hotel and restaurant staff came to the windows and gave a thumbs up. Drivers in their cars honked in support.

Denied a permit to march in the street by the Atlanta Police Department, the marchers nevertheless stopped traffic on this major thoroughfare by crossing back and forth across the street at the traffic lights.

The rally in Woodruff Park included the singing of "The 12 Days of Christmas." The final verse went as follows:

"In the AIDS epidemic, the gov'ment gave to me, NO NATIONAL PLAN—anti-gay bias, a decade of flat funding, a fast track to prison, no decent housing,

roadblocks to treatment, silver virginity rings, censorship of science, discrimination, misinformation and a country full of H.I.V."

The Atlanta march was preceded by actions across the country, from Boston to Austin to Oakland.

In Washington, D.C., on Nov. 30, nearly 200 activists—including community members, students and people living with HIV and AIDS—brought together local, domestic and global demands for critical changes to U.S. HIV and AIDS policies.

After the rally, in a separate demonstration in front of the White House, 40 demonstrators wrapped in red tape—a symbol of the political red tape blocking effective HIV and AIDS action—and wearing shirts that said "At-Risk Youth" and "Hand-tied Teacher" sat in front of the presidential palace and refused to move until the government cut the red tape.

Referencing the three warnings given to advocates conducting civil disobedience before they're arrested, they chanted, "Warning one, warning two, warning three, warning eight. We won't leave 'til you cut the red tape!"

All 40 were arrested.

The PJM was initiated by Community HIV/AIDS Mobilization Project (CHAMP) in collaboration with ACT UP Philadelphia, AIDS Foundation of Chicago, the Center for HIV Law and Policy, the Georgia Prevention Justice Alliance, the Harm Reduction Coalition, the National Women and AIDS Collective, the New York State Black Gay Network and SisterLove.

For more information, go to www.preventionjustice.org. Material on the D.C. demonstration is from that website. □



WW PHOTO: JOHN CATALINOTTO

NBC airs evidence in Mumia case

Continued from page 1
mote their book, which calls for Abu-Jamal's execution. But a concerted effort by Mumia supporters, including an international petition and letter-writing campaign demanding equal air time for Mumia; press packets from Journalists for Mumia; and a 7:00 a.m. demonstration in the freezing cold, forced the Today Show to give some fair coverage.

Among those who wrote letters to MSNBC urging that the program show fairness was Veronica Jones, a former prostitute and witness whom police

threatened and forced into lying at the original trial in 1982. When Jones tried to tell the truth at the hearing in 1996, she was handcuffed and arrested. Jones' letter was read at the rally.

Speakers at the rally, including Pam Africa of International Concerned Family and Friends of Mumia Abu-Jamal and Monica Moorehead of the International Action Center, addressed the atmosphere of police intimidation that has surrounded the case for 26 years.

"All Lauer did was show fairness to both sides," Africa noted. "He clearly pointed out that police hid the evi-

dence, yet last night Chris Matthews [of MSNBC] and other conservative talk show hosts did hit pieces on Lauer."

Moorehead spoke to the vital role that the movement has played in keeping Mumia alive for 26 years. His case, she said, was really about silencing a voice that speaks out on all the important social issues, from the struggle against poverty, racism and wars to the right to health care, housing and jobs.

Other rally speakers included Ramona Africa, MOVE organization; Suzanne Ross, NY Free Mumia Abu-Jamal Coalition; and Tyneisha Bowens,

Nandigram says ‘No!’ to Dow’s chem

By Stevan Kirschbaum
Nandigram, West Bengal, India

For 11 months the people’s movement of Nandigram has defied the full power of the Indian state, military, police and armed death squads in a struggle to halt a planned “chemical hub” that would destroy their district.

Nandigram comprises 38 villages in the East Midnapore district of West Bengal, located 60 miles southwest of Kolkata (formerly called Calcutta). Its population of 250,000 consists mostly of peasant farmers, laborers and fishers.

The people of Nandigram trace their history back nearly 2,000 years. They take great pride in their heritage of fighting to defend their land. One village is named Pichabani—“We shall not step back”—in memory of their successful struggle in 1942 to drive the British colonialists out of the area.

In December 2006, the people of Nandigram were given notice that nearly

one quarter of their land would be seized and 70,000 people be evicted from their homes. Some 127 primary schools, four secondary schools, three high schools, 112 temples, 42 masjids and countless houses, markets, shops and sacred burial grounds were to be destroyed and the land given to the Salim Indonesia group—a real estate “developer.”

Salim is part of a growing number of dirty middlemen who develop the infrastructure—roads, bridges and so on—to literally pave the way for corporate special economic zones. In Nandigram the SEZ was to be a chemical hub led by Dow Chemical, infamous for the development of napalm used against the Vietnamese people.

Dow is also hated in India since it bought up Union Carbide. On the night of Dec. 3, 1984, a pesticide plant of Union Carbide released 40 tons of methyl isocyanate gas in the city of Bhopal, killing upwards of 5,000 people. The disaster is ranked as one of the world’s worst industrial catastrophes due to negligence.

The people of Nandigram are also aware of the fate of Singur, a nearby area where lands were taken away and the peasants brutalized to make way for the Tata Small automobile project. They were determined not to accept a similar fate.

They immediately organized to fight back. On Jan. 3 of this year, 15,000 people assembled at the village governing office to protest. Police opened fire and many were injured. Three days later, over 50,000 people gathered and announced the formation of the Bhumi Ucched Pratirodh Committee (BUPC)—Committee Against Land Grabbing and Eviction. This highly disciplined, representative body has led the struggle. The next day, state authorities fired into a crowd of protesters, killing three, including a 14-year-old boy.

The people then escalated to direct action in defense of their land. For the next three months, house-by-house and village-by-village, BUPC organized to establish effective people’s power. Roads were dug up, bridges blocked and barricades set up

to defend Nandigram by any means necessary. By March 2007 the people had effective control of Nandigram and the state could not move forward on the SEZ.

It was at this point that the state unleashed a vicious terror campaign.

On March 14, in the village of Gokul Nagar, police, soldiers and armed civilian thugs fired into a crowd of protesters who were worshipping to a goddess to save their homes. State forces employed the most cruel and savage of tactics, killing at least 14 and injuring hundreds with beatings and shootings. Rape was an organized police tactic, with hundreds of documented cases of gang rapes. Many people were “disappeared.”

But the people would not be defeated. They regrouped, reorganized and continued to hold Nandigram. News of their inspiring battle spread and they received solidarity and support from labor unionists, social justice activists, the urban poor from Kolkata and beyond, cultural workers and actors. All came to lend their support.

As part of the campaign to inflict maximum punishment and also cover up their atrocities against the people, state authorities attempted to deny them medical care and falsified the medical documentation of deaths, injuries and treatment. A courageous group of doctors and medical workers, the Medical Service Center, nevertheless went to Nandigram to set up a people’s clinic. They ministered to the people’s medical needs and have been steadfast advocates for their rights.

The MSC has produced a documented, detailed report on the deaths and injuries—Health Spectra, Vol. 17, Special Nandigram Issue. This horrifying catalog of atrocities is available through msc_cc@rediffmail.com. (The International Action Center has posted this video on YouTube—type in “Nandigram.”)

Unable to go forward with its plans, the government announced it would scrap the SEZ. The people’s movement, however, vowed to remain vigilant. Faced with a full-scale state coverup, the movement demanded justice, a full inquiry into the state’s atrocities, prosecution of those responsible for heinous crimes, and reparations and restitution for damages.

The breadth of the solidarity movement forced the Kolkata High Court to take up the case, but it remained silent on its findings for months.

On Nov. 6 and 12, 2007, the government unleashed yet another terrible assault on Nandigram. Nearly 100 people were killed, 652 houses were ransacked, 119 homes were burned to the ground, 9,205 people were left homeless and more than 200 rapes were reported. Many people are missing to this day. Villagers state that they witnessed government forces and their paid thugs carrying away bodies to be burned in the nearby Janani brick field, in the town of Kahejuree.

On Dec. 6, authorities discovered the charred bone and skull remains of bodies believed to be those killed in November. Notwithstanding all these odds, the people refuse to give in and continue to return to their burned-out homes, staying with neighbors and fashioning makeshift tents.

Solidarity campaign escalates

The movement in India, and in Kolkata in particular, has organized exemplary solidarity. On Nov. 14, a massive solidarity protest of 100,000 people took to the streets of Kolkata in support of Nandigram. Political activists, jurists, trade unionists, professors, “Bollywood” directors and actors, college students, youth workers, environmentalists and doctors are raising one voice to demand



Women tell reporters who accompanied IAC delegation about attacks on Nandigram.



Mother and children in front of burned-out home..

Repression and a false policy

How could a party calling itself the Communist Party of India-Marxist carry out a policy of expropriating tens of thousands of peasants from their land and implementing Special Economic Zones with super-exploitation of labor? It is important to look at the history of class struggle in West Bengal to understand this development.

A left-front coalition led by the CPI-M was elected in Kolkata and West Bengal state in 1977. It has administered the state for 30 years.

West Bengal is the most densely populated state in India, with a population of 80 million. Kolkata has a population of 14 million. Beginning with British colonial rule, it became the most heavily industrialized city in India.

The region has a long history of revolutionary opposition to British colonialism as well as militant trade unionism and peasant organization. Communist and left parties have a strong base among both workers and peasants. From the 1950s through the 1970s, many workers were killed and thousands jailed in militant union struggles. There were general strikes and plant seizures. These strikes won important gains for the organized working class.

The CPI-M was elected in 1977 because of this revolutionary political climate. But it had a totally social democratic orientation. It had become a reformist, left party administering an oppressive capitalist state. This is why the Indian bourgeoisie accepts its holding office. It put a cap on the struggle.

The CPI-M has defended its open conciliation with the ruling class with the utterly false position that socialism in

India can be built only on the basis of developed capitalism. Thus, it is committed to the smooth running of the capitalist state. This repressive state apparatus is often used against more revolutionary left parties who continue to organize and agitate among the workers.

Although the workers have won gains and some important land reforms, capitalist property relations remain basically intact. The repressive state apparatus of police, courts and jails and the enormous state bureaucracy enforcing capitalist ownership also remain unchanged. In West Bengal as a whole and in the huge city of Kolkata, there is desperate poverty and an enormous gap between rich and poor. In 30 years of administering the state, the CPI-M has never challenged these fundamental class relations.

Especially in the past decade, faced with demands from the IMF and World Bank to make the investment climate friendly to international capital, the CPI-M has made ever-increasing concessions. For example, based on a World Bank plan to improve the “image” of Kolkata, many thousands of homeless families who lived and slept on the streets and along the railroad tracks and canals were forcibly removed to vast slums outside the central city area. This did not solve the problem—it only removed it from view.

With the collapse of the Soviet Union, the Indian bourgeoisie lost billions of dollars in Soviet aid and trade. In 2000 India announced the introduction of a Special Economic Zones policy. Since then 220 such zones have been established throughout India.

Throughout the 1990s a process of de-industrialization happened in West Bengal. Based on the drive to maximize profits by ruthlessly cutting labor costs and undercutting labor militancy, more than 56,000 industries closed shop in the state. The industrialized work force was cut in half, from 9,170,000 to 4,560,000.

The CPI-M, anxious to attract foreign capital, has expropriated the land of tens of thousands of peasants to create zones where corporations are free of all labor regulations and there is intense super-exploitation.

Rather than utilize land closer to Kolkata where closed industries used to be located, the state government selected Nandigram, an isolated rural area almost 60 miles from the militant workers of Kolkata, as the site for an SEZ.

The corporate media in India has praised these policies of the CPI-M as “creative” and “flexible.”

On a national level, the CPI-M is part of India’s present coalition government.

The CPI-M’s program and actions in the Nandigram affair do the greatest injury to the history and name of communism and Marxism. Genuine communist, socialist and other progressive forces are organizing and leading the struggle against the SEZs, global imperialism and the Indian capitalist state. It is these truly revolutionary organizations that represent the future of the Indian struggle for socialism. Nandigram provides yet another, if not the most severe, lesson of the fatal and tragic error of communists joining and administering a capitalist state.

—Sara Flounders

mical hub

justice for Nandigram and the truth about the state's criminal actions.

On Nov. 16, the High Court finally released its findings declaring that the state's actions in Nandigram were "unconstitutional." However, instead of taking action against those responsible, the court ordered further investigation.

Now the press are carrying daily stories that support the claims of the BUPC and the people of Nandigram. Witnesses have come forward with video and still photos of the rapes committed. (The Statesman, Dec. 1) Missing bodies have been discovered. (Press Trust of India, Dec. 7) Finally a few of the thugs have been charged and taken into custody. However, 10 of these thugs had earlier been picked up and quickly released without charge by the state authorities.

Nandigram has now entered the vocabulary of class struggle in India. The Dec. 1 Hindustan Times carried an article headlined "Nandigram re-run alleged in Orissa." The article refers to the government's campaign in another district to browbeat protesters into submission as "the Nandigram strategy." But the business pages of the Indian press are filled with panicky articles assuring future imperialist SEZ investors that India is safe and that Nandigram is an isolated case.

Global imperialism's favorite tactic

A "special economic zone" is global imperialism's model of super-exploitation at its most severe. In different countries the name changes—free enterprise zones, maquiladoras, SEZs—but the tactics are the same. The people are ruthlessly driven from the land to pave the way for unrestricted corporate exploitation. Corporations have virtually totalitarian authority, ignoring all labor standards, hiring and firing workers with no redress, paying starvation wages with no social benefits, and ignoring any environmental protections.

In the United States, the union movement in an earlier period fought against what it called the "runaway shop." Now the runaway is global.

Why would Dow Chemical pay union wages to workers in a plant in the United States when it can pay SEZ workers pennies a day? Dow just announced it was terminating more than 1,000 jobs in Charleston, S.C. In the state of West Bengal, over 56,000 firms have been shut down while at the same time SEZ industries are cropping up all over India.

IAC solidarity mission

On Nov. 29, an International Action Center delegation led by former U.S. Attorney General Ramsey Clark joined with West Bengali activists to visit the area of the attacks in Gokul Nagar. The state authorities had sealed off all roads leading into Nandigram both to increase their isolation and keep evidence of the November atrocities from the media.

Heavily armed police accompanied the delegation. There was concern this would make residents fearful to speak freely for fear of reprisals. But as the IAC arrived at a refugee camp at the Brajomohn Tewari School, scores of victims came forward. One after the other gave their stories of suffering and injuries sustained at the hands of police and armed mercenaries.

A mother showed the wounds of her 10-year-old son, Bulu Mir, who had been shot through the head but miraculously survived. A 30-year-old woman gave moving testimony of how she had been gang raped. She is one of more than 200 women, ranging from children to elders, who

Continued on page 11



Huge rally in Kolkata against U.S. imperialism.



90-year-old woman in Nandigram tells Ramsey Clark how her home was torched by death squad..

Anti-imperialists meet to discuss and act

By Sara Flounders
Kolkata (Calcutta), India

It wasn't just another international conference. It wasn't just a talk shop.

The day before the conference on "Imperialism, globalization, Zionism—Resistance to military occupation and war," which opened on Nov. 28, a powerful demonstration and rally of more than 50,000 people was held in the streets of Kolkata (Calcutta).

Most of the international delegates to the conference came from areas of successful armed resistance to imperialist onslaught. Their experiences were reflected in the resolutions.

The All India Anti-Imperialist Forum (AIAIF) organized the conference, with a strong focus on the U.S. imperialist war in the Middle East and the role of Zionism. An important delegation from Lebanon attended, including members of Hezbollah. Several delegates were denied visas by the Indian government, including from Iran.

Other international delegates came from armed resistance in Nepal and from Palestine. There were delegates from Turkey, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Russia, France, Germany, Canada and the U.S. They were joined by 1,500 delegates and several hundred observers from across India.

The Mahajati Sadan auditorium was packed to overflowing. Outside were several tented areas where video screens allowed more people to follow the presentations.

As international delegates entered the hall, lines of chanting and cheering Indian delegates greeted us with raised fists.

Militant march and rally

The day before, many different contingents had marched to the U.S. Consulate with hundreds of anti-war and anti-imperialist banners and placards. One slogan raised repeatedly was "Death, death to U.S. imperialism!"

Youth from Nepal played traditional instruments as they marched, drawing broad support that reflected enthusiasm for armed resistance to the feudal regime in Nepal, which lies directly north of this West Bengal state in India.

At an outdoor rally after the demonstration and at the opening session of the conference the next day, Hussein Sukur emotionally described how the U.S. had supplied Israel with the bombs that wiped out his entire family in Beirut. He is determined that war crimes charges must be lodged against the guilty.

Manik Mukherjee of the AIAIF set the tone of the conference with a paper on the international situation since the collapse of the Soviet Union and the socialist bloc. He described the deepening crisis in the economies of the imperialist countries

and growing contradictions among them over the world market.

Leading members of Hezbollah gave presentations on the Lebanese Resistance and the changes it has achieved. Abdul-Halim Fadlallah addressed the conditions and organization that had "inflicted on the occupation state a resounding defeat, the first of its type in the history of the Arab-Israeli conflict." Mustafa Haj Ali explained that "the experience in Lebanon teaches that it is possible to resist imperialism."

It was a significant participation by important Islamic resistance fighters at a gathering of mainly left secular forces.

A number of the conference presentations dealt with firm opposition to the U.S. occupations of Iraq and Afghanistan and to U.S. imperialism's support for the Zionist state of Israel. They covered the phony "peace conference" in Annapolis and the continuing heroic Palestinian resistance. This focus was also reflected in the conference resolutions.

The continuing armed revolutionary struggle in Nepal against the feudal state was raised by Suman Jadav from the Communist Party of Nepal—Maoist. This group is leading the resistance that has liberated two-thirds of Nepal and forced negotiations on the archaic social forces still holding the reins of state.

The living struggle against globalization and plans for a Special Economic Zone (SEZ) in Nandigram, 60 miles from Kolkata, had the attention of many conference delegates. For the first time a popular struggle has actually succeeded in stopping one of these centers of super-exploitation of labor from being set up.

According to the World Bank, more than 3,000 such zones have been established in recent years in 130 countries. Some 220 SEZs exist in India and more than 500 are on the drawing boards. A conference on imperialism in this era needs a clear view on this aggressive new labor offensive by multi-national corporations, backed up by Pentagon weapons and enforced by local government repression.

Ramsey Clark, a former U.S. attorney general and the founder of the International Action Center, spoke in the opening session of the conference and at the rally the day before. On the second day of the conference, Clark went to Nandigram with two other delegates from the IAC—Steve Kirschbaum and Sara Flounders. They returned just before the close of the conference to give a report on the continuing struggle there and the government's severe repression of local peasants. (See accompanying article.)

This repression is being carried out by a reformist left party that has held office in the state of West Bengal and in the city of Kolkata for 30 years and unfortunately calls itself the Communist party of

India—Marxist (CPI-M). Its policies are being successfully opposed by a broad peasant coalition in the Nandigram district and by several revolutionary left parties, including the Socialist Unity Center of India, which was a major force in the anti-imperialist conference in Kolkata. This debate has roiled Indian left politics and the mass media. The repressive policy has been the focus of massive demonstrations and strikes.

Many of the Indian delegates to the conference had played an active role in defending the Nandigram struggle. Some had been severely beaten and even shot. It was a living example of the impact of corporate globalization on the world movement.

At the conclusion, the conference voted to expand its efforts into a wider anti-imperialist formation: the International Anti-Imperialist and People's Solidarity Coordinating Committee. Ramsey Clark was asked to head it up and Manik Mukherjee to act as general secretary, and both agreed. The organization intends to reach out to many other countries and resistance struggles. The conference proceeding was chaired by Dhrubajyoti Mukhopadhyay.

Concluding resolutions affirmed solidarity with the resistance in Iraq and in Lebanon, solidarity with Iran, full support of the Palestinian demand for the right to return, solidarity with the Bolivarian Revolution in Venezuela and the Cuban Revolution, and condemnation of imperialist aggression and destabilization in Latin America, especially against Cuba and Venezuela.

Two resolutions dealt with international developments impacting on India. One warned that the Indo-U.S. nuclear deal is "part of a blueprint for a bigger political-strategic collaboration between India and the U.S." A resolution against Special Economic Zones noted the "unrestricted exploitation, loot and plunder" by foreign and Indian capital and demanded their complete scrapping. □



WW PHOTOS: SARA FLOUNDERS

Kolkata march supports Nandigram struggle against Special Economic Zone.

Civil servants strike, protest in Egypt

By G. Dunkel

Many of the workers in local tax collection offices in Egypt are no longer youths, but they have been coming out into the streets, confronting the cops, trying to occupy the office of the official union that is supposed to represent all the workers in Egypt, and carrying out a hunger strike in front of Cabinet offices. This militancy is a sure sign that their living conditions are harsh and worsening.

The tax workers told reporters that they make \$50 to \$80 a month after decades of employment at jobs that can often be dangerous—because farmers bitterly resent the taxes they are forced to pay. Inflation is high in Egypt; independent economists put the real rate around 16 percent yearly.

This tax collectors’ struggle is part of a wave of strikes and workers’ protests in Egypt over the past two years. Hundreds of actions have taken place, at times involving tens of thousands of workers,

particularly in the textile mills in the delta south of Alexandria.

Workers have won some significant victories. The government has hesitated to engage in the kind of mass repression it has used against students and intellectuals demanding democracy. The regime focuses more on picking off workers’ leaders and closing organizing centers.

The tax collectors are all state employees who work for the property tax department. They began their struggle in October when 55,000 tax workers struck. In early December, tax workers from all over Egypt—variously estimated at a few hundred by the AP to thousands by an Egyptian journalist—began an “indefinite picket and hunger strike” in front of Cabinet offices in Cairo. They have done this despite the refusal of the official union to support the strike.

One of the protesters told the German Press Agency (DPA), “We could be dismissed from work, we could be imprisoned or beaten up by security police, but

we don’t care any more.”

“We fear nothing. We just want our rights back,” another cried out.

The protesters say they will collect no taxes until their demands are met. Such a stoppage could have a serious impact on the finances of Egypt’s provinces and rural communities.

Calling the finance minister, the head of the official labor union, and even members of the Cabinet “liars, scoundrels and thieves,” the protesters said they stood alone, “poor, hungry and no better than beggars.”

Leaders of the strike say the government has so far not responded to demands that they be treated like their colleagues in departments run by the Ministry of Finance.

“They have no hearts, no children or wives or parents,” a protester told DPA, describing how “inhuman” the authorities were. “We are spending our days here on the bare pavement and they feel nothing for us. Where is the mercy?”

Egypt under President Hosni Mubarak is the most important ally of U.S. imperialism in the Middle East, after Israel. A major question for progressives outside of Egypt is how this strike wave is going to affect the U.S. drive to dominate the oil, and profits derived from this oil, in the region.

Joel Beinin and Hossam el-Hamalawy wrote in an article about a strike in the textile industry, “Some of the strike leaders contacted leftist Kifaya activists in Cairo to ask for their support ... suggesting that they are beginning to consider political issues beyond their immediate economic demands, perhaps including regime change.” (MERIP online, May 9)

The authors concluded, “The mere fact that a workers’ movement has persisted and achieved as much as it has is eloquent testimony that the struggle between labor and capital is alive and well—and likely to intensify as the neoliberal project in Egypt advances.” □

As prelude to Afghan invasion

U.S. war agitation targeted LGBT movements

By Leslie Feinberg

U.S. and British military public relations, and their embedded media, focused on Taliban laws and attitudes about same-sex love to agitate for the October 2001 invasion and justify occupation.

The monopoly corporate media broadcast this newfound concern for the rights of oppressed sexualities—like its crocodile tears for Afghan women—after 9/11, as U.S. imperialism readied the Pentagon to plant its corporate flag in this geo-strategic Central Asian country. Transnational energy behemoths like Unocal and Enron were hellbent on siphoning the vast fossil fuel wealth of the Caspian Sea region from the former Soviet Union through Afghanistan.

More than a year before 9/11, the U.S. Department of State’s “Country Reports on Human Rights Practices, 2000” had stated that during the Taliban rule, “The punishment for those found guilty of homosexual acts is to have walls toppled over them. Although there were no known instances of such punishment during the year, this punishment was carried out on at least one occasion in 1999, and seven times in 1998 (resulting in five deaths).”

Whether those facts are accurate or distorted, the Department of State wasn’t

ready to make war against Afghanistan in 2000, using same-sex rights as a shield. And of course, the U.S. did not declare war on any of its client states in the region that punish homosexuality by prison terms or execution.

In the weeks between the Sept. 11 attacks and the first blast of the imperialist blitzkrieg on Oct. 7, articles in the imperialist corporate media amplified accounts of the 1998 and 1999 executions. These reports also got picked up by media aimed at the lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans communities.

But months later, after the U.S.-led occupation of Afghanistan was already in place, more reports about the period in which the executions took place revealed a more complex reality.

Struggle against rape

Tim Reid reported in “Kandahar Comes Out of the Closet,” in the Jan. 12, 2002, issue of *The Times of London* that stopping the abduction and rape of male youths by landlord militia commanders “was one of the key factors in Mullah Omar mobilizing the Taliban.” Mohammed Omar is the leader of the Taliban

Reid reported that two non-Taliban militia commanders fought over a male

youth in the summer of 1994, just a few months before the Taliban took control of Kandahar. Civilians were killed in the artillery shelling. “Omar’s group freed the boy and appeals began flooding in for Omar to help in other disputes. By November, Omar and his Taliban were Kandahar’s new rulers.”

Reid quotes Torjan, a soldier loyal to the post-Taliban governor appointed under imperialist occupation. Torjan, 38 years old, recalled, “In the days of the Mujahidin, there were men with their ‘ashna’ [beloved young man] everywhere, at every corner, in shops, on the streets, in hotels: it was completely open, a part of life. But in the later Mujahidin years, more and more soldiers would take boys by force, and keep them for as long as they wished. But when the Taliban came, they were very strict about the ban.”

Other media presented similar accounts. The *New York Times* wrote on Feb. 21, 2002: “In 1994, the Taliban, then a small army of idealistic students of the Koran, were called to rescue a boy over whom two commanders had fought. They freed the boy and the people responded with gratitude and support.”

The *Times* article quoted Amin Ullah, a

money changer, gesturing to his two teenage sons hunched over wads of Afghani bank notes at Kandahar’s currency bazaar. “At that time boys couldn’t come to the market because the commanders would come and take away any that they liked,” Ullah said.

One of the Afghan men that the U.S. Department of state claimed was sentenced to death in 1998 for being “found guilty of homosexual acts” survived. By law, he was later set free. The Feb. 21, 2002, *New York Times* admitted that the man—Mullah Peer Muhammad—was a former Taliban fighter arrested for sexual abuse of young male prisoners while he was in charge of the central prison in Kandahar. The *Times* stated, “The man had been convicted of raping and killing a boy.”

Clearly a more complex reality existed than the one the *New York Post* used to press for war: “Men accused of being gay were executed by having a wall toppled on them.”

These accounts aim to divert attention from the real issue: The Pentagon—that armed institution of gay-bashing violence—had no right to invade and occupy Afghanistan.

Next: Embedded anthropology

E-mail: lfeinberg@workers.org.

Victory for U.S. war resisters in Canada

By Dee Knight

The War Resisters Support Campaign (WRSC) in Canada scored a victory Dec. 5 when the Parliament’s Committee on Citizenship and Immigration passed a motion that would grant U.S. war resisters the right to stay legally. All three parties on the committee that are in opposition to the governing Conservative Party—an ally of George Bush—united to pass the motion.

The motion still needs to pass in the full Parliament.

“This motion is a very important step forward,” the WRSC said, “after the Supreme Court ruled on Nov. 15 that it would not hear the appeals of U.S. war



Resister Phil McDermott and his partner, Jamine Aponte.

resisters in their refugee claims. It shows a willingness of the opposition parties in Canada’s Parliament to come together to ensure that none of these resisters is returned to the U.S., where they face court-martials, incarceration and possible deployment to Iraq.”

The victory followed rallies in eight cities across Canada and an intensive WRSC lobbying effort. It built on a national anti-war demonstration in Ottawa, Canada’s capital, in August, at which Iraq war veteran and former Sgt. Phil McDowell was a featured speaker. McDowell told the demonstrators he refused to report for a second tour in Iraq after serving there for a year in 2004-5, and determined that the war was immoral and illegal. He called on the

audience to press the government to say no to Bush and yes to U.S. war resisters.

McDowell took the same message to the Parliamentary Committee, telling the members about numerous GIs who refused to fight in Iraq, did prison time and then received bad conduct discharges—a permanent felony record.

Olivia Chow, a close friend of the War Resister Support Campaign, had introduced the motion. Chow represents a Toronto neighborhood that is home to the WRSC office. Following the committee vote, Chow said: “Canadians said no to George Bush’s illegal invasion of Iraq. Now Canadians want Parliament to let the war resisters stay in Canada.”

As the New Democratic Party’s main spokesperson on immigration, Chow is also leading a significant move that would have Canada buck the tide of anti-immigrant hysteria that has gripped right-wing

and ruling class elements in the U.S. and some European countries.

While celebrating this important victory, the WRSC said, “There is still much work to be done to ensure that this motion translates into real protection for war resisters.”

Parliament closes Dec. 13 for the holiday break, which lasts until early February. The WRSC is calling a pan-Canadian mobilization on Jan. 26 to ensure that deportation proceedings against U.S. war resisters currently in Canada cease immediately; and that the full Parliament passes a law ensuring that U.S. war resisters refusing to fight in Iraq can stay in Canada and become legal residents.

“The best way to think of it,” said one WRSC member, “is as a stepping stone or a springboard. Just one victory—with the chance for more.” The struggle continues. □

Two strategies against Iran

Bush gang’s plan to attack undercut by NIE report

By Joyce Chediac

A bitter dispute within the Bush administration became a public fight on Dec. 3 when all 16 U.S. spy agencies jointly announced, in a National Intelligence Estimate (NIE) report, that Iran had neither a nuclear program nor nuclear weapons.

This intelligence about-face was not the result of new spy data or a better spying technique. It was a political move taken by the U.S. military itself to stop the clique headed by President George W. Bush and Vice President Dick Cheney from the dangerous adventure of bombing Iranian nuclear installations when the Pentagon is already hopelessly bogged down in Afghanistan and Iraq.

This victory for Iran reflects the strength of the national liberation struggles in the Middle East, which have not been stopped by Pentagon threats or bombings. It also is a result of anti-war sentiment in the U.S., as even the Pentagon owns up to difficulties recruiting soldiers to fight in the Middle East.

The NIE report removed the linchpin holding up the Bush-Cheney argument for aggression against Iran: the nuclear weapons myth. Immediately after the report’s release, the attempt by the White House to corral the U.N. Security Council for a third round of sanctions against Iran fell apart.

Who is behind the report? “The secretaries of state and defense and the leaders of the uniformed military had decided that diplomacy was the best way to deal with an admittedly hostile and dangerous force in Tehran.” (Time, Dec. 17)

Tehran ‘has no nuclear weapons’

The NIE report represented all 16 U.S. spy agencies, eight of them directly linked to the military. Its conclusions are available online. It assessed with “high confidence” that “in 2003 Tehran halted its nuclear weapons program,” had not restarted it, and today “has no nuclear weapons.” While Iran continues to enrich uranium as part of its civilian nuclear energy program, the report finds it likely that Iran would not have enough plutonium for a nuclear weapon until 2015.

The NIE contradicted its own earlier findings, made in 2005, that Iran was secretly building nuclear weapons. The NIE issued this bombshell five years after a 2002 report in which U.S. spies claimed that Iraq had “weapons of mass destruction.” This blatantly false statement gave the Bush gang its rationale for launching what many in the military now see as their debacle in Iraq.

While Bush and Cheney were trying to construct a similar pretext for bombing Iran, the Pentagon spy agencies undercut the pretext.

A year ago “Bush asked the [Joint Chiefs of Staff] about attacking Iran. He was told that a bombing campaign could do severe damage to Iran’s military and nuclear facilities, but the Chiefs said they were opposed to such a strike because of the probable ‘blowback.’ The Iranians, Bush was told, could make life very difficult for the U.S. troops on the ground in Iraq. They could shut off the flow of oil through the Strait of Hormuz, thereby creating a global economic crisis.” (Time)

In truth, U.S. generals have reasons to avoid a war at this time against a country of 71 million whose population is militantly anti-imperialist and showed what they could do just 30 years ago, when they staged a fierce and mass revolution-

ary struggle that ousted a U.S. puppet, the hated shah of Iran.

But Bush was moving ahead anyway, so the military pulled the rug out from under him. “The truth about Iran appeared to shatter the last shreds of credibility of the White House’s bomb-Iran brigade, and especially that of Vice President Dick Cheney,” wrote Time magazine.

A victory for Iran

This is why Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad said, “This report tries to extract America from its impasse, but it also is a declaration of victory for the Iranian people against the great powers.” (aljazeera.net, Dec. 5) This view is held by the Iranian people as well, according to Al Jazeera’s reporter in Tehran.

While U.S. spies have exposed one lie, it does not mean that what they are saying now is the whole truth. Iran says it has never sought to produce atomic weapons. “Ali Lariyane, delegate of the Supreme Leader of the National Higher Security Council, said if the U.S. government has any evidence of this, it should hand it over to Mohammad El Baradei, director of the International Atomic Energy Agency.” (Prensa Latina, Dec. 7)

Iran, an oppressed country, has every right to develop nuclear weapons as a deterrent against the U.S. and Israel,

which are bent on Iran’s destruction and pose the real threat in the Middle East. Israel has 75 to 200 nuclear warheads, according to the Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists. The U.S., with more than 9,000 nuclear warheads, has a string of bases in the Middle East, three aircraft carrier groups in the Arabian/Persian Gulf with guns pointed at Iran, and troops on two of Iran’s borders, in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Want to subvert Iran

The main movers in the report are National Intelligence Director Adm. Mike McConnell and Thomas Fingar, chair of the National Intelligence Council. McConnell, who came out of retirement to take on this study, was the chief security advisor to the Joint Chiefs of Staff during the dissolution of the Soviet Union and during the first Gulf War. Fingar has a long intelligence history with the State Department and was part of John Negroponte’s inner circle.

Members of Congress had requested the NIE report. Among elected officials mentioned in the New York Times in conjunction with the report is Republican Sen. Charles Hagel of Nebraska.

In a recent speech at the Center for Strategic and International Relations on U.S.-Iran relations, Hagel gave more details on the view of the departments of

State and Defense and of the Joint Chiefs on how to approach Iran.

“Loose talk of World War III, intimidation, threats, bellicose speeches only heighten the dangers we face in the world. ... What confidence should we have in a strategy that, to date, has nothing to show for it ... that has achieved no tangible changes to Iran’s nuclear program and actually has seen the Middle East become more dangerous and Iran more defiant? Is the U.S. pursuing a policy that could very well produce a self-fulfilling prophecy of the president’s warning of World War III?

“By refusing to engage Iran in direct, unconditional and comprehensive talks, we are perpetuating dangerous geo-political unpredictabilities. Our refusal to recognize Iran’s influence does not decrease its influence, but rather increases it.

“Our strategy must be one focused on direct engagement and diplomacy ... backed by the leverage of international pressure, military options, isolation and containment ... not unlike the strategies that the United States pursued during the Cold War against the Soviet Union.”

‘Talks’ as cover for destabilization

Hagel continued, “Inside Iran, there are social strains and serious differences

Continued on page 10

CIA destroys tapes in prisoner torture case

By John Catalinotto
New York

When it comes to “human rights,” the U.S. government has become infamous for two brutal military occupations and for mistreatment of prisoners that includes abuse and torture at Baghram, Abu Ghraib and Guantánamo prisons.

Now not only has current CIA head Michael Hayden admitted that the agency destroyed tapes showing interrogations of at least two “high-level” prisoners, but in a Dec. 10 statement the agency said that its lawyers had given written approval for destroying the tapes, even though it was known they might be needed for legal proceedings later.

The tapes destroyed include hundreds of hours of interrogation of Abu Zubaydah and Abd al-Rahim al-Nashiri. Both were captured in 2002 and are now being held at Guantánamo Bay, a territory in Cuba occupied and administered by the U.S. Navy despite the Cuban government’s objections.

Hayden said the agency was right to destroy two videotapes of interrogations, and claimed that the tapes posed a “serious security risk.” He said that if they had become public, they could have exposed CIA officials and their families to “retaliation from al-Qaeda and its sympathizers.”

Others say the tapes were destroyed for a different reason: they would make the Abu Ghraib scandal look like child’s play and expose Washington as the world’s home office of torture.

The Bush administration, which had promoted abuse and torture, failed to order the CIA to refrain from destroying the tapes. It has also come out that leading Democrats, including current House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, were informed as early as 2002 about CIA interrogation techniques, including waterboarding, and approved them.

Zubaydah had been captured in a fire-fight in Pakistan in March of 2002 and was interrogated at a CIA safe house in Thailand. Al-Nashiri was captured in the United Arab Emirates.

According to their confessions, Zubaydah is a high-ranking al-Qaeda official and Al-Nashiri planned the 2000 attack against the USS Cole in Yemeni waters. Both have challenged the confessions, saying they were obtained under torture.

The U.S. authorities labeled the two “high-level detainees,” of whom there are 14 at Guantánamo, and classified them as “enemy combatants.” Since U.S. interrogators used extreme sensory and sleep deprivation, along with blatant torture like waterboarding, it is possible the two prisoners told their interrogators anything they thought their captors wanted to hear.

Most of the other 800 prisoners who have been held at the U.S. concentration camp in Guantánamo since 2002, of whom about 305 remain, were picked up in Afghanistan or Pakistan by Pakistani mercenaries. In some cases they were rank-and-file Taliban soldiers, who under pre-9/11 conditions would be considered prisoners of war.

Others were just in the wrong place at the wrong time, like the al-Jazeera reporter Sami al-Hajj, captured in 2001 and still held after six years. According to al-Hajj, who was beaten and tortured at Baghram Air Force Base in Afghanistan, for three years interrogators tried to get him to say there was a relationship between al-Jazeera and al-Qaeda.

CCR brings case to Supreme Court

The group that has organized legal representation for the Guantánamo prisoners, most held since 2002, is the New York-based Center for Constitutional Rights (CCR). After winning a case for the detainees in 2004—Rasul v. Bush—the

CCR coordinated a large coalition of pro-bono lawyers, including many from corporate law firms, to represent the prisoners there and try to get them a hearing.

In 2006, CCR won another case before the Supreme Court, Hamdan v. Rumsfeld, which was supposed to guarantee the detainees a hearing. However, Congress passed a new repressive law, the Military Commissions Act, which placed the cases before special military courts and in reality denied them hearings.

“We have been back and forth in the courts as the government has tried one maneuver after another to avoid the Supreme Court’s past rulings—that the detainees are entitled to challenge their detention in U.S. courts,” said Vincent Warren, executive director of CCR.

Warren spoke at a luncheon meeting of CCR supporters and friends Dec. 10 in the group’s Manhattan offices. He gave an update on CCR’s third Supreme Court Guantánamo case. He recounted how a military lawyer had told him that the U.S. military had purposely chosen Guantánamo to build the prison in the hope of avoiding being subject to U.S. or any other law.

Before the Supreme Court on Dec. 5, CCR cooperating attorney Seth Waxman argued that Guantánamo is U.S.-controlled territory and that U.S. laws should hold there. Thus the prisoners should be entitled to challenge their detention in civilian courts under habeas corpus. “The U.S. government has complete jurisdiction and control over this place. No other law applies. If the U.S. law doesn’t apply, it is a law-free zone,” Waxman said.

Warren called Waxman’s argument defending the prisoners’ rights before the Supreme Court “brilliant” and was cautiously optimistic that there would be a favorable ruling. He added, however, that “even with a favorable decision it may still take another two years in the courts” before the detainees are heard. □



A rotten new bill

Earlier this fall the House of Representatives passed, by a ridiculous vote of 404-6, a thoroughly reactionary bill known as the “Violent Radicalization and Homegrown Terrorism Prevention Act.” Introduced by California Democrat Jane Harman, HR 1955 would set up commissions called “Centers of Excellence” to study what “radicalizes” people and how to prevent it. The Senate has yet to produce its version of the legislation.

While HR 1955 is supposed to be directed against “terrorism,” its language is so vague and broad that civil liberties activists rightly note that these “Centers of Excellence” could be turned against any direct action and even against dissenting speech or writing on the Internet. HR 1955 is a preliminary step for more state repression.

To keep its threat in perspective, and to see how to fight it, it’s useful to recall the history of the House Un-American Activities Committee or HUAC. Created in 1934, allegedly to fight the KKK and German Nazis, HUAC quickly became an instrument to investigate communists. When the Cold War peaked, from about 1948 to 1960, it had the weight of a modern Inquisition. If you were called before it, you could lose your job, be outlawed from your profession, and find your reputation ruined with neighbors and friends. If you stood strong and defied HUAC, you might do jail time for contempt of Congress.

By the early 1960s, young people by the thousands protested against HUAC when it started to investigate the anti-war movement. Its power was already beginning to wane. By the late 1960s, radicals looked forward to being called before HUAC. The more flamboyant protesters like Jerry Rubin and Abbie Hoffman ridiculed the committee. People laughed at it. Everyone had contempt of HUAC.

It was not any change in laws that altered the threat of HUAC but a change in the level of struggle and of mass consciousness.

In a similar way today, HR 1955 threatens dissent not just because of its wording but because it signals the intention of the capitalist state to find ways to crack down on opponents. It is important to try to stop it in the Senate, but also to prepare a popular struggle against it, should it pass.

Imagine this scenario. A “Center of Excellence” (it’s hard to write that phrase without quotes) hearing is held to investigate why people become “radicalized.” Protesters are there with picket signs: “I was radicalized when my job was outsourced after 20 years on the production line.” “I became a radical when my home was repossessed.” “I turned left when I was ethnically cleansed from New Orleans.” “I found myself considering violence when I was sent to Iraq to kill civilians.”

It’s a rotten bill. But if it passes—don’t moan, organize. □



Bob Kohler (center) at his 80th birthday party with Rickke Mananzala and Jesse Ehrensaft-Hawley, FIERCE; Joo-Hyun Kang, Audre Lorde Project; and Imani Henry and Cori Wiggins, FIERCE.

BOB KOHLER: Stonewall vet, AIDS activist, anti-racist fighter

By Imani Henry
New York

A multinational crowd of all ages marched on Dec. 9 through the streets of the West Village, the East Coast birthplace of the modern lesbian/gay/bi/trans movement. Onlookers repeatedly asked, “What’s going on? What are you protesting?” Marchers explained that they were actually just saying “Good-bye.”

Bob Kohler, a Stonewall Rebellion combatant and gay “granddad” to many New York LGBT radicals, had died Dec. 5 of lung cancer. He was 81 years old.

With militant chanting and drumming and carrying signs demanding services for homeless people with AIDS, over 150 LGBT and AIDS activists participated in the political funeral. Led by a banner that read, “We love you, Bob,” marchers chanted, “Whose streets? Bob’s streets?” as they made their way along Christopher Street on their way to throw Bob’s ashes into the water at the Hudson River piers.

In the week following his death, much was written about Bob’s decades of activism. What can never be stated enough was how, as a white, gay man, he spent his life fighting in solidarity with communities of color, transgender and gender non-conforming people and people living with AIDS.

“Bob was an unapologetic ally, which is what every lesbian, gay, I, two-spirit trans and gender non-conforming person of color needs,” said Lucia Leandro Gimeno, development and administrative coordinator for the Audre Lorde Project, a center for community organizing.

Throughout his life, Bob learned the meaning of self-determination and respected the leadership of oppressed communities. Without any fanfare, Bob Kohler would make himself available to do whatever was needed or asked of him.

According to an 80th birthday tribute written by Emmaia Gelman, one of the close friends and activists who took care of Bob in his later years, Bob was born in May of 1926 and raised in Queens, N.Y. After a stint in the Navy, he spent the immediate post-war years working in television, before starting his own talent agency. He was a pioneer in representing non-big-name African-American actors during a time of Jim Crow segregation.

In the 1960s, Bob became active with the civil rights group CORE (Congress for Racial Equality) and went to the South to participate in the Freedom Rides.

In the summer of 1969 immediately following the Stonewall Rebellion, Bob Kohler along with other Stonewall combatants formed the Gay Liberation Front. Inspired by the people of Vietnam’s National

Liberation Front, the GLF had a broad and revolutionary political platform.

The GLF was not only an LGBT anti-imperialist, anti-capitalist formation but it fought sexism and racism and declared itself in support of national liberation movements such as the Black Panther Party.

Over the years, Bob Kohler became an activist with many groups, including ACT-UP and New York City AIDS Housing Network, Sex Panic!, and Fed-Up Queers. He spent 18 months standing outside the NYC Division of AIDS Services with a clipboard and a cell phone, fighting the city’s illegal attempts to deny housing to poor/homeless people with AIDS.

Right up into his 70s, Bob loved to participate in civil disobedience. He was arrested at an estimated 32 direct actions in the fight against AIDS, for justice in the police murder of Amadou Diallo, and in solidarity with immigrants against the Special Registration Drive.

“You always knew you could count on him to show up at a picket, rally, meeting or special scouting mission that could be helped by an older white man with blue eyes who just needed to use a bathroom in that corporate headquarters,” wrote Joo-Hyun Kang, founding executive director of the Audre Lorde Project.

Two of Kohler’s dearest friends were the legendary trans leaders Sylvia Rivera and Marsha P Johnson. Marsha and Sylvia were also Stonewall combatants and founders of the first New York City trans group, Street Transvestites Action Revolutionaries (STAR). Sylvia affectionately referred to Bob as her “gay father” because of his love, respect and the solidarity he genuinely felt towards younger activists.

A longtime resident of the West Village, Bob later in life became a staunch supporter and ally to the political LGBT youth group FIERCE, which leads the fight against police brutality and gentrification of the Village.

Bran Fenner, co-director and one of the founders of FIERCE, said, “Bob Kohler has meant so much to FIERCE personally as well as organizationally. His work in the movement has been immense and so is the loss that so many of us are feeling. I feel honored to have been able to work with so many radical queer elders such as Bob and Sylvia.”

Rickke Mananzala, also a co-director of FIERCE, went on to add, “In honor of Bob, our work will stay steady on the road to reaching the future that he and other visionaries fought for. Thirty-eight years after Stonewall, Bob’s legacy will continue to remind us that the rebellion is not over!”

Bob Kohler, presente! □

Bush gang’s plan to attack undercut by NIE report

Continued from page 9

of opinion. ... There are political divides in Tehran. ... Our strategy should exploit these differences. ... The United States must be wise enough ... and patient enough ... not to follow the same destructive path on Iran that we did on Iraq.”

The forces backing the NIE report are just as hostile towards Iran as Bush and Cheney. They merely think other tactics would be more successful in bringing down Iran. For example, at a conference on regional security in Bahrain on Dec. 8, Defense Secretary Robert M. Gates called Iran “a grave threat to regional security even without nuclear weapons.” (New York Times, Dec. 9)

If Bush doesn’t bomb Iran in the next year, it doesn’t mean that the next administration won’t. Norman Podhoretz, a senior neoconservative and a cheerleader for bombing Iran, is foreign policy advisor to Rudolph Giuliani’s presidential campaign. And neither of the Democratic Party frontrunners, Hillary Clinton or

Barack Obama, has pulled back from shrill and aggressive positions on Iran.

Mass struggle made Pentagon blink

This is a falling out among thieves on how best to bring Iran down and how to stop the struggle in the Middle East. The NIE benignly describes itself as “the intelligence community.” It is really a collection of assassins, liars, mass murderers and destabilizers of progressive governments. The Bush-Cheney forces are no different. Both sides are hired guns for a U.S. ruling class determined to control Middle Eastern oil.

It is the strength of the mass liberation struggles—from Iran to Iraq to Afghanistan to Lebanon to Palestine—which made the biggest military colossus in the world blink. The spy report is an admission that Pentagon bombs cannot stop the mass struggle and often drive it forward. It is this struggle that will determine the fate of the Middle East. □

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

Books to change the world. that's the point!
www.leftbooks.org

Workers discuss U.S.-Latin America relations

By LeiLani Dowell
Tijuana, Mexico

Workers from Cuba, Venezuela, Mexico and the United States shared information and solidarity at a labor conference here on the weekend of Dec. 7-9. Plenary talks discussed the case of the Cuban Five; relations among the U.S., Cuba, Venezuela and Mexico; U.S. “free trade” agreements versus the Bolivarian Alternative of the Americas (ALBA); and the immigrant rights struggle.

Irma Schwerert, a deputy in Cuba’s National Assembly and mother of René González, one of the Cuban Five, represented the five political prisoners held in U.S. jails and their families in an opening event on Dec. 7 dedicated solely to the case. The International Committee to Free the Cuban Five screened “The Trial” (El Proceso), a new documentary jointly produced by the Cuban Institute for the Cinematographic Arts and Industry (ICAIC) and Venezuela’s Telesur.

A Saturday panel featured representatives of the Cuban Workers Central (CTC) and Bolivarian Socialist Workers Force of Venezuela. Raymundo Navarro Fernández, director of foreign relations for the CTC, reviewed the history and methods of U.S. domination in Latin America. He said, “You can vote for a government but you cannot change the political system—it means that there is a neoliberal project that is above everything.”

Osvaldo Vera, a national coordinator of the Venezuelan workers’ group, discussed the results of the recent constitutional referendum in his country and plans to continue to deepen the revolutionary process there.

Elvira Arellano—called the “Rosa Parks” of the immigrant struggle, who was recently deported from the U.S. to Mexico and separated from her son, Saulito—and Emma Lozano of La Familia Latina Unida participated in the immigration panel, as did José Medina, a member of the Mexican Congress who was key in founding a new cross-border organization for the rights of Mexican/Chicano people.

Namibia Donadio of the youth group FIST—Fight Imperialism, Stand Together—discussed why youth are inspired by and stand in solidarity with Cuba and Venezuela. She recounted her experiences on a FIST-organized trip to Cuba this summer.

An open letter calling on the leadership of the AFL-CIO and the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) to stop slandering Cuba regarding its labor rights was introduced and signed. The letter also called on affiliates to work to free the Cuban Five and end the U.S. blockade of Cuba—the U.S. trade and travel ban that blocks U.S. workers from traveling to Cuba and denies visas for CTC representatives to enter the United States, making it necessary for such gatherings to take place in other countries.



Cheryl LaBash of U.S./Cuba Labor Exchange, Raymundo Navarro Fernandez of Cuba and Oswaldo Vera of Venezuela discuss how to build solidarity in U.S./Cuba/Venezuela International Relations panel.

WW PHOTO: BOB MCCUBBIN

A call for activities for immigrant rights on May 1—the international workers’ day and third anniversary of the “Great American Boycott” of 2006—was well received.

*More will be reported on this conference in future issues of WW.
E-mail: ldowell@workers.org*

Palestinians denounce Annapolis conference

By Joyce Chediak

Some 100,000 Palestinian people demonstrated in besieged Gaza on Nov. 27 against the so-called peace conference being held in Annapolis, Md. They chanted “No recognition of Israel!” and protested what they called “the renunciation of Palestinians’ legitimate rights.”

“We do not recognize those who hold talks in Annapolis. They do not represent the Palestinian people,” said Ismail Haiyeh, a former Palestinian prime minister and member of Hamas who was dismissed by the forces of Mahmoud Abbas, head of the Palestinian Authority (PA), who took part in the Annapolis meeting.

A participant in a women’s rally said, “We don’t want more alleged peace conferences, which bring us more suffering. We prefer poverty to accepting shameful peace.”

In Gaza, the Palestinian Legislative Council passed a bill against making concessions on the Palestinian refugees’ right to return to their homeland, as well as the Palestinian people’s rights to Jerusalem and to resist occupation.

Hundreds who demonstrated in the West Bank cities of Nablus, Tulkarm, Hebron and Ramallah were attacked by Palestinian Authority security forces, who killed one demonstrator in Hebron. The PA had banned the protests.

Other demonstrations took place outside the territories, in the Palestinian diaspora, demanding their right to return.

Speaking of the protests in the territories, Jamal Juma, coordinator of the Palestinian Grassroots Anti-apartheid Wall Campaign, said, “Our demonstration, which was supported by the Popular Committees of the Refugee Camps and over 150 civil society organizations and representatives, called for the upholding of the fundamental principles of our struggle: the right of the refugees to return,

the right to Jerusalem as the Palestinian capital and the right to our land.

“We were refusing the recognition of Israel as a Jewish state, as this would legitimize the Zionist ideology of colonialism, racism and ethnic cleansing, and effectively exonerate Israel from the crimes of the Nakba [expulsion of Palestinian people in 1948], waiving the right of return. Such recognition would justify and reinforce the Israeli system of apartheid against Palestinian citizens of Israel. ...

“For the oppressed and occupied, ongoing struggle and resistance using all necessary means ... is our only tool to ensure that ‘negotiations’ talk about how to achieve our rights and not how to abandon them step by step. Yet for the first time in the 60 years of our struggle, those who claim to represent us at a national level are no longer talking about resistance to the attacks of the occupiers. Instead they are disingenuously opening up negotiations relying on the U.S., the occupation’s most ardent backer, to act as an ‘honest broker.’” (electronicintifada.net, Nov. 28 and Dec. 2) □

Nandigram says ‘No!’ to Dow

Continued from page 7
have been brutally raped in a plan to punish the community. Daughters and mothers were raped in front of their fathers.

The IAC surveyed homes that had been burned to the ground and then looted of all belongings. The worst attacks were clearly reserved for leaders of the BUPC. Roshmi Das Adhikari, 90, told how state-sponsored forces had set fire to her home while she was inside. Despite everything, the people expressed their determination to stay in Nandigram.

At an impromptu press conference at the close of the tour, Ramsey Clark declared:

ZIMBABWE

Massive march supports a defiant gov’t

By Caleb Maupin

Al-Jazeera’s news coverage of Zimbabwe’s Million Man and Woman March on Dec. 7 showed huge crowds—estimated in the hundreds of thousands—marching, chanting and waving red, black, green and yellow flags. They are the symbol of the Zimbabwe African National Union—People’s Front, the party that has ruled the country since independence.

It was nearly 27 years ago, in the very suburb where this march took place, that Robert Mugabe declared Zimbabwe—formerly Rhodesia—to be free from colonialism. The war of liberation, also known as the “Rhodesian Bush War,” was over and the African people had won. The white-dominated colonial government had been overthrown.

The recent march was led by thousands of veterans of the liberation struggle, who proudly proclaimed that Washington, Downing Street and Wall Street have no

right to remove Mugabe, the leader they have chosen.

“Britain has no right to be sitting and discussing us almost every week in their stupid Parliament. Have they no shame?” President Mugabe proclaimed loudly from the podium at the rally. His speech gained thundering applause from the massed crowds of workers and farmers.

Marchers converged on the capital city of Harare from every corner of Zimbabwe, coming by bus, train and even on foot. Songs of the revolution were sung, and chants supporting Mugabe and in defense of the revolution rang out.

The march was endorsed by the Zimbabwe Federation of Trade Unions, which represents thousands of workers. The ZFTU has had differences with Mugabe and ZANU-PF in the past, but, according to the Herald—the main newspaper of Zimbabwe, it was in full support of the Dec. 7 march.

The leader of ZFTU issued a statement in which he proclaimed that Mugabe is “a leader whose ideals are focused on the welfare of his people.”

Mugabe has become the object of scorn by the Western capitalists due to his policy of redistributing the land back to the African people, from whom it was stolen by the colonial powers and given to white farmers. Britain, in particular, the country which once held Zimbabwe in its colonial clutches, has, to no surprise, expressed disapproval of the land redistribution that Mugabe has championed.

But the hundreds of thousands of marchers on Dec. 7 made it clear that they would not allow the British, U.S. and other Western powers to steal their revolution away. Their message was that they stand behind Mugabe and national liberation 100 percent. □

¡Proletarios y oprimidos de todos los países, uníos!

Chávez acerca del referéndum: 49% dice sí al socialismo

Por Berta Joubert-Ceci

El 3 de diciembre la Comisión Nacional Electoral (CNE) de Venezuela anunció los resultados del referéndum propuesto concerniente a los cambios de 69 artículos de la Constitución venezolana. El voto del “No” a las reformas ganó por un margen de menos del 2% sobre la opción del “Sí”, el cual habría profundizado los cambios progresistas y ratificado la reconstrucción de la sociedad sobre un base socialista.

Luego de haber sido anunciado los resultados por radio y televisión nacional, el Presidente Hugo Chávez dijo sobre su propuesta de reformas que “no pudieron ser hoy, pero yo continuaré proponiéndolas, las más avanzadas en el planeta y las que propone alcanzar la inclusión social máxima, un principio fundamental de nuestro sistema”.

Chávez enfatizó que “como presidente de la nación, yo he escuchado la voz del pueblo y siempre seguiré escuchando. Lo llevaré en mi corazón para nuestro análisis y continuar la construcción de una Venezuela bolivariana para nuestros hijos”. En otras declaraciones recalcó, “Tendremos que madurar y continuar construyendo nuestro socialismo”.

Cuando se conocieron las noticias, las fuerzas opuestas a la Revolución Bolivariana comenzaron a celebrar en los barrios ricos lo que llamaron “el fin de Chávez” y la revolución—en otras palabras, sus esperanzas de regresar al viejo sistema de privilegios y riquezas para unos pocos y pobreza y exclusión para la mayoría.

Desde que Chávez llegó a la presidencia en 1998, las fuerzas pro revolucionarias han prevalecido en cada una de las elecciones locales y nacionales, incluyendo el atentado por la derecha de derrocar al presidente a través de un referéndum revocatorio y la reelección presidencial de hace un año, en diciembre del 2006. Habían ganado un total de 10 procesos electorales.

¿Qué pasó esta vez? ¿Acaso la revolución se está debilitando? ¿La oposición derechista se está fortaleciendo? ¿Está el pueblo desilusionado con la revolución u opuesto a la idea de construir el social-

ismo en Venezuela? Además del proceso electoral, ¿qué métodos pueden ser utilizados para avanzar la revolución?

Antes de que cualquiera de estas preguntas pueda ser contestada, debemos ver muy de cerca los resultados. De los cerca de 27 millones de venezolan@s, 16 millones están registrad@s para votar. La comisión electoral reportó que 8.883.746 votos válidos fueron contados, reflejando un gran nivel de abstención: un 44%. En las elecciones presidenciales del año pasado, Chávez ganó con un 63% de los votos y la tasa de abstención fue de sólo un 25%.

El Referéndum Constitucional era complicado, con 69 artículos divididos en dos bloques, los que se votaban por separado. Tomando ambos bloques, los resultados fueron de 50-51 por ciento de los votos por el “No” y el 48-49 por ciento por el “Sí”.

Varios de los artículos trataban de cuestiones concretas como por ejemplo la reducción de horas en la jornada de trabajo y garantías de seguro social para l@s trabajador@s en la economía informal. Otros se trataban de cuestiones más abstractas que requerían una atención y explicación cuidadosa. Entre éstos se incluía una nueva división del territorio nacional, el cómo bregar con una emergencia nacional, y los pasos a seguir para la transición al socialismo.

Se hicieron intentos para informar a la población sobre las reformas propuestas. La Asamblea Nacional distribuyó diez millones de ejemplares de la propuesta entre agosto y octubre. Una línea telefónica especial fue establecida para consultas y más de 9000 eventos fueron celebrados a través del país.

Sin embargo, queda claro que eso no fue suficiente. L@s venezolan@s bolivarian@s actualmente están en el proceso de analizar seriamente los resultados.

El Presidente Chávez dijo: “A nosotros nos faltaron 3 millones de votos de personas que no fueron a votar. ¿Por cuáles razones? Hay que evaluarlo, estoy completamente seguro que la inmensa mayoría de esas personas sigue con nosotros, que no votaron por el Si; se abstuvieron: dudas, temores, faltó tiempo, capacidad

para explicar....Hay bastantes elementos políticos que debemos tomar en cuenta en esta batalla”.

Él notó, sin embargo, “que haya votado 49% por el proyecto socialista, a pesar de todo es un gran paso político”.

EEUU detrás de la oposición

A pesar de los avances logrados a favor de la mayoría pobre, el modo de producción capitalista aún está vigente en Venezuela. La oligarquía en alianza con los EEUU está en una lucha permanente en contra de las medidas progresistas y de la posibilidad que se construya el socialismo.

La oposición tradicional, los antiguos partidos de la Cuarta República que llevaron a cabo el golpe de estado instigado por los EEUU en el 2002, había sido fraccionada y debilitada. Pero una nueva capa ha emergido que ha llevado nueva esperanza a la oligarquía. Ell@s son mayormente l@s hij@s de la burguesía blanca y rica de Venezuela. Algun@s de ell@s vienen de las universidades públicas pero la mayoría son de las universidades privadas y católicas. Han organizado manifestaciones a veces violentas oponiéndose a la reforma constitucional y quejándose de que Chávez quiere volverse en un dictador-de-por-vida porque uno de los artículos pide la eliminación de los límites del período presidencial.

Éstos hijos e hijas de los ricos se esconden bajo el lema de “libertad y democracia”, mostrando un desprecio arrogante y racista no sólo contra el presidente, sino contra l@s pobres y el resto de la juventud venezolana, que está fuertemente al lado de la revolución.

El imperialismo estadounidense está tratando nuevas tácticas para detener la revolución. En la edición del 2 de diciembre del Washington Post, Juan Forero escribió que “algunos grupos estudiantiles han recibido fondos para llevar a cabo seminarios de la Agencia Estadounidense para el Desarrollo Internacional (USAID), según documentos que fueron hechos disponibles al Washington Post el sábado. . . Los documentos estadounidenses, conseguidos a través de una solicitud bajo el Acta de Libertad de Información (FOIA) hecha por un investigador para el Archivo de Seguridad Nacional en la Universidad de George Washington, muestra que \$216.000 fueron dotados desde el 2003 a grupos estudiantiles no identificados en varias universidades para ‘la resolución de conflictos’, ‘la promoción de democracia’ y otros programas”.

En este país profundamente religioso, la Iglesia Católica también ha desempeñado un papel desestabilizador. El vicepresidente Jorge Rodríguez le envió un video al Nuncio Papal Giacinto Berloco

que fue grabado en una de las iglesias de Caracas mostrando un llamado a ignorar el resultado de las elecciones si la opción del Sí ganara.

Otra táctica usada por la oposición fue la de una escasez severa de comida, creada principalmente por la retención de alimentos básicos por el sector de negocios agrícolas y de distribución de la oligarquía. Desde hace semanas mucha gente ha tenido que pararse en largas colas en los Mercados, los mercados subvencionados por el gobierno. Esto, decían los oligarcas, es lo que puede pasar bajo el socialismo. La campaña también trató de asustar al pueblo haciéndole creer que el gobierno socialista podía quitarles sus hij@s y sus casas.

A fines de noviembre, el contraespionaje venezolano obtuvo una comunicación interna de la CIA relativa a la “Operación Tenaza” en la embajada Estadounidense en Caracas. La comunicación fue escrita por Michael Middleton Steere, un oficial de la CIA apostado en la embajada, y estaba dirigida al Director de la CIA en Washington, General Michael Hayden.

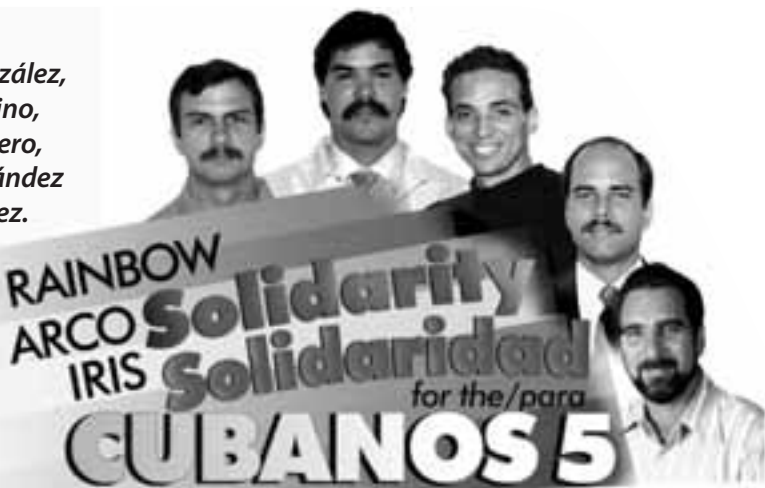
Revelaba distintos aspectos de la campaña de la CIA contra la revolución, incluyendo el trabajo de USAID, la creación de encuestas fraudulentas y la distorsión de información sobre el referéndum en conjunción con los medios privados de difusión nacionales e internacionales. Las acciones múltiples de desestabilización que la comunicación describe incluyen todo desde protestas violentas en las calles y la creación de un ambiente de desestabilización que hiciera imposible el gobernar al país, hasta la intervención militar. El Presidente Chávez leyó el texto por televisión, llamando al pueblo a estar alerta y listo para la acción.

La alegría de los derechistas tal vez no perdure. Las fuerzas pro-revolucionarias, en vez de sentirse tristes o derrotadas, están expresando un entusiasmo nuevo para avanzar la revolución y establecer el socialismo.

Cartas al sitio de la red Aporrea y declaraciones de partidos organizados y otras formaciones se han dirigido a la necesidad de depurar lo que dicen son elementos oportunistas alrededor de Chávez que están impidiendo que la revolución avance y también a la necesidad de ampliar el diálogo con la población para explicar los conceptos del socialismo. Uno de tales oportunistas es el ex Ministro de Defensa Raúl Isaías Baduel que se unió a la oposición contra las reformas, diciendo que representaban un “golpe constitucional”.

L@s revolucionari@s también están de acuerdo con la necesidad de una reflexión y un análisis serios para tratar de corregir cualquier error cometido. □

Fernando González,
Ramón Labañino,
Antonio Guerrero,
Gerardo Hernández
y René González.



¡LIBERTAD PARA LOS CINCO CUBANOS!