

WORKERS WORLD

Workers and oppressed peoples of the world unite!



DEC. 6, 2007

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Stop banks from taking our homes!

Detroit protest demands moratorium on foreclosures

By Jerry Goldberg
Detroit

Demonstrators in downtown Detroit on Nov. 27 demanded a moratorium on home foreclosures. They were picketing outside a summit on foreclosures hosted by Detroit Mayor Kwame Kilpatrick and attended by mayors from across the U.S.

The summit came the same day a Detroit News article exposed that 72,000 homes went into foreclosure in metropolitan Detroit over the last two years. Some Detroit neighborhoods had foreclosure rates of 17 percent.

The mayors' conference was closed to the public but open to the banks and financial institutions. These same banks and financial institutions have brought on the housing crisis with their predatory lending practices and racist sub-prime mortgages. In fact, the only proposal emanating from this summit was that the mortgage lenders' association would set up a hot line for people in foreclosure—in other words, the mayors are relying on the vultures to help their prey.

In contrast, the Michigan Emergency Committee Against War and Injustice (MECAWI), organizers of the moratorium demonstration, demanded that Michigan Gov. Granholm and governors throughout the country immediately declare states of emergency in their respective states and use their emergency powers under the law to place a moratorium to halt 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.

The MECAWI protest and the call for a moratorium on foreclosures was covered by the Detroit daily newspapers, the Michigan Citizen, Detroit's progressive African-American newspaper, TV 2 Fox news, and given extensive play on Detroit's all-news radio station. Significantly, in press coverage of the mayors' summit and demonstration, Detroit Mayor Kilpatrick was heard acknowledging that he is for a moratorium on foreclosures and plans to take the issue to Lansing, the state capital. Activists plan to hold the mayor to his words.



WW PHOTO: CHERYL LABASH

Detroit, Mich., Nov. 27, outside mayors' meeting.

MECAWI is planning a community organizing meeting on Saturday, Dec. 8, at 1:00 p.m., at Central United Methodist Church, 23 E. Adams, in Detroit at Grand Circus Park. The meeting will discuss building a fightback movement with demonstrations and militant actions to press for a moratorium on foreclosures and utility shut-offs, as well as educate people about their legal rights to challenge predatory loans.

The Detroit News article noted that the Detroit foreclosure rate, which was already at an all-time record in January 2006, has jumped six-fold since then. There are some Detroit neighborhoods where one in seven homes received a foreclosure notice between January 2006 and September 2007. One in ten Detroit homes has had a foreclosure notice in that time period.

More than one million homes in metro Detroit, which comes to two out of three households, are worth less today because their value has been damaged by nearby foreclosures. Over 10 percent of Detroit's population is potentially facing imminent homelessness. Thousands face a winter with no heat, water or electricity.

Coupled with the economic devastation that has hit the people of Michigan, the foreclosure crisis in Detroit is a direct product of the racist, predatory lending practices of the banks and financial institutions. In Detroit, 85 percent of mortgages are "sub-prime," meaning that they are at a much higher rate than the 6-percent rate for "prime" mortgages. Most of the mortgages

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Annapolis no-Palestine yes!

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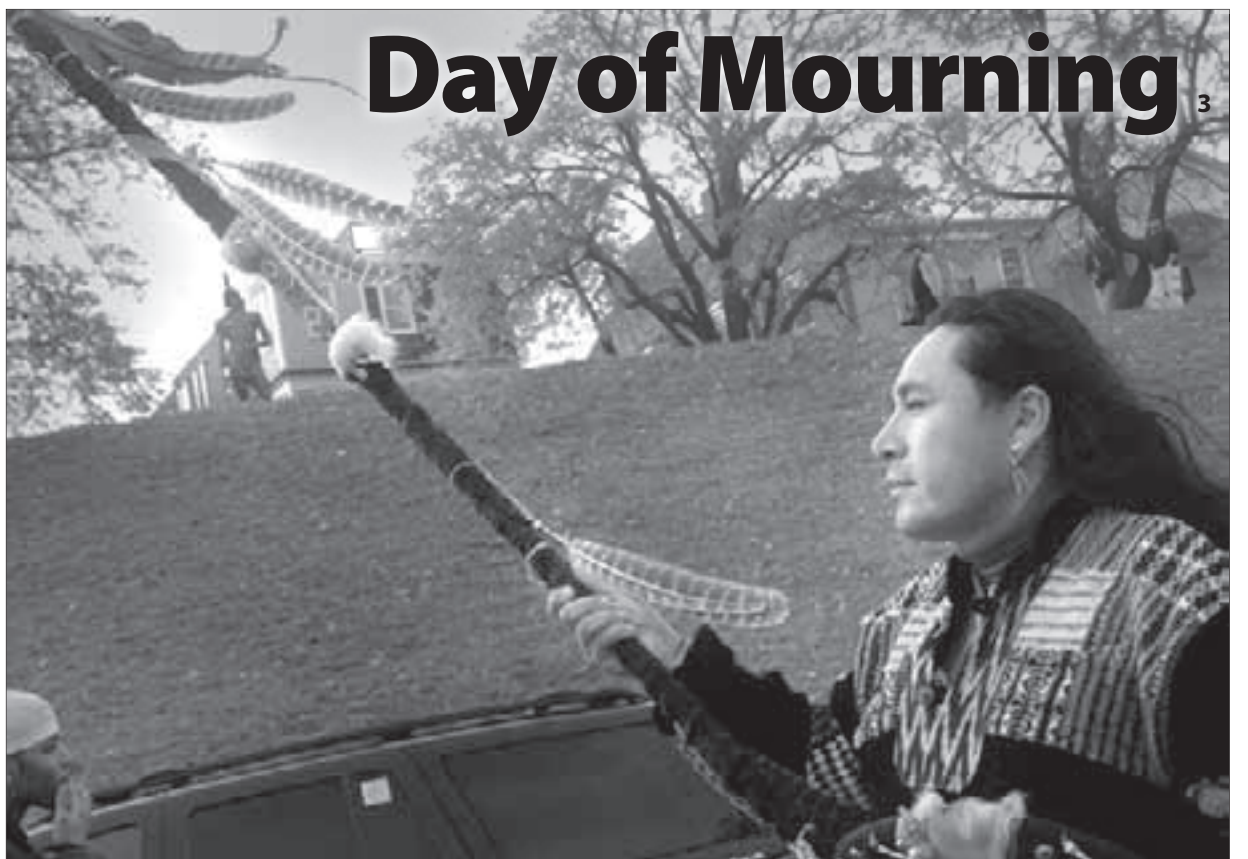


Hollywood, Calif., Nov. 27.

PHOTO: RAMON ARMENDARIZ

Day of Mourning

3



Plymouth, Mass., Nov. 22.

WW PHOTO: LIZ GREEN

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WORKERS WORLD NEWSPAPER
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B-A-G-D-A-D

For those besieged by U.S. imperialism

By Larry Hales

As a person who has primarily been exposed to the culture of Black people, it would appear difficult to review an album from outside that world. When it is classical music, then, one would think it an even more profound dilemma. It is difficult to write well about something that is distinctly different from what one is accustomed to.

However, when songs are purposely connected to the struggle against exploitation, war and imperialism, then a music that intellectuals may describe as heady becomes beautiful and accessible.

Milos Raickovich is a Belgrade, Yugoslavia, born, world renowned classical musician and composer. His newest album, “B-A-G-D-A-D,” has an explicit purpose. The cover art itself, done by Raickovich’s daughter, illustrates the greatest tragedy of this imperialist war—what becomes of children faced with constant death and destruction, in whose ears alarms will forever sound. The name, the spelling in many languages of the capital of Iraq, is the title of the anchor of this collection of nine compositions.

The anchor piece is an “ode to the ancient city,” according to Raickovich. “B-A-G-D-A-D” was composed as a

ACTION ALERT

Ensure fairness for Mumia Abu-Jamal on NBC’s Today Show!

On Dec. 6, NBC’s “The Today Show” intends to air a show about Michael Smerconish and Maureen Faulkner’s new book “Murdered By Mumia.” According to the announcement on Michael Smerconish’s website, the show is planning to feature both Smerconish and Faulkner as guests.

The International Concerned Family and Friends of Mumia Abu-Jamal (FreeMumia.com), Journalists for Mumia (Abu-Jamal-News.com), and Educators for Mumia (EmajOnline.com) have initiated a media-activist campaign urging people to write “The Today Show” at today@msnbc.com asking them to fairly present both sides of the Mumia Abu-Jamal/Daniel Faulkner case, by also featuring as guests, Linn Washington, Jr. (Philadelphia Tribune columnist and Associate Professor of Journalism at Temple University) and Dr. Suzanne Ross (Clinical Psychologist and Co-Chair of the Free Mumia Abu-Jamal Coalition, NYC).

A sample letter accompanied by an extensive informational press pack [both available at www.millions-4mumia.org—eds.] has been created to use for contacting “The Today Show.” Please take a minute and contact them to ensure fair media coverage of this controversial and important case.

Sincerely,
The International Concerned Family and Friends of Mumia Abu-Jamal
Journalists for Mumia Abu-Jamal
Educators for Mumia Abu-Jamal

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.

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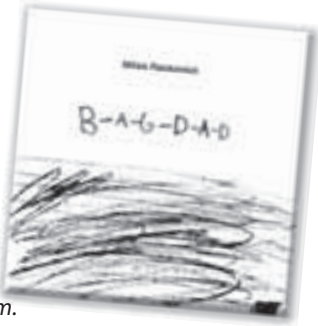
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“B-A-G-D-A-D” can be purchased through Albany Records at www.albanyrecords.com.



piano piece in September 2002 before the war in Iraq started, and is made of six notes, starting with B-flat. There are three different versions in the collection, one a piano piece, another with a harp and the third with a string quartet.

The piece is reminiscent of John Coltrane’s “Alabama.” “Alabama” begins melancholic, symbolizing the place and time, then strolls like life, never free from the struggle as the theme returns and continues until percussionist Elvin Jones’ drums roll in—the dawn that can’t be held back, like the struggle of the oppressed.

Raickovich’s “B-A-G-D-A-D,” while somber too, builds more slowly. As an ode to an ancient city, it takes its time because it has a longer history to reference. It ends on a melancholic tone, an allusion to the tragedy of U.S. imperialism and what it has done to a people, their culture and their cities.

The second piece is composed of chanting done at an anti-war demonstration in Washington, D.C., in January 2003. Raickovich says, “This piece is a testimony to the courageous people in the U.S. who are struggling to stop the war.”

“Alarm,” the third piece, was the first one composed as an anti-war statement. It was written in 1999 after Yugoslavia had been bombed for 78 days by the U.S. and NATO. Raickovich was inspired to write the piece after he heard a woman scream during a protest in New York City: “Her sliding, falsetto scream sounded like sirens in Belgrade.”

The cello and violin are used to great effect to symbolize the sound of sirens; in between the sirens the thoughtful and haunting piano playing continues, heightening to the human tragedy. One is left to imagine the space between the sirens, until they reach a cacophony when there is no space. It is jarring and disorienting, but Raickovich finishes with the sad melody, symbolizing what is left when the sirens cease.

For someone who has never appreciated classical music, or for anyone, “B-A-G-D-A-D” is a surprising collection. It is a statement; further evidence of a culture other than that of the ruling bourgeois class; an expression of the hopes, desires and frustrations of the oppressed and exploited. It is a piece in solidarity with those besieged by U.S. imperialism. It translates well and this reporter is honored to have had the opportunity to appreciate and review it.

New CD on Leftbooks.com

Pam Parker Live: Bread & Roses

Live selections from: Busboys & Poets, Takoma Park Folk Fest, & Signature Theater’s Cabaret. Beautiful vocals by Pam Parker and Jobari Parker. Songs included are Bread & Roses, Mean to Me, My Foolish Heart, Voodoo Woman and more! Fifteen songs in all.



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PLYMOUTH, MASS.

Hundreds honor Day of Mourning

By Workers World Boston bureau

Hundreds of Native people and their supporters gathered in Plymouth, Mass., on Nov. 22 to commemorate the 38th National Day of Mourning. Day of Mourning has been held annually since 1970 on U.S. thanksgiving day to provide a forum for Indigenous people to speak the truth about the history of this country and to speak out about current conditions in Indian Country. Participants, led by members of United American Indians of New England, marched to protest the lies told about thanksgiving and the European theft of the Americas and held a rally at the site of Plymouth Rock.

Moonanum James (Aquinnah Wampanoag), co-leader of UAINE, corrected some of the thanksgiving mythology that is customarily taught in schools.

“The pilgrims, like Columbus, did not discover an empty land. Every inch of this land was, and remains, Indian land. The pilgrims (who did not even call themselves pilgrims) came over here as part of a business venture and not seeking religious freedom—they already had that in Holland. Sexism, racism, anti-lesbian and gay bigotry, jails and a class system did not exist here until introduced by the European invaders. The pilgrims were no better than any of the other Europeans in their treatment of the Indigenous people here. They killed Indians; they stole land; they tried to turn Indian people against each other.

“The pilgrims did not even land at that sacred shrine down the hill called Plymouth Rock, a monument to racism and oppression.

“As soon as they stepped ashore, in present day Eastham down on Cape Cod, the pilgrims opened my ancestors’ graves and stole our corn and beans. Later, from Plymouth Harbor—the very harbor we can see from here—the English sold my ancestors as slaves for 220 shillings each.

“The first official ‘Day of Thanksgiving’ was proclaimed in 1637 by Governor Winthrop. He did so to celebrate the safe return of the men from Massachusetts who had gone to Mystic, Conn., to participate in the massacre of over 700 Pequot women, children and men.

“About the only true thing in the whole mythology is that these pitiful European strangers would not have survived their first several years in ‘New England’ were it not for the aid of Squanto, Massasoit, and other Wampanoag people. What Native people got in return for this help was genocide, theft of our lands, and never-ending repression. This is indeed ‘America’s Home Town.’”

A roar of laughter greeted James’ comment that since Plymouth was planning to demolish and rebuild the stone structure protecting Plymouth Rock, why not have UAINE tear it down for free.

The crowd listened quietly as a special message from Native political prisoner Leonard Peltier was read by Bert Waters (Wampanoag). Many were moved by Peltier’s expression of gratitude for the ongoing support for his freedom: “As I sit here in my cell, thinking about you and gathering my thoughts, I want to tell you how good it feels that after 30-plus years you still remember me. Your songs, prayers, thoughts, laughter, smiles, and support keep me strong.”

Speakers touched on many points, including the importance of supporting the anti-war movement as well as building ties of unity within Native communities and



Above left, Mahtowin Munro with her children: Womsikuk James (cap) and Ki'sha James.

Top right, Stephanie Hedgecoke.

Juan Gonzalez, right.

WW PHOTOS: LIZ GREEN



Moonanum James, above.

with non-Native allies. Mahtowin Munro (Lakota) emphasized the importance of supporting immigrant communities that are under attack by the government:

“What happened to the mostly Mayan sisters and brothers in New Bedford last March when Immigration and Customs Enforcement raided a factory there and separated parents from their families was not an anomaly. Massive raids continue to be carried out by ICE. In cities across the country, ICE is trying to push immigrant workers further underground and scare them away from organizing and fighting for their rights.

“Those who dare to cross the U.S.-Mexican border face ICE and other federal agents, hovering customs helicopters, profiteering contractors, spy towers and federal ‘cage’ detention centers. Immigrant children are imprisoned by the federal government in the Hutto prison in Texas.

“But undocumented workers from Mexico and Central America and South America, joined by Caribbean, Asian, African and other allies, have fought back and will continue to do so. Step by step, day by day, this movement will grow.

“All of our nations need to come together and stop what is being done to so-called illegal immigrants by this government of the pilgrims, by the pilgrims, for the pilgrims. We cannot stand by and allow this brutality to continue. Let’s tear down that wall that is being built on the U.S./Mexico



Elena Ortiz

border! Our future, and the very future of our Mother Earth, require us to join together!”

Other speakers included Elena Ortiz (Ohkay Owingeh), Stephanie Hedgecoke (Cherokee) and Jesse Lokahi Heiwa (Hawaiian). The ceremony was opened and closed by Juan Rodríguez and Rosalba Solís (Mayan). Rodríguez, who had recently returned from an encuentro in Mexico, called for a boycott of Mexican food products because of Mexico’s abuse of Indigenous peoples. César Villalobos of Inca Son played a song dedicated to



Jesse Lokahi Heiwa

Mother Earth on a Native flute.

Sam Sapiel, a Penobscot elder and medicine man who had opened National Day of Mourning for decades and who died in the spring, was honored. He was described as a good man, one who always urged younger people to remember their traditional Native ways and who built bridges to many other communities by his participation in countless progressive struggles over the years. □

Gov’t frame-up?

Behind the indictment of Barry Bonds

By Mike Gimbel

The grand jury that indicted baseball superstar Barry Bonds Nov. 15 was empowered to investigate steroid sales and distribution by BALCO, a Bay Area drug laboratory. Is Barry Bonds an owner of BALCO? No! Is Barry Bonds a distributor of illegal drugs for BALCO? No! The prosecutors manipulated the investigation of BALCO into an indictment of Barry Bonds.

Retired National Basketball Association star Charles Barkley called the Bonds indictment “a selective prosecution witch hunt. ... They don’t think he’s a nice guy. First of all, he’s not paid to be a nice guy. He’s paid to hit home runs. That’s his job. He’s the best player we’ve seen in the last 25 years.” (Los Angeles Times, Nov. 18)

Michael Rains, Barry Bonds’ lawyer said: “Barry got up on the stand and did his best to answer questions and to answer them truthfully. He told them like it is. ... Whether you like him or dislike him, the way the federal government has proceeded in this case is going to be a very, very sad commentary on the enormous power of the government to ruin people’s lives and to scar their reputation for no good reason.” (The Mercury News, Nov. 18)

Taking “supplements” of various sorts, up until very recently, has been considered an accepted part of sports for millennia. According to Professor Charles Yesalis, an expert on performance-enhancing drugs, the ancient Maya chewed cocoa leaves to get them through the aggressive sport of Pok-a-tok and “the ancient Greek Olympians drank mushroom and herb concoctions to give them extra oomph. ... They might eat the testicles of a man or animal to gain potency, or the heart to gain bravery.”

“It wasn’t until the mid-19th century and the advent of modern medicine that performance-enhancing drugs really began to take off. ... Coaches around the world tried to concoct a winning formula to ensure their athlete was first across the finish line. By the 1930s amphetamines were the pill of choice. ... It wasn’t considered cheating back then. ... Soon after, steroids—drugs derived from hormones such as tes-

tosterone—arrived on the scene.” (National Geographic News interview, June 22)

The racist lynch mob claims that Barry Bonds’ records are “tainted.” If Barry Bonds’ records are “tainted,” then what about almost every single baseball record from most of the 20th century when the use of performance enhancing drugs was not only not illegal, but an accepted fact? And what about the truly tainted MLB records due to the racist exclusion of great African-American baseball players before Jackie Robinson broke the color barrier with the Brooklyn Dodgers in 1947?

Buck O’Neil, a great player in the Negro Leagues, who later became a Major League Baseball coach and scout, is quoted as stating, “The main reason Negro Leaguers never used steroids was because steroids weren’t available!” (“The Soul of Baseball,” Joe Posnanski, William Morrow, Harper Collins)

Norman Fost, M.D., MPH, states: “The claims that have been made for prohibiting the use of anabolic steroids by competent adults appear to be incoherent, disingenuous, hypocritical, and based on bad facts. ... Anabolic steroids clearly do enhance performance for many athletes, but there is no coherent argument to support the view that enhancing performance is unfair. If it were, we should ban coaching and training.

“Competition can be unfair if there is unequal access to such enhancements, but equal access can be achieved more predictably by deregulation than by prohibition. It is hypocritical for leaders in major league baseball to trumpet their concern about fair competition in a league that allows one team (the Yankees) to have a payroll three times larger than most of its competitors.

“A particularly egregious example of this hypocrisy was the juxtaposition in the 1988 Olympics of Ben Johnson and Janet Evans. Johnson broke the world record for the 100-meter dash and not only had his gold medal taken away but became the permanent poster child for the immorality of steroids, which, though illegal, were available to virtually anyone who



Barry Bonds

wanted them. Evans, after winning her medal in swimming, bragged about the key role of her greasy swimsuit, which the Americans had kept secret from their competitors, and went on a prolonged lecture tour as ‘America’s Sweetheart.’” (American Medical Association Journal of Ethics, Nov. 2005, Vol. 7, Number 11)

Sportswriter Dave Zirin states: “And what is a ‘performance enhancer’? That’s not even a legal or medical term; it’s sports radio shorthand. The cortisone shot into Curt Schilling’s ankle in the 2005 playoffs was a performance enhancer. The Viagra coursing through Bob Dole’s veins is a performance enhancer. Whatever keeps that smile glued to Laura Bush’s face is a performance enhancer. It’s a colloquial phrase that tells us nothing. It only raises the question whether the indictment was written by Mike or the Mad Dog.

“The timing that’s important here is ... the ascension your brand spanking new attorney general, Mike Mukasey, and his desire for a cheap hit. ... The fact is that Bonds is under attack from a collection of torture-loving, Habeas Corpus shredding, illegal wire tapping, political operatives. The idea that a Barry Bonds indictment becomes the first act of Mike Mukasey’s Justice Department only exposes Senators Diane Feinstein and Chuck Schumer, and the other Democratic politicians who backed his confirmation.” (Edge of Sports)

Where is the grand jury to investigate the building of the levees in New Orleans? How about investigating the failure to allow the New Orleans residents to come home and the destruction of public housing in New Orleans? Where is the grand jury to investigate the prosecutor in the Jena 6 case? How about investigating torture at Guantánamo and Abu Ghraib or investigating the Iraq War lies of George W. Bush and Dick Cheney?

How about a grand jury investigation into the police murders of so many Black youth all across the country? If they really wanted to “investigate crime in sports,” where’s the investigation of sports franchise owners for extorting cities by threatening to move their teams unless these cities spend hundreds of millions of our tax dollars on their stadiums, rather than on needed social services? Isn’t extorting entire cities and states a crime?

Barry Bonds is the greatest hitter in the history of baseball, our “National Pastime.” Can we allow the racist ruling class to bring him down? No way! Barry Bonds has refused to bow down to ruling class power. The least we can do is to show him our unqualified support. □

ON THE PICKET LINE

BY SUE DAVIS

Broadway strike continues

After two weeks of a strike that has darkened more than two dozen theaters during the usually lucrative “Thanksgiving” weekend, the stagehands in Local 1 of the International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employees forced the League of American Theatres and Producers back to the negotiating table on Nov. 25.

Meanwhile, the League continues to spread lies about why the stagehands won’t sign the take-back contract. Essentially, the stagehands are worried about their safety, the safety of actors and that of theatergoers.

For instance, the League is demanding that pre-show checks be done the night before. The stagehands won’t agree to that, according to a “Myths and Facts” list created by Actors Equity, which is supporting the strike: “Pre-show checks must be done immediately prior to the performance for safety issues to confirm that no damage has occurred overnight.”

CBS News workers vote to strike

CBS News writers, producers, editors, artists and assistants for both radio and TV in national and four local markets voted to strike on Nov. 19. The 500 members of the Writers Guild of America have been working without a contract since April 2005.

CBS wants to institute a two-tier pay scale, offering the network TV and radio workers a three percent raise while offering the local radio workers in Chicago, Los Angeles, New York and Washington only a two percent raise. Calling the two-tier system unfair, Michael Winship, president of WGA, East, told the New York Times, “This is a wakeup call to CBS News management. We’re saying that we are really at the end of our rope.” (Nov. 20)

Already 12,000 members of WGA are on strike. They’ve been walking picket lines in Hollywood and New York for more than two weeks.

Calif. laundry workers call strike

On strike since Sept. 12, hundreds of laundry workers from Los Angeles to San Diego have charged Prudential Overall Supply with unfair labor practices. The workers opted to walk in protest of Prudential’s intimidation, harassment and threats after they organized to join UNITE HERE.

Prudential doesn’t seem to care who it abuses in California. The company is being sued for \$1.82 million in damages by the city of San Diego for “unlawful, unfair and fraudulent business practices” because it violated the city’s living wage laws. The city of Oakland found Prudential in violation of its living wage law and ordered Prudential to pay \$120,000 in back wages and benefits. Though Prudential signed a Ventura County laundry contract in July, it dropped it in October after it was informed that it would have to pay the workers a living wage.

Last spring a horrible chlorine gas accident at Prudential’s Vista facility hospitalized 21 workers and caused respiratory problems, vomiting and dizziness among the entire workforce, which had to be evacuated. Obviously Prudential puts its profits before the workers’ welfare. On with the strike!

ILCA reports from News Orleans

The International Labor Communications Association, organized in 1955 to promote the labor press, held its Oct. 18-20 convention in New Orleans. More than 70 members, working in 17 teams, fanned out all over the city to research stories and make multimedia presentations about how people continue to struggle with the effects of the 2005 Katrina disaster. Called the New Orleans Labor Media Project, the materials are posted on www.neworleanslabormedia.org.

The introduction to the site reads: “Feel free to use anything you find as long as you credit the author properly as well as this website. We would also like to know where and how you are using [the materials]. Our goal and our work is to demonstrate the collective power of labor’s voice.”

Help FedEx Ground workers organize

FedEx Ground workers are fed up with the company’s threats, interrogation, bribery and other illegal actions, which are all part of its campaign to harass, isolate and fire union supporters. A recent report by the National Labor Relations Board—which is no friend to labor—detailed these illegal actions and issued a complaint against the company. To sign a petition supporting the workers’ right to union representation, go to www.fedupwithfedex.org. □

Lou Dobbs picketed in Boston

By Frank Neisser
Boston

Lou Dobbs came to Boston on Nov. 19 to attempt to foment and spread his immigrant-bashing, racist views. But he was met by a militant picket line and told there is no place in Boston for his white supremacist, hate mongering lies. International Action Center picket signs and chants said “Jobs not Dobbs!” “No human is illegal!” “There are no borders in the workers struggle!” and “Globalize solidarity!”

The IAC issued a statement that was distributed to passing workers. It said in part:

“Lou Dobbs uses his television program week after week to spread hatred and lies about immigrants. At a time of growing economic uncertainty, he tries to exploit workers’ economic anxiety by scapegoating undocumented workers. His lies have gone so far that the New York Times has editorialized against them.

“Lou Dobbs does not speak for

Continued on page 9

Boston election

Media targets city council members of color

By Frank Neisser
Boston

Boston’s racist ruling establishment used the recent City Council election here to wage an all-out assault on the right of oppressed communities in Boston to representation, in an attack focused on Team Unity—Chuck Turner, Felix Arroyo, Sam Yoon and Charles Yancey—the four Boston city councilors from oppressed communities.

These four councilors have functioned as a unit fighting racism and injustice in Boston. They have sponsored resolutions against the war in Iraq, in support of Rosa Parks Day and to declare an HIV State of Emergency in Boston’s oppressed communities. They have fought for jobs, Criminal Offender Record Information (CORI) reform, tenants’ rights and against placing a bioweapons lab in the oppressed community, to name a few important struggles.

Team Unity has supported the Boston School Bus Drivers’ Union in campaigns for safety for drivers, mechanics and Boston’s school children. Members have fought tirelessly against an unending stream of attempts to resegregate Boston schools under the slogan of returning to “neighborhood schools.”

Councilor Yoon is the first and only representative of Boston’s Asian community on the City Council; Councilor Arroyo is the first and only representative of the Latin@ community. Oppressed communities now make up the majority of Boston’s population, but continue to be underrepresented in city government.

Councilor Arroyo particularly displeased the establishment powerbrokers by clearly demonstrating his support of the revolutionary government of Hugo Chávez in Venezuela, leading the immigrants rights May Day demonstration in Boston, advocating licenses for the immigrant community, and proposing that anyone who could prove residency in the City of Boston be allowed to vote in city elections. This last proposal would have completely changed the political landscape in Boston.

Arroyo also sought to name a main street in the Latin@ community Simón Bolívar Boulevard, visited Venezuela as an official representative, and coordinated home heating oil relief from Venezuela for Boston’s oppressed communities. In return for this, the racist establishment launched a slander campaign calling Arroyo an “absentee councilor” and

showing his face on the side of a milk carton in the style of campaigns to find lost children.

The establishment’s campaign against Team Unity was well coordinated. The mayor, the Boston Globe and the Democratic Party all played their role at the behest of the banks and big business. The mayor fielded candidates against Turner and Yancey, while the racist establishment machine fielded and funded a representative of the “old boys” network from a long established West Roxbury family, John Connolly, as an at-large candidate in an attempt to unseat Arroyo or Yoon.

The Globe, which in the past had endorsed all of the Team Unity candidates, endorsed only Connolly this year. The Democratic ward committees followed suit, and the Democratic governor got in on the act, giving all of his actual active support, photo ops and publicity to Connolly. Not only were endorsements and political support withheld, but a well-orchestrated campaign made sure that sources of financial support for earlier Team Unity campaigns were not available.

The Globe also wrote articles alleging that Turner—the only politician from any level of government with an office in the heart of Roxbury, and the core of the Team Unity group—wasn’t representing the people of his district. Turner, the most grassroots and community-based city councilor,



PHOTO: YAWU MILLER/BAY STATE BANNER

Team Unity, from left: Charles Yancey, Chuck Turner, Felix Arroyo and Sam Yoon.

mobilized his base of support and turned back this attack, winning by a landslide in both the preliminary and final elections. Yoon and Yancey also were re-elected.

Taken as a whole, these attacks represented a full-court attempt to turn back the clock to the “good old days” before the desegregation battles of the 1970s, when the Boston government was the exclusive province of white politicians and their sponsors in the banks and business establishment. It is part of the war at home against the workers and oppressed just like the attacks against immigrants, heightening racism and division in the face of the developing capitalist economic crisis.

In the face of this offensive, the Boston School Bus Drivers’ Union and the Boston International Action Center came out in support of the Team Unity campaign, in both the preliminary and final election. Volunteers jumped in to participate in the campaigns, and a traveling sound truck rallied for the campaigns throughout the communities on the weekends leading up to the election and on Election Day.

The Team Unity sound truck also participated in an Oct. 27 anti-war demonstration, spreading the anti-war message of the Team Unity councilors and soliciting support against the attack on the representation of oppressed communities. But overall, the progressive movement failed to recognize the character of the attack or oppose it.

In the end, the racist machine’s candidate, John Connolly, was successful in narrowly defeating Felix Arroyo. The nature of the campaign was laid bare in subsequent days when the Arroyo staff shared with members of the School Bus Drivers’ Union hate mail that had been sent to the councilor actually signed “the Bulger Group”—referencing one of Boston’s leading racist political families, that of former State Senate President Billy Bulger. Bulger was a leader of the racist forces that opposed desegregation of Boston’s schools in the 1970s. The crying need for solidarity with the oppressed communities against racist attacks in whatever form they come has never been clearer. □



PHOTOS: CHARLOTTE KATES AND WW PHOTO

Annapolis no, Palestine yes!

By John Parker and Greg Butterfield

Hoisting signs reading “Annapolis—No; Free Palestine—Yes,” more than 50 people held a militant picket line during the evening rush hour outside the Israeli Mission in New York City Nov. 27. The action was one of several held across the

United States to protest the Bush administration’s so-called Middle East peace conference at the U.S. Navy War College in Annapolis, Md.

Chanting “End the siege of Gaza” and “U.S. out of the Middle East,” protesters pushed back an attempt by New York police to force the swelling picket line onto a tiny sliver of pavement. They liberated most of the sidewalk on a busy block of Second Avenue between 42nd and 43rd streets.

“It’s an outrage and insult to the anti-war movement—which is most of the people in this country—that Bush would call a ‘peace conference’ while occupying Iraq and Afghanistan and preparing for a new war in Iran,” declared Larry Holmes of the Troops Out Now Coalition, which initiated the call for protests against the Annapolis meeting. “This is a war conference, a colonialist conference.”

Charlotte Kates of Al-Awda New York and New Jersey Solidarity-Activists for the Liberation of Palestine led the crowd in chanting, “Not one more penny, not one more dime for Israel’s crimes.” She said that while the Annapolis gathering was aimed at sowing more divisions within sections of the Palestinian and Arab leadership, the Palestinian people are united

in their opposition to any bogus agreement made under U.S. aegis.

“Thousands of people came out today to protest in Gaza, and also in the West Bank, despite severe repression,” Kates reported.

In Los Angeles County the same day, some 50 protestors with signs saying “Annapolis—No; Free Palestine—Yes! No U.S./Israeli Colonialism” held a moving picket at the heart of Hollywood’s crowded holiday shopping district.

BAYAN-USA, member organization of the Los Angeles Troops Out Now Coalition, led militant chants of “One, two, three, four, we don’t want your racist war” and “Bush lies, people die.” Other member organizations of LA-TONC who were present were the International Action Center and the March 25th Coalition for Immigrant Rights.

Also giving solidarity statements at the rally were Yael Korin of The Committee to End Israeli Apartheid, Ester Chiccone of the Communist Party USA, Hamid Khan of the South Asian Network, Namibia Donadio of the youth group FIST—Fight Imperialism, Stand Together—and Mazen Al Moukddad of Al-Awda Right of Return Coalition. □

Stop banks from taking homes

Continued from page 1

are variable adjustable rate mortgages, meaning the payments double or triple after the first couple of years.

Seniors who had paid off their homes now find themselves with unaffordable monthly payments, as a result of being lured into unaffordable, illegal home-equity loans by brokers working on behalf of the financial institutions. Studies have documented that even among women, African Americans and Latin@s with good credit, sub-prime mortgages are the rule due to racist and sexist banking practices.

Three separate Michigan statutes—MCL 10.31 et.seq., 10.85 et.seq. and 30.401 et.seq.—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 Gov. Granholm utilize these emergency powers to impose an emergency moratorium to stop foreclosures and utility shut-offs.

During the 1930s, the state legislature utilized its emergency powers to pass the Mortgage Moratorium Act, Act No. 98, Pub. Acts 1933. The act extended the redemption period during which homeowners could not have their property taken from them after foreclosure, from six months to five years. The Michigan Moratorium Act was upheld by the Michigan and U.S. Supreme courts.

For more information on the fight for a moratorium on foreclosures and utility shut-offs, contact 313-319-0870 or visit www.mecawi.org. □

WWP NATIONAL CONFERENCE: FOR INTERNATIONAL

Attack on women & LGBT people must be answered

Excerpts from a talk by National Committee member and Fight Imperialism, Stand Together (FIST) leader LeiLani Dowell to the WWP conference Nov. 17-18.

An alarming study came out this week from the Center for Reproductive Rights, which found that if *Roe v. Wade* fell, a majority of states would ban abortions.

Anti-choice forces throughout the country are making an organized, concerted and multi-faceted effort to repeal the right for women to have safe abortions. It is an attack that warrants the serious attention of every anti-imperialist organizer.

Women's E-News reports: "On one front, activists are pushing contentious legislation challenging *Roe* that is designed to be fought up to the Supreme Court. In the last three years, 27 such abortion bans have been introduced in 14 states. ...

"Authors of the report ... estimate as many as 30 states could pass legislation to restrict or altogether ban abortions in the wake of a *Roe* reversal."

This is all the more precarious following the Supreme Court appointments of Samuel Alito and John Roberts.

Lastly, in an ominous sign, a ruling last April "eliminated the precedent that legal restrictions placed on abortion must include an exception to protect the health of the woman."

Working women

In his work "High Tech, Low Pay" founding Workers World Party chairper-

son Sam Marcy described the "feminization" of labor—the increasing numbers of women in the workforce due to the pauperization of labor.

By now it's a given that there are lots of women in the workforce. But the United Nations Population Fund reports that worldwide, women on average earn slightly more than 50 percent of what men are earning.

As far as upward mobility in the U.S., a recent study finds that women in the bottom fifth of the economy are more likely, across generations, to remain in the bottom fifth.

We also see the more visible presence of lesbian, gay, bi and trans people in the workforce. A recent struggle involved the Employment Non Discrimination Act (ENDA). This bill would prohibit discrimination against lesbian, gay and bi peoples, and passed in the House recently. The bill was watered down by Democratic Party politicians to exclude gender identity from the bill, despite a united struggle from some of the major LGBT organizations for greater inclusion.

Of course, the number of violent attacks against LGBT people has not abated, and even the right of LGBT people to defend themselves has been denied in the courts. Consider the case of the Jersey Four—four young African-American lesbians who were convicted for defending themselves against a violent male attacker, and given sentences of three to 11 years.



Intersection of oppression

Any attacks that fall on the working class will fall hardest on those who have to deal with multiple layers of oppression.

In the current sub-prime mortgage loan crisis, where working people are losing their homes left and right to foreclosures, it is women, and particularly women of color, who have received a disproportionate number of these loans.

We have the example of Victoria Arellano, the immigrant trans woman who was murdered in a detention center through the denial of her HIV medication. The remarkable solidarity of the prisoners in the center, who took care of her when the guards wouldn't, even staging a protest to defend her when their own deportation status was on the line, shows the potential of united struggle when repression breeds resistance.

After discussing the changing character of the working class, including the increase of paid working women, Marcy closes this chapter of "High Tech, Low Pay" with these words:

"Up until now when the word movement was used, it could mean either the Black movement, the Latino movement, the civil rights movement, the anti-war movement, the lesbian and gay movement or the women's movement. But the term seldom if ever referred to the working-class movement. ...

"Now, however, the change in the social composition of the working class lays the objective basis for a movement of the working class itself..."

"When we speak of the women's movement or the anti-war movement or the Black movement as part of the working-class movement, it doesn't mean they won't have an independent character. Of course they will. But they will be part of the working class movement because it will have come alive as the fundamental class in society which alone can weld these movements together in a genuine anti-capitalist and progressive struggle, a struggle both for democratic rights and for socialism. ...

We see the shining example of socialist Cuba, which consistently moves forward in the liberation of women and LGBT people—not as a concession, but as necessary rights for the well-being of all. As women, as queer people, we need socialism. We need an end to the system that oppresses us all. □

The Chinese Revolution lives!

Excerpts from a talk by long-time Workers World Party member Stephen Millies to the WWP conference Nov. 17-18.

In 1949 Mao Zedong declared, "China has stood up." The People's Republic of China was born. One quarter of humanity had liberated itself from imperialist enslavement. Chinese women broke their chains and stepped forward with unbound feet.

Wall Street responded to the founding of People's China by launching the Korean War less than nine months later. Hundreds of thousands of Chinese soldiers died beside their Korean sisters and brothers. Among them was Mao's own son.

The Chinese Revolution was a tremendous victory against racism. Malcolm X wrote in his autobiography about its impact on him in prison. Robert F. Williams—hunted by the FBI because he led armed self-defense against the Ku Klux Klan in Monroe, N.C.—was given asylum by both Cuba and China. Upon the urging of Williams, Mao issued a statement in support of the Black struggle, "Oppose Racial Discrimination by U.S. Imperialism."

Members of Youth Against War and Fascism (YAWF)—then Workers World Party's youth organization—distributed 10,000 copies of Mao's statement to the 1963 freedom march in Washington, D.C., where Dr. King delivered his "I Have a Dream" speech. Comrade Key Martin, who died in 2000, told me that leaflets were snatched up by demonstrators who were thrilled that a quarter of humanity was in their corner.

The history of Workers World Party is bound up with the Chinese Revolution. Even before our party was founded, com-



STEPHEN MILLIES

WW PHOTOS: JOHN CATALINOTTO

rade Sam Marcy stood almost alone in 1950 when he described it as a proletarian revolution, despite the small number of Chinese workers. The front page headline on the first issue of Workers World newspaper in 1959 was "Hail the Communes," which saluted the socialist reconstruction of the Chinese countryside.

But now almost all the communes have been abolished. Following Mao's death in 1976, the grouping inside the Communist Party led by Deng Xiaoping took over China, suppressed the left and adopted pro-capitalist measures. Deng's opening to the United States was sealed by his treacherous invasion of Vietnam in 1979.

China is almost totally enmeshed in the capitalist world market. Where previously there was almost no unemployment, China now has the world's largest reserve army of labor. Capitalists exploit millions of workers.

At the same time China has made tremendous economic progress. Last year Chinese mills poured 400 million tons

of steel. Ninety-eight percent of Chinese homes have electricity.

None of this would have been possible without a socialist revolution that shook the world.

Pentagon's ultimate target

All of us here will be first in the street to oppose any U.S. military threat to China. That's the Pentagon's ultimate target. We all reject China-bashing, which will rise in a crescendo leading up to the Beijing Olympics.

It's a mistake to think that China possesses an economic super weapon because it holds hundreds of billions of dollars and U.S. treasury bonds. These are just tokens of value which Karl Marx described as fictitious capital. Chinese financial reserves are hostage to the devaluing U.S. dollar.

Good revolutionaries and good communists can disagree on the class character of China. The dismantling of the communes and the opening of China to the world capitalist market represented the first

expansion of capital into new territory in decades. It's been disastrous for the communist movement and served to buttress bourgeois ideology around the world.

However we don't believe that a counter-revolution has occurred in China. Despite the growth of a capitalist class inside the country, the great historical legacy of the Chinese Revolution is still a tremendous social weight that hasn't been overcome by the bourgeoisie. They may have almost all the limousines but they don't control the army.

Marxists consider the state machine, its army and cops to be a superstructure that ultimately has to be brought into accord with the actual relations of production. But there can be a long historical lag between the two.

Chinese workers and peasants don't thank George Bush, the Pope or the hundred or so billionaires in China for sending a Chinese cosmonaut into orbit around the earth. They credit their revolution and the Communist Party for this stunning achievement.

Millions of Chinese communists are concerned about the massive inequality that has developed inside their country. Speeches by Communist Party leader Hu Jintao are a reflection of this. Chinese trade unionists are organizing Wal-Mart workers—something the labor movement hasn't done in the United States.

We think there are many more chapters to be written in the Chinese Revolution. The Chinese working class—now several hundred million strong—will have the last word. While we unconditionally defend China against the Pentagon—which in 1999 bombed the Chinese embassy in Belgrade, Yugoslavia—we look forward to a resurgence of communism inside China. □

ONAL SOLIDARITY & SOCIALISM

Unity can strengthen the working class

Excerpts from a speech by National Committee member John Parker to the WWP national conference on Nov. 17-18.

We must unify our class, especially with those sectors who face increased oppression from the ruling class: women, Black, Brown, Asian, Native, immigrant, Arab and Muslim, and lesbian/gay/bi/trans workers.

How do we build class consciousness and organization among the workers? Some may think that all we have to do is convince workers that they are members of the working class and all of their issues should be framed narrowly within that definition, so Black, Latin@ or Asian workers and their experiences here in the U.S. are not tied to the history of the nations of Africa, Latin America, South and East Asia—they are simply workers and we need not concern ourselves issues of national oppression.

One important thing to remember about unity is that you can't come together by dividing, by excluding certain sectors of the working class.

After 9/11, fighting for Palestinian rights or the rights of Muslim people became much more difficult. At that time, you could probably build a bigger anti-war rally with moderate and Democratic Party folks if you kept those issues off the table. However, this makes the ruling class feel more empowered and the movement more defensive and meek and weaker.

Why? Because in the case of sacrificing the issues of solidarity with Palestinian and Muslim people at a demonstration, the anti-war movement would lose a very important, leading sector of the international class struggle against imperialism,

along with their allies.

Fortunately, sections of the anti-war movement, like the Troops Out Now Coalition, in which our Party members are very proud to be involved, will not sacrifice the issue of Palestine or the Jena 6 or Katrina for the sake of building a so-called broader and bigger demonstration, even if it means one or more moderate groups that could help build a bigger demonstration refuse to participate.

We should remember that numbers at a demonstration don't necessarily correlate to the amount of unity that a demonstration builds.

Evidence of what a more working-class movement can accomplish may be found by looking at the demonstrations starting on March 25, 2006, in Los Angeles that sparked the May Day 2006 rallies for immigrant rights.

Responding to a severely repressive anti-immigrant bill, HR-4437, that passed easily through the Democratic-controlled House of Representatives and was due to hit the Senate floor, a demonstration and one-day work boycott of over a million people occurred in Los Angeles—and that was basically the last you heard of that bill going to the Senate.

When those immigrant workers boycotted, billions were lost in profits. Why? Because when those workers who bag and check out the groceries or cut the meat or change the bedpans or wash the dishes or load the trucks go out for a day, then prof-

its come to a screeching halt.

Danger of division between workers is especially clear in regards to immigrant workers being scapegoats now. These workers were forced into this country to look for the livelihood that was stolen from them due to U.S. economic policies like NAFTA.

Immigrant workers also face the same "invisibility" that Ralph Ellison wrote about in his book, "The Invisible Man," referring to how Black people and their lives and struggles are dismissed by many white progressives as unimportant.



JOHN PARKER

When a section of your class is being threatened like this, however, a working-class organization must respond.

Our party takes this struggle very seriously. That's why the coalition that initiated the March 25 demonstration in Los Angeles and the May 1 demonstrations for immigrant rights has members of our Party on its steering committee. We will try to build solidarity and organizational support to strengthen the working class as a whole.

Unity between Black and Brown workers is a natural thing. This is why the ruling class tries so hard to keep us divided. And this is why we must constantly try to bring these struggles together.

There were national demonstrations coinciding with the Sept. 20 rally in Jena, and in Los Angeles we made sure to facilitate getting Latino M25 coalition representatives on the stage to speak to the 99-percent Black crowd in the heart of the Black community in South Central to express solidarity.

As a revolutionary party, you're useless if you can't be seen as a trusted ally in the eyes of the most oppressed workers. If what I'm saying resonates with your mind and your heart, and you want to join a revolutionary party that is beholden to our working class, is responsible to our working class and is determined to strengthen the working class for the purpose of creating a revolution in this country, then this is the place for you. □

Study to change the world

Excerpts from a talk by National Committee member Phebe Eckfeldt to the WWP national conference Nov. 17-18.

We are all here today because we want to help change the world, make it a better place.

How are we going to accomplish that? One very important way is to study. We need to continuously develop ourselves politically.

If you are traveling to a destination, you need to read and study a map to figure out how to get there. If you want to make a revolution, you need to study the works of revolutionaries and study history. These are maps or guides

Marxism-Leninism is like a map. It is a guide for action; you can alter your route according to conditions on the road. Marxism is an objective way of looking at the world and understanding it.

Marxism takes an individual or specific development and connects it to what is going on in society as a whole. Marxism explains the world as no other system of political thought can. It shows in general terms how the world can be changed—that is, it explains the material basis for class struggle.

A young Black man caught up in the clutches of racial profiling and police brutality will find answers about why this is happening to him in Lenin's "The National Question and Self-Determination," and also in WWP's book "Marxism, Reparations and the Black Freedom Struggle."

A woman stitching clothes 12 hours a day in Indonesia can discover in Marx's "Wage Labor and Capital" the economic



PHEBE ECKFELDT

WW PHOTOS: JOHN CATALINOTTO

laws that drive the bosses to squeeze every drop of profit from her unpaid labor.

A young mother in an abusive relationship can discover that she is not to blame, but that women's oppression is built into the capitalist system, by reading Engels' "The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State."

Marxism is a guide for action.

In Boston when we were working on the case of the Somerville Five—five Black

youth racially profiled, brutalized by police and framed up, we used the book, "Marxism and Reparations" as our guide.

When I was first introduced to Marxism in college I knew quite quickly that this was the lens through which I wanted to view the world. Marxism looked right to me, it sounded right, it smelled right, it felt right. It matched the world I saw and experienced.

Marxism is empowering!

The three things that I learned right away through Marxism were: Women have not always been oppressed and exploited; we are part of a worldwide class of workers; and that capitalism is a temporary phase in the history of social development that will inevitably be replaced by a higher, humane system of socialism

How empowering is that?

Many poor and working people may feel intimidated by the mention of studying economics or history—and justifiably so. Workers are told that we cannot understand economics or can't understand the words or concepts or vocabulary contained

in Marx or Lenin.

That's a bunch of lies. They tell us that because they are afraid we will study Marxism and use it to change the world!

Instead they hold up places like Harvard University as the standard for education. What kind of education is that? It is bourgeois indoctrination.

I work at Harvard. Recently a former Harvard professor named James Watson, the co-discoverer of DNA and Nobel Prize winner, published a book which states that African American people are genetically inferior! This followed the former president of Harvard implying that women were inferior to men.

This is the ideology the top scholars at Harvard taught to the future members of the ruling class. This is the ideology that keeps us divided and powerless to change anything. This is what we are fighting against.

So, let's read, let's study. Let's take a beautiful and riveting document like Fred Goldstein's upcoming book, "Colossus with Feet of Clay," and read it line by line and talk about it and interpret it and tear it apart and digest it and turn it into action.

Let's study our history. The history of working and poor and oppressed people is alive; it is emotional, glorious, painful. Our history brings us to tears, it makes us want to stand up and shout, it makes us want to fight.

Let's be like Che Guevara, who encouraged his fellow workers and comrades by telling them that at the end of a long day of working at a difficult and tiring job—go home, open up a book and study for one hour and you can change the world. □

Wars, lies and ‘mass rape’ charges

By Leslie Feinberg

Unsubstantiated imperialist media accusations of systematic mass rape became the “weapons of mass destruction” pretext for the breakup of the former Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, orchestrated by the United States and Germany. But it was NATO armies and their fascist hirelings that brought systematic sexual violence—including mass rape of women and girls.

Rape and sexual exploitation are a feature of imperial warfare.

The Pentagon and CIA have long trained torturers to use rape, gender degradation and sexual humiliation as violent weaponry—from the School of the Assassins to Abu Ghraib to Guantánamo.

An unusually clear view of the imperialist troop indoctrination that rape is a “spoil,” a “right” taken through the patriarchal conquest of empire, appeared in a series of still pictures in the July 6, 1997, German newspaper Bild am Sonntag. The photographs showed German soldiers in battle fatigues during a break from training for their military mission against the former Yugoslavia. They were staging simulated rape, torture and noose lynching of civilians.

U.S. and German imperialism bankrolled neofascist forces in Croatia and Bosnia and in Serbia’s Kosovo province. Rape is a terror weapon in the arsenal of fascist violence, which targets oppressed nationalities, ethnicities, religions, sexes, gender expressions and sexualities.

The actions of private mercenary armies, like DynCorp commandos, are subject to

even less scrutiny than Pentagon troops. These privately owned “foreign legions” have been assured of virtual immunity from prosecution.

Investigative journalist Jeremy Scahill wrote in November 2005, “DynCorp employees in Bosnia, where the company plays a major policing role, have engaged in organized sex-slave trading with girls as young as 12, and DynCorp’s Bosnia site supervisor was filmed raping a woman.”

A company whistleblower, whom DynCorp initially fired but eventually settled with, filed a suit that described “coworkers and supervisors literally buying and selling women for their own personal enjoyment, and employees would brag about the various ages and talents of the individual slaves they had purchased.” (CommonDreams.org)

U.S.-NATO industrialize mass rape

In Kosovo, capitalist profiteers literally established large-scale mass rape as a profit-generating industry.

“The first case of sex-slave trafficking came to light in October—four months after NATO-led peacekeepers entered the province,” revealed a Washington Post report on April 24, 2000.

Even the Post’s preservation of imperialist double speak—“peacekeepers”—cannot obfuscate the consequences of capitalist reconquest: “Kosovo, which had some local prostitution but no trafficking problem before the peacekeepers arrived after the Kosovo war ended last June, is just another new market.”

NATO troops, including from the U.S., were customers.

The Post article elaborated that in the



NATO puts Serb leader on trial

By Cathrin Schütz

Vojislav Seselj, head of the Serbian Radical Party (SRS), went on trial Nov. 7 before the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia (ICTY) at The Hague, Netherlands. Seselj is an open Serbian nationalist. He was often a direct opponent and even enemy of pro-socialist forces in Yugoslavia, including the Socialist Party of Serbia when it was led by Slobodan Milosevic, the late president of Yugoslavia.

Nevertheless, the ICTY, created by NATO in the early 1990s to prosecute leading Serb politicians, has accused Seselj of forming a “Joint Criminal Enterprise” (JCE) with Milosevic and other political and military leaders. Allegedly, this JCE’s purpose was to create a “Greater Serbia” through “cleansing” of other ethnic groups.

Seselj is charged with war crimes in the pursuit of these aims. Although the accusations against Seselj refer to a time no later than the autumn of 1993, the indictment was issued 10 years later, in 2003.

Seselj is now accused of “hate speeches,” but this charge was entered only after the indictment against him was revised in 2005. Whatever speeches Seselj may have made during all the time relevant to the indictment—that is, before 1993—he was at that time a meaningless politician of a party not even officially recognized. Only in 1998, facing an imminent attack from NATO, would the SRS and the Socialists form a common government.

Like Milosevic before him, Seselj is rep-

resenting himself at the trial. He enforced his right to do this with a hunger strike last year.

Milosevic in his trial successfully rejected the charge that Serb forces were responsible for the aggression in the Balkans and uncovered the war-mongering policy of the NATO countries, but he became seriously ill. Observers accuse the Tribunal of refusing him medical assistance because his successful defense had become a real danger to the forces behind the Tribunal. Milosevic died in March 2006, before his trial was finished.

Seselj stated in his opening speech that Germany, the Vatican and the U.S. are at fault for the bloody conflicts, as they aimed to destroy the Yugoslav state. He said the ICTY was illegal and under the control of the NATO countries.

The ICTY was established by the U.N. Security Council. Unlike the post-World War II Nuremberg Court, which is often said to serve as a model for The Hague tribunal, the ICTY has no jurisdiction over aggressive war—the crime characterized by the Nuremberg judges as “the supreme international crime.” It was set up under pressure from Germany and the United States, which were already deeply involved in the bloodshed in Yugoslavia.

The NATO countries committed a war of aggression by intervening in Yugoslavia in 1999, but are out of reach of this NATO creation. The trial of Seselj is intended to justify the 1999 attack on Yugoslavia and the exploitation of the former Yugoslav republics by U.S. and European Union imperialism. □

prior decade, “Hundreds of thousands of women from the former Soviet republics and satellites have been trafficked to Western Europe, Asia and the United States.”

They were tricked into travel or kidnapped from Moldavia, Ukraine, Bulgaria and Romania. The Post reported that the women and girls were repeatedly raped and beaten to break their resistance to enslavement.

While some people forced into prostitution industries are paid at least a small sum, these women and girls were bought and sold like chattel.

The procurers, the Post article stated, “work under the protection of major crime figures in Kosovo, officials said, including some with links to the former anti-Serbian rebel force, the Kosovo Liberation Army.”

The U.S. and Germany armed and equipped the so-called Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) against the Yugoslav government. The New York Times—which supported the war to break up Yugoslavia—nevertheless reported on March 28, 2000, that many of the leaders of the KLA trace their roots to a fascist unit set up by the Italian occupiers during World War II.

Yet while the U.S. and Germany had spent a decade bankrolling fascist groupings to destabilize the former socialist Yugoslavia, the imperialist propaganda machinery slandered the Serbs as fascists.

How PR firm pulled off ‘Big Lie’

Nazi propagandist Joseph Goebbels built the German imperialist media blitzkrieg on the “Big Lie”—the premise that any lie or distortion can be publicly accepted as truth if it is broadcast loud enough and frequently enough.

James Harff, director of the Ruder Finn Global Public Affairs public relations firm, adds, “Speed is vital. ... It is the first assertion that really counts. All denials are entirely ineffective.”

Harff knows what he’s talking about. The Washington-based firm of Ruder Finn was hired to handle public relations and win support for the break-away Yugoslav republics of Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina and the opposition in Kosovo.

Harff did an interview in April 1993 with Jacques Merlino, associate director of French TV 2. Harff boasted about how

his firm had developed an ad campaign designed to make the Serbs appear to be fascists.

Harff said his proudest achievement in this effort was, “to have managed to put Jewish opinion on our side. ... Tens of thousands of Jews perished in Croatian camps, so there was every reason for intellectuals and Jewish organizations to be hostile towards the Croats and the Bosnians. Our challenge was to reverse this attitude and we succeeded masterfully.”

Harff bragged: “We outwitted three big Jewish organizations—the B’nai B’rith Anti-Defamation League, the American Jewish Committee and the American Jewish Congress. In August, we suggested that they publish an advertisement in the New York Times and organize demonstrations outside the United Nations. That was a tremendous coup. When the Jewish organizations entered the game on the side of the [Muslim] Bosnians, we could promptly equate the Serbs with the Nazis in the public mind.”

Harff added, “By a single move we were able to present a simple story of good guys and bad guys which would hereafter play itself. ... Almost immediately there was a clear change of language in the press, with use of words with high emotional content such as ethnic cleansing, concentration camps, etc., which evoke images of Nazi Germany and the gas chambers of Auschwitz. No one could go against it without being accused of revisionism. We really batted a thousand in full.”

Merlino asked, “But between 2 and 5 August 1992, when you did this, you had no proof that what you said was true.”

Harff put it all out on the table when he concluded, “Our work is not to verify information. We are not equipped for that. Our work is to accelerate the circulation of information favorable to us, to aim at judiciously chosen targets. ... We are professionals. We had a job to do and we did it. We are not paid to moralize.”

For more information read part 114 of *Lavender and Red* at www.workers.org and “NATO in the Balkans” (*International Action Center*, New York: 1998).

Next: Pentagon did not wage war on Afghanistan to “liberate” women and same-sex love.

E-mail: lfeinberg@workers.org

Washington and NATO strategists invoked humanitarian principles to justify their war. But they practiced the divide-and-conquer tactics used by empires since the days of Imperial Rome.

Hidden Agenda: U.S./NATO takeover of Yugoslavia

By Ramsey Clark & various authors

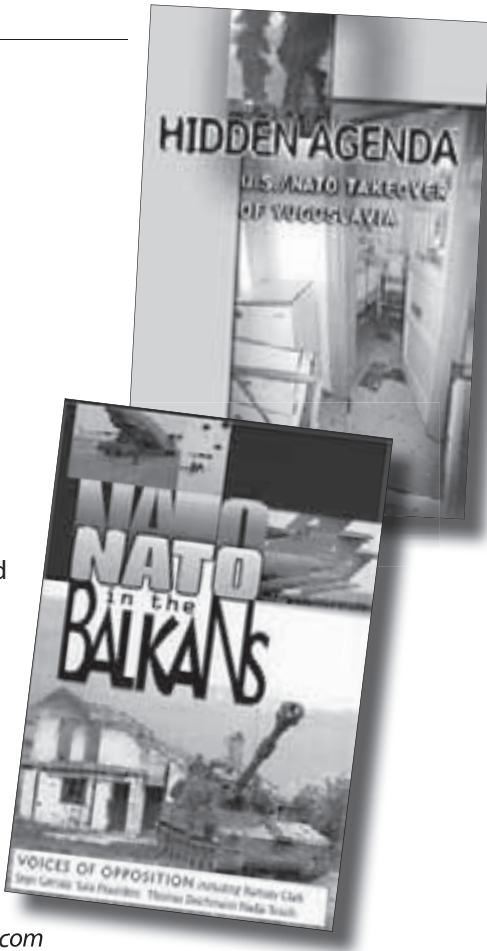
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Somalia’s crisis made in USA

By G. Dunkel

The Somalian Transitional Federal Government, installed by Ethiopian troops at the end of 2006, has decided to move the resistant population out of the capital, an action it calls “empty the sea.” The resistance to its rule in Mogadishu has been so strong, with attacks on Ethiopian troops lasting for hours and involving mortars and other heavy weapons, and has so much mass support, that the TFG took drastic measures.

The president of the TFG, Abdullahi Yusuf, a British- and U.S.-backed military leader, wants the city empty. He said in Nairobi, Kenya, in mid-November, that Mogadishu’s civilians can either choose to fight the Islamic insurgents or they will themselves become targets of his “war on terror.” (British Guardian, Nov. 21) Mogadishu’s Mayor Mohammed Dheere has accused aid workers of “feeding terrorists” by helping those who have fled. (The Age, Melbourne, Nov. 22.)

Nearly 200,000 residents of Mogadishu have been forced to flee as the fighting intensified at the end of October and the beginning of November. Most have joined unofficial refugee camps, already spread out along 20 miles of the road west to Afgoi. They live under trees in the dust

and pay to use latrines, which is a recipe for cholera and other diseases that flourish in poor sanitation. About one million of Somalia’s 10 million people are internally displaced.

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees considers Somalia worse off than Darfur in Sudan. The hunger is greater, the violence more intense, yet no major U.S. newspaper or TV channel has bothered to cover this rapidly unfolding tragedy. African newspapers cover the Somalia events.

“If this happened in Darfur, there would be a major outcry,” said Eric Laroche, the U.N.’s humanitarian co-coordinator for Somalia. “Since it is in Somalia, no one cares. Somalia is a forgotten emergency.”

While the UNHCR has complained, Anders Knudsen, who is program coordinator for the Danish Refugee Council, says that the UNHCR carries a lot of the blame itself because the UNHCR supports the TFG, which it recognized as the legitimate government of Somalia.

Addressing the difficulties the U.N. has had in delivering supplies to the refugees, Knudsen said, “The problem is that the United Nations-supported transition government has no support from the population, and therefore the U.N. emergency vehicles are not welcome among

the clan militias, because they regard the United Nations as the extended arm of the transition government and Ethiopia in Mogadishu.”

While the corporate media may ignore Somalia, neither the European Union nor the U.S. has forgotten it.

The European Parliament passed a resolution in Strasbourg, France, on Nov. 22, condemning “the serious violations of international humanitarian law and human rights law committed by all parties to the conflict in Somalia” and calling for an immediate end to hostilities. French navy ships have been escorting ships with relief supplies into Somalia’s southern ports supposedly to protect them against pirates. These pirates have flourished since the Siad Barre government, which was beholden to the U.S., was driven from power.

Harvests in southern Somalia, the breadbasket of the country, have been nearly destroyed by a combination of floods, drought and locust swarms.

The first U.S. setback in this African nation was in 1993 when two U.S. helicopters hunting down “warlords” were shot down. Armed Somali fighters killed 18 Marines who survived the crashes in the helicopters. This incident was used as the basis of a book and film called “Black Hawk Down” and forced the Clinton

administration to withdraw the U.S. occupation troops from Somalia.

Washington’s justification for its 1992-1993 intervention was that no centralized state had asserted itself in Somalia after Barre’s fall in 1991. The Pentagon’s aborted intervention was supposed to be part of a “peacekeeping mission.”

U.S. meddling in Somalia had begun much earlier, however. It first interfered in Somalia in the late 1970s when Washington urged Barre to invade neighboring Ethiopia, which at that time was led by a pro-socialist government allied with the Soviet Union.

A number of liberal analysts and NGOs are again calling for this 1990s type of “humanitarian” intervention. Washington justifies its current intervention based on the alleged terrorist threat. The government the Ethiopian intervention overthrew was based on “Islamic courts,” which Washington considers an enemy.

While Somalia is a poor country whose major exports come from its herds and gum arabic, it occupies a strategic position on the Horn of Africa. The major naval base at Berbera allows any navy based there to control the flow of oil to Europe and to China through the Red Sea. Thus, the interest of the EU and U.S. to intervene in Somalia. □

Transport workers in France suspend strike

By G. Dunkel

After a nine-day strike resisting a cut in pensions, transportation workers in France Nov. 23 suspended their action for a month. Meanwhile three-sided talks among the transportation unions, the companies that run the French system and the French government will take place.

One union confederation, the CFDT-rail which pulled out of the strike after a few days, has filed a notice of its intent to strike Dec. 20. Other confederations have hinted that they are considering the same step.

The French government has said it will insist on its “reforms,” meaning benefit cuts for workers. Xavier Bertrand, the minister of labor, said he wanted no negotiations while the strike was going on and that the government should refuse to participate in them.

When he finally agreed to the structure of talks the unions demanded, it was after it became clear that without this step the strikes would continue to the detriment of the government’s public support. The government actively worked to mobilize

public support among right-wing and pro-capitalist sectors, but the unions also had a solid sympathy among many French workers.

During the transportation strike, the public service workers—teachers, nurses, air traffic controllers, post office, Bank of France, and government office workers—held a one-day strike Nov. 20 to protest their low salaries. About 5 million workers walked out and about 970,000 people throughout the country participated in marches and demonstrations.

It is clear on the government’s part that while they will talk, the “reform” will proceed. French President Nicolas Sarkozy, congratulating himself in a press conference announcing the end of the strike, said, “I promised this reform and I have kept my promise. It happened because we chose the way of dialog and firmness.”

While Sarkozy claims he is confident about his eventual victory, the workers in transportation are still preparing to struggle. Liberation, a major French newspaper with a strong financial connection to the super-wealthy Rothschild family, ran

an article Nov. 23 on the radicalization and anger that the strike produced. Some workers in Marseilles called for blocking tracks and forcing the cops to play a cat-and-mouse game.

The British Guardian interviewed Herve Berthome, a bus driver in Paris, outside his depot on the last day of the strike. Berthome said, “We’re the human stones ready to be lobbed at the government. We’re the last line of resistance to protect France from neo-liberalism, capitalism and the end of society.” Berthome’s father used to reminisce about striking in May 1968, when 10 million workers went on an unlimited strike. “Sarkozy is our Thatcher,” he continued. “He’s a provocateur, he plays one France against the other. He’s ready to serve his class and his cronies, the rich who eat caviar off a golden spoon.”

The French working class is confronting an ever more unified and vicious ruling class, but has shown it is prepared for long and protracted struggles to protect the gains it has won over the last century. □



French Public Service workers

Lou Dobbs picketed in Boston

Continued from page 4
working people or anyone else affected by lousy jobs and pay. His paycheck (in the six figures) comes from Time-Warner and CNN. He uses his privileged status to bash working people who are only trying to earn a living for themselves and their families. These workers have been forced to come to the U.S. to find work because of Bush-Cheney policies that have subjugated the economies of their homelands like Mexico, Guatemala and Haiti. They come because of U.S. funded wars against the people of Central America in the 1980s and the kidnapping of President Aristide in Haiti in the 1990s. The economies of their countries have been destroyed by the likes of NAFTA and the IMF and the World Bank, destroying centuries of self-sufficient

economy like corn growing in Mexico by drowning them in cheap imports, forcing immigrants to come to the U.S. to work the jobs with the lowest pay and the worst conditions, simply to survive.

“All workers are sisters and brothers toiling for the profit of greedy multinational corporations who exploit our labor, and then try to scapegoat us and turn us against each other. We condemn the ICE raids in New Bedford, Mass., earlier this year and elsewhere; the tearing apart of families; and the jailing, chaining and deportation of poor workers in the middle of the night by terror squads of the U.S. Immigration Service.

“There are no borders in the workers struggle! Full rights for all immigrants now! Stop ICE raids!” □

German train drivers walk out

By G. Dunkel

German train drivers have been conducting a series of one- and two-day strikes to force Deutsche Bahn, the German state-owned railroad company, to recognize their new union and give them a significant raise.

The drivers’ schedules vary from day to day. Their work week often stretches to 55 hours. Although they do skilled work and are responsible for keeping hundreds, if not thousands, of people safe, they make less than \$2,200 a month. This salary is about 30 percent lower than the going wage in other European countries.

The most recent strike ended early on

Nov. 17 after shutting down freight service for 62 hours and passenger transportation for 48 hours. It clogged the port of Hamburg and stopped production at some auto plants. Eastern Germany was more affected than the western part of the country. DB claimed the strike would cost it more than \$700 million if it lasted a week.

Manfred Schell, head of the GDL, the union that organized the strikes, said he was “very happy” with the action and was expecting an offer from the company. On Nov. 18 the union issued a news release stating that if DB didn’t improve its offer, the workers would go out on an unlimited strike. □



France: To rebel is justified

Just five days after a one-day strike of 5 million workers in France, another rebellion by youth has rocked the suburbs of Paris. Reports indicate that these youth have taken steps to better organize themselves than in the 2005 rebellion. According to reports in the corporate media and from the police, the youth have weapons—which wasn’t true in 2005—and are using them in a systematic way.

As in the previous rebellion, the spark that ignited this year’s rebellion was the death of two teenagers. The cops say the youths ran their motor-bike into a police car; residents say that the officers fled the scene and didn’t stop to assist the two youths. Within an hour of the incident, young people had hit the streets.

Regardless of the incident, the rebellions are yet another explosion of the powder keg of poverty, racism and anti-immigrant xenophobia, and constant police harassment of youth in the suburbs of Paris and other French cities. Workers World stands in solidarity with these youth, who are bravely taking a stand against the violence they face in their lives on a daily basis.

In describing the 1992 rebellion in Los Angeles, the late Workers World Party Chairperson Sam Marcy wrote at the time: “After every stage in the struggle of the workers and oppressed people, there follows an ideological struggle over what methods the masses should embrace to achieve their liberation from imperialist monopoly capital. There are always those who abjure violence while minimizing the initial use of violence by the ruling class. ...

“Marxism here again cuts through it all. The Marxist view of violence flows from an altogether different concept. It first of all distinguishes between the violence of the oppressors as against the responsive violence of the masses. ...

“As Marx would put it, such a rising is a festival of the masses. The incidental harm is far outweighed by the fact that it raises the level of the struggle to

a higher plateau. The wounds inflicted by the gendarmerie will be healed. The lessons will be learned: that a spontaneous uprising has to be supported with whatever means are available. ...

“Spontaneity as an element of social struggle must beget its own opposite: leadership and organization. Consciousness of this will inevitably grow.”

The French ruling class has opened an offensive against the entire working class in the form of President Nicolas Sarkozy’s attack on workers’ pensions and other benefits. In the U.S., massive layoffs and social-benefit cutbacks have always harmed Black, Latin@, women and all specially oppressed workers most. The sub-prime mortgage crisis here disproportionately hurts the most oppressed, as the massive list of foreclosures in Detroit, a mostly African-American city, shows.

In France, too, the damage to the most oppressed is exacerbated when French neo-fascists from the National Front and a right-wing president like Sarkozy—who has used racist language to describe the poor of the suburbs—attempt to divide the working class by scapegoating people from other cultures, mainly non-European and Muslim immigrants, who may have lived in France for three generations.

Will the working class in France, with its wonderful tradition of struggle that includes the Paris Commune, the massive general strikes of 1936 and 1968, and the anti-Nazi resistance, overcome the ruling class attempt to divide them by religion or nationality or by level of organization?

The world is looking to see if organized labor in France will express its solidarity with the oppressed youths of the impoverished suburbs fighting racism and racist cops, just as it looks to see if organized workers here stand in solidarity with immigrants under attack and with urban African-American communities that rise up to fight police repression. □

MADRID, SPAIN

Youths defy cops to protest fascist murder

By John Catalinotto

As in the United States, in the Spanish state fascist and other right-wing groups have made immigrants the scapegoat for the ills of society in their attempt to break up the unity and solidarity of the working class. This was underlined by the murder of a 16-year-old anti-fascist youth on Nov. 11 and a militant anti-fascist protest on Nov. 24, both in Madrid, the capital.

The protest brought 3,000 anti-fascists, mainly young people, to the center of Madrid near the Atocha train terminal. The “Socialist Party” government had reversed an earlier permit and outlawed the legitimate anti-fascist protest. Attacked by rioting police, the youths retreated, set up barricades and about 1,000 fought their way from Atocha to the Legazpi metro stop. There, amid cheers that they had succeeded despite the open police repression, they hung a plaque to honor the slain youth.

The plaque read: “Here Carlos Javier Palomino was murdered on Nov. 11, 2007, at the age of 16, struggling against fascism and racism. Carlos, brother, we will not forget you. The best way to honor you is to continue the struggle.”

The latest events began when the extreme right-wing National Democracy group—the equivalent of Le Pen’s racist National Front in France—called for a demonstration in Usera, a working-class district in Madrid with a high proportion of immigrants, under the slogans “Against immigration” and “Against anti-Spanish racism,” which are, in essence, racist slogans.

Young anti-fascists from diverse organizations had met near Legazpi on Nov. 11 to take the metro to the site of the fascist demonstration to either heckle it or stop it. When a group of these young anti-fascists entered a subway car, they ran into the killer, a professional soldier who was also a member of the honorary battalion of the king’s guards. Metro videotapes show that without hesitating to speak, this soldier pulled out a machete and used it to stab Palomino in the heart, killing him, and seriously wounding Jonathan M. Alexander when a machete blow cut his lung.

Other young people chased and finally brought down the killer. But at the metro exit, riot police attacked the anti-fascist youths, injuring several of them, one of them seriously. These events took place soon before the Nov. 20 date, when both Spanish fascist dictator Francisco Franco died in 1975, and founder of the Spanish fascist Falange party, José Antonio Primo de Rivera, died in the 1930s.

The young anti-fascists are mainly from groups in Madrid’s Antifascist Coordination, which was founded by several left organizations, mainly comprised of young people, in the mid-1980s.

According to a text written by Ángeles Maestro of the Red Current group, this coordination has carried out anti-fascist demonstrations that have continually gained in political and class content—last year the slogan was: “Republic [end the monarchy—J.C.], Self-determination, Socialism.” Maestro attributes this development to:

(1) The increase in questioning of the legitimacy of the monarchy and the regime that arose from the “Transition”; that is, the change from fascism, after the death of Francisco Franco in 1975, to imperialist democracy.

(2) The insecure working conditions, including the impossibility especially for young people to obtain independent housing arrangements, and the decline of living conditions.

The Spanish state, and Madrid especially, is a financial and commercial link between world imperialism and Latin America. This was revealed earlier in November by the arrogant attitude toward Latin America’s Indigenous elected leaders expressed by the Spanish King Juan Carlos II—named by Franco to his post—at the Iberian-American summit in Santiago, Chile.

Maestro notes that, “After the dramatic events of Nov. 11 the very serious development occurred: all the great [corporate] mass media referred to the events as if they were a confrontation between ‘rival gangs’ and connected the antifascist movement with ‘terrorism.’

“From this arises the enormous importance of the popular response in the working-class districts, with large demonstrations following the murder, especially in Usera, the district where the fascists tried to demonstrate, and in Vallekas, where the murdered youth lived.”

There were anti-fascist demonstrations on or around Nov. 17 in almost all the major cities in the Spanish state, one of the largest in Barcelona in the Catalan region. The organization of the Basque people’s movement, Batasuna, issued a statement in solidarity with Carlos Palomino and the anti-fascist struggle. The Madrid government and fascists, besides scapegoating immigrants, have carried out a systematic repression of the organizations struggling for self-determination for the Basque nation.

What is also significant is that the “Socialist” (PSOE) government led by Prime Minister Zapatero has permitted all the demonstrations requested by pro-fascist and ultra-right groups, including a tribute to Franco and a protest demanding that the government hold no negotiations with the Basque ETA group, while it denied permits to the anti-fascists.

Despite the state repression, the anti-fascist youth seem combat ready and prepared to take the next steps to defend their rights and those of immigrant workers. □

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‘Che’ panel on podcast

At the Workers World Party Conference, Nov. 17, organizers from Fight Imperialism, Stand Together (FIST), conducted a session on “The Legacy of Che Guevara.” Laura Bickford chaired, and speakers included Dante Strobino, Caleb Maupin, Mike Martinez, Filipe, Tyneisha Bowens, and Mia Campbell. An audio podcast of the session can be found at www.workers.org. □



Uribe disrupts Colombia-Venezuela relations

By Berta Joubert-Ceci

Political developments in Colombia and Venezuela, two countries in South America that share a 1,380-mile border, are strategic to the region’s political climate and stability. This puts them also in the sights of the Bush administration and the Pentagon.

Both countries have vast natural resources. Colombia enjoys the geopolitical advantage of having both an Atlantic and a Pacific coast. Venezuela has vast oil reserves. Transnational corporations find this lure enticing.

The governments of these two countries have opposing ideologies. The neofascist President Álvaro Uribe Vélez, the closest ally of Bush in all Latin America, rules Colombia. Venezuelan President Hugo Chávez Frías has been promoting a revolution that aims to construct society on a socialist foundation; to Washington’s dismay, several countries in South and Central America are following Chávez’s example.

The U.S. agenda has been to destabilize the Bolivarian Revolution in Venezuela, mostly through the funding of violent opposition groups that hide behind the mask of “democracy” in Venezuela and by U.S. political intervention, mostly through its ambassador in Bogotá, Colombia. Meanwhile, Washington props up the Uribe government with more than \$4 billion to date through Plan Colombia. Colombia is third in U.S. military aid after the Middle East and Afghanistan.

The U.S. goal of pitting Colombia and Venezuela against each other had failed overall until recently. Despite their differences, both countries had increased trade with each other. Both are each other’s second largest trading partners after the U.S. Several weeks ago an oil and gas pipeline was inaugurated in Colombia, a joint Colombia-Venezuela project.

Of course the U.S. has had some successes. Colombian paramilitaries were caught in Caracas several years ago, planning to kill President Chávez. Other incidents in both countries pointed in the direction of a destabilization move against the Bolivarian Revolution coming from Colombia’s soil.

And now, Uribe’s abrupt and unilateral call to stop the negotiations for a Humanitarian Exchange (HE) of prisoners in Colombia’s civil war have brought the good-neighborrelations to a screeching halt. The negotiations were aimed at exchanging 45 people held by the Colombian liberation fighters known as the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia—Popular Army (FARC-EP) and the 500 FARC members in Colombian prisons.

Humanitarian Exchange, a hope for peace in Colombia

The growing movement for a humanitarian exchange in Colombia opposes the U.S./Uribe’s plan to “rescue” those held by the guerrilla forces through military intervention. Every such military attack in the past has led to more deaths of prisoners.

It is likely this growing movement, with ample support both in Colombia and internationally, prompted Uribe to accept negotiations that could lead to the exchange. Even the conservative French President Nicolas Sarkozy applied pressure to start talks, as he had to show interest in freeing French-Colombian Ingrid Betancourt, former Colombian presidential candidate. Also, the parents of three U.S. Pentagon contractors demanded talks. The FARC-EP holds these people prisoners.



WW PHOTO: DEIRDRE GRISWOLD

Colombian Senator Piedad Córdoba, shown above at an environmental conference in Caracas.

The FARC itself has said it would like the HE to lead to negotiations with the government for an eventual peace plan.

In mid-August, Uribe surprised observers by selecting Afro-Colombian senator Piedad Córdoba to be the Colombian government representative for the facilitation of the negotiations for the HE accord. Córdoba is an opposition leader from the Liberal Party, who has been quite vocal linking Uribe’s close government allies to paramilitary forces.

Senator Córdoba then invited President Chávez to be part of the effort. Chávez, who had volunteered himself for it, gladly accepted. Uribe approved these steps. To mediate effectively, the facilitators met with the FARC secretariat; Senator Córdoba met with FARC spokesperson Raúl Reyes on Sept. 15.

Both Chávez and Córdoba gave priority to HE negotiations. Córdoba went to Caracas, to Paris and to Washington, where she met with FARC members Simón Trinidad and Sonia, both held in U.S. prisons. Both Trinidad and Sonia graciously told the senator that they should be removed from the list of those to be exchanged if their presence on it would interfere with the HE.

Both Chávez and Córdoba met with FARC envoys in Caracas and also went to Europe to meet with Sarkozy. Great advances were reported. Relatives of the guerrillas in prison and of those held by

the FARC were grateful that for the first time a serious attempt was being made to negotiate and arrange for the freedom of their loved ones. Colombians reported a tremendous sense of hope permeating the country.

During the Latin American Summit held in Chile at the beginning of November, Chávez pleaded with Uribe to be more flexible. Though Uribe had approved the negotiations, he was setting strict limits. Uribe vehemently refused to clear (demilitarize) a space in Colombia so the negotiations could take place safely without the military’s interference, as the FARC had demanded.

In mid-November, Uribe underlined his intransigence, setting a deadline of Dec. 31 for the negotiations. It was unreasonable to believe that armed conflict in existence for more than 40 years could suddenly provide for such a speedy and important action. Even Chávez mentioned many times the difficulties in communicating with the FARC, due to the intense Colombian army bombing of the jungle where the guerrillas are.

U.S. orders a halt to HE

Two days later, on Nov. 21, in an interesting but tragic turn of events, U.S. former ambassador to Venezuela, William Brownfield, who had been accredited as ambassador to Colombia only on Sept. 12, publicly stated, “We are two months

and 22 days into this process and we still have no proof of life,” A few hours later, Uribe unilaterally announced that the negotiations were suspended and both Córdoba and Chávez were dismissed.

The excuse used by Uribe was a 30-second phone conversation between Chávez and Colombian Army General Mario Montoya. Uribe claimed that Chávez’s call to Montoya was a breach of protocol. In reality, Córdoba had placed the call as part of many she had made to Montoya in an effort to mediate.

Imagine the relatives’ abrupt loss of hope, and by extension, that of the people in Colombia who want peace. And the international community that stands in solidarity with the struggling and courageous Colombian masses. Even Sarkozy urged Uribe to reconsider.

The relatives of those held by the FARC responded to Uribe’s announcement with harsh criticism. An article in the Nov. 23 Washington Post reports that, “Jo Rosano, mother of Marc Gonsalves, one of the Americans, blamed Uribe, saying he had undercut the mediation efforts by Chávez and Colombian Sen. Piedad Córdoba, a leftist who is close to Chávez.”

“This is not the first time that he’s sabotaged this, and it won’t be the last,” Rosano said from her home in Connecticut. “Shame on him is all I can say. The eyes of the world are on him.”

Colombia-Venezuela relations in crisis

Chávez criticized Uribe’s decision, stating that this unilateral pronouncement was not what was agreed to before. He questioned Uribe’s sincerity about reaching peace in Colombia. He also accused imperialist interference of bringing about this sudden ending.

Uribe answered with his fiercest attack so far against Chávez, accused him of pursuing an “expansionist project” for Latin America and saying that Colombia will “close its doors” to it. He also accused Chávez of “not wanting peace for Colombia but rather that Colombia be a victim of a FARC terrorist government.”

As of Nov. 27, the Venezuelan government has recalled its ambassador to Colombia for consultation. Chávez has also said that trade with Colombia might be affected.

And in the wildest turn of events, the Colombian Supreme Court cited Senator Córdoba for “treason to the Homeland” because she met with FARC representatives in her effort to mediate a HE.

This is happening at a time when the scandal of the paramilitary links of Uribe’s allies in government is at its height in Colombia.

This is also just a few days before a crucial constitutional referendum in Venezuela on Dec. 2. There is ample mass support for the referendum. Through the funding of NGO’s that fuel the viciousness of the opposition groups, Washington is intervening, aiding the much-publicized “students” demonstrations against the referendum. These “students” are really the wealthy, business and religious representatives of the oligarchy and their children.

The mass, magnificent pro-Chávez rallies have been ignored by the corporate media, both in Venezuela and in the imperialist countries. □

Protests demand: ‘Close School of Americas’

By Jaimeson Champion

Approximately 25,000 people assembled at the gates of Fort Benning in Columbus, Ga., on Nov. 18 as part of an annual protest to demand that the U.S. military close the notorious School of the Americas (SOA).

The SOA, now named the Western Hemisphere Institute for Security and Cooperation, is used to train military and security personnel from Latin American nations. SOA graduates are responsible for the murder and torture of hundreds of thousands of people in countries across Latin America.

The demonstration began with Gennaro Jacinto Cael, from the International Mayan League, offering a traditional Mayan blessing. Speakers at the demon-

stration recounted atrocities committed by SOA trained murderers, such as the 1981 El Mozote massacre in El Salvador where more than 900 men, women and children were brutally killed, and demanded that the U.S. military immediately shut down the school. Participants in the demonstration included survivors of torture at the hands of SOA graduates.

Demonstrators placed thousands of white crosses with the names of victims who were murdered by SOA graduates at the gate of the base. Military police arrested 11 people who crossed onto the grounds of the base in an act of civil disobedience.

Simultaneous demonstrations took place in San Francisco; Fort Huachuca, Ariz.; Monterey, Calif.; Santiago, Chile; and Toronto, Canada. □

MUNDO OBRERO

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Mensajes de solidaridad para el Partido Mundo Obrero/WWP

Un partido obrero en EE.UU. es esencial

Por John Catalinotto
Nueva York

Los mensajes de solidaridad internacional que fueron enviados a la Conferencia Nacional del partido Workers World/ Mundo Obrero, que tuvo lugar durante los días 17 y 18 de noviembre en esta ciudad, además de expresar solidaridad y deseos de éxito, también proveyeron una idea sobre las condiciones de los movimientos obreros y populares en diferentes regiones y países.

Para l@s activistas en Estados Unidos, quizás lo que más nos llena de modestia pero a la vez nos da fuerza, es la importancia que los pueblos del mundo dan a cualquier señal de lucha dentro de los Estados Unidos y la atención especial que l@s revolucionari@s del mundo prestan a la necesidad de un partido revolucionario que sea claramente antiimperialista en las mismas “entrañas del monstruo”. (Puede leer los mensajes en su totalidad en workersworld.net)

El Partido Comunista Cubano dice en su mensaje: “a pesar del bloqueo económico nuestro pueblo ha avanzado dramáticamente en la construcción de una nueva y mejor sociedad y cooperando con nuestros hermanos y hermanas en Venezuela, Bolivia y ayudando a muchos otros en Latinoamérica, el Caribe, África y Asia para mejorar sus vidas. ...Es desde esta perspectiva que nosotros agradecemos su solidaridad incondicional con nuestra lucha por la independencia y la justicia ante las agresiones imperialistas que nuestro pueblo ha venido resistiendo y venciendo, heroica y exitosamente por más de 47 años”.

El Partido de los Trabajadores de Corea (RDPC) envía sus deseos de que, “La Conferencia Nacional de su partido sea una ocasión importante en sus actividades para fortaleces aún más al partido organizativa e ideológicamente y forjar el partido como el partido popular apoyado por las masas populares”.

El Frente Socialista de Puerto Rico escribió que: “han sido testigo de la solidaridad del WWP/MO en todas nuestras luchas, y en particular con la causa de dar fin a la colonización de nuestra nación, la lucha para liberar a Vieques de la Marina de los Estados Unidos, la lucha contra la privatización de los servicios públicos durante la huelga del pueblo”.

La importancia de la lucha dentro de Estados Unidos

Del Profesor José María Sison, presidente de La Liga Internacional de la Luchas Populares (ILPS), recibimos el siguiente mensaje: “La políticas de globalización neoliberal instigadas por los Estados Unidos y la guerra global de terror (incluyendo el terrorismo estatal y las guerras de agresión) han infligido las peores formas de explotación y opresión contra los pueblos en una escala sin precedentes.

...Nosotros siempre anhelamos el crecimiento en fuerza y el avance del movimiento antiimperialista y democrático del pueblo americano. Esto tiene unas consecuencias de largo alcance y de gran beneficio para la clase obrera y los pueblos

oprimidos del mundo en su resistencia al imperialismo y a toda reacción”.

Del Partido de la Liberación (PL) de Argentina leemos que “Eso no es sólo en interés de ustedes sino también en el nuestro, en el sentido que la mejor organización y protagonismo político de los marxista-leninistas en Estados Unidos y otros países imperialistas ayuda y fortalece las luchas de los pueblos del Tercer Mundo, como es el caso de Argentina”.

De la Coordinadora Continental Bolivariana (CCB), una organización de unidad antiimperialista en América Latina, “Nosotros entendemos muy bien la importancia de la acción por parte del pueblo en Estados Unidos en la lucha antiimperialista y reconocemos su gran esfuerzo en las luchas internacionales como también en la lucha de clase dentro de su propio país”.

Del Centro de Unidad Socialista de India (CUSI) llega un mensaje que dice, “Su valiente persistencia en la lucha contra el imperialismo estadounidense, el peor enemigo del hombre en nuestro tiempo, ha sido una fuente de inspiración para todos los que construyen movimientos antiimperialista en todo el globo”.

La necesidad de un partido revolucionario.

La Unión do Povo Galego (UPG) en el estado español, destaca las dificultades: “Todos somos conscientes de lo difícil que es hoy por hoy la lucha por la soberanía de los pueblos y por el socialismo, y sabemos que en el corazón del imperio las condiciones en las que desarrolla esa lucha tiene características aun más complejas si cabe”.

¿Cómo bregar con estas complejidades? El Foro Antiimperialista de Toda la India (AIAIF) lo resume: “Por un lado la opresión capitalista y la explotación de la clase trabajadora se han intensificado, y las potencias imperialistas encabezadas por los EEUU han perpetrado una agresión bárbarica contra muchos países del mundo, y por otro lado el resentimiento popular frente al sistema capitalista también está aumentando. La lucha anticapitalista del pueblo puede emerger victoriosa sólo si tiene una base ideológica firme en el Marxismo-Leninismo”.

Del Partido de los Trabajadores de Bélgica, leemos que “En cada país del mundo, la construcción de un partido leninista, leal al mapa trazado por la Revolución de Octubre, permanece como la tarea principal. ... Nunca las coaliciones, redes o facciones sin una clara convicción podrán reemplazar a los partidos obreros basados en el centralismo democrático”. Además, “El internacionalismo proletario es un elemento fundamental que distingue a los partidos comunistas y de trabajadores de todos los demás”.

La Corriente Roja (CR) en el estado español escribe que la consigna, “¡Trabajador@s de todas las tierras, uníos! señala nuestra tarea inmediata. Camaradas del Partido Mundo Obrero/ Workers World Party: vuestra lucha y vuestro papel es trascendental en esta tarea. L@s comunistas de EE.UU. tenéis el trabajo más duro y al mismo tiempo el más decisivo en la lucha común de l@s trabajador@s y los pueblos de todo el

mundo. Junto a la resistencia en Iraq, en Cuba, Venezuela y Colombia, vuestra lucha es el latido de esperanza del mundo”.

Condiciones específicas de la lucha obrera.

La Unión de Trabajadores Africanos de Senegal (RTA-S) escribe que su país “está aún directa y económicamente dominado por el imperialismo francés. Pero el imperialismo estadounidense está haciendo lo más que puede para encontrar la manera de establecer una base militar permanente en algún lugar de África Occidental para sus propios intereses. Nosotr@s nos sentimos felices de tenerles a Uds. como fuerzas revolucionarias y antiimperialistas en las entrañas del monstruo”.

El Partido Comunista Mazdoor Kissan (CMKP) de Pakistán exhorta a que, “Estamos en medio de una lucha por la democracia en contra de un dictador militar auspiciado por los EEUU. En este contexto la solidaridad de nuestras dos organizaciones fraternales tiene una importancia vital. Cualquier protesta en los EEUU contra la política del gobierno de apoyar a Musharraf tiene un incalculable valor para nuestro movimiento, dada la feroz represión dentro de Pakistán”.

De Noruega Roja y del Partido Comunista de Dinamarca sabemos que actualmente la lucha por sacar las tropas de Afganistán de estos dos miembros de la OTAN escandinava tiene prioridad, con una protesta programada frente al Parlamento Noruego el 24 de noviembre. Dinamarca también ha enviado tropas a Irak y a la ex Yugoslavia. En Dinamarca también, “durante el último año y medio, ha habido un ascenso en la lucha de clases”.

“Hay una creciente conciencia entre amplios sectores del pueblo danés de que el ‘sistema de bienestar social’ es decir sus derechos sociales, democráticos y sindicales, está siendo gravemente amenazado por la política neoliberal y pro Unión Europea del gobierno, y que es necesario tomar la vía de la lucha de clases para defender estos derechos”.

Del Sindicato Vasco L.A.B. supimos de la lucha del País Vasco, que detrás de los reportes de violencia “existe un contencioso de naturaleza política innegable, un conflicto basado en la negación al Pueblo Vasco de sus derechos democráticos. . . En un país de 3 millones de habitantes en pleno corazón de Europa, existen más de 600 prisioneras y prisioneros políticos y más de 2.000 personas exiliadas, las cifras hablan solas sobre la envergadura del conflicto político”.

La Federación Democrática Internacional de Mujeres (FDIM), más de 210 organizaciones de mujeres que actúan para promover la paz, la igualdad de derechos y la justicia social, ahora basada en Brasil, escribe que “La experiencia de los pueblos de nuestro continente — eligiendo presidentes comprometid@s con la democracia, la soberanía y la cooperación entre las naciones — indican los avances en nuestro continente. . . La experiencia de Cuba con Fidel y la construcción del socialismo en Venezuela bajo la comandancia del Presidente Hugo Chávez sólo pueden fortalecer en nosotr@s la certeza de que

latinoamericano@s y norteamerican@s tendremos que unir una América con prosperidad e igualdad para tod@s”.

El Partido Comunista de Brasil (PCdoB) también escribe que “América Latina vive un momento especial para las fuerzas progresistas y revolucionarias. En el último período un ciclo de gobiernos progresistas tratan de traer el desarrollo económico y la soberanía nacional, el desarrollo social y la ampliación de la democracia en la región. El fin del triste ciclo de neoliberalismo del período anterior permite ahora a los pueblos latinoamericanos desempeñar un papel nuevo en el mundo, reforzando posiciones progresistas en defensa de la paz, el desarrollo, la multipolaridad y la lucha contra el imperialismo”.

La Asociación Campesina del Valle del Río Cimitarra (ACVC) y la Agencia Prensa Rural escriben que están activas en “la región del Magdalena Medio en Colombia. El 29 de septiembre, cuatro de nuestros dirigentes fueron arrestados por el gobierno narco-paramilitar del Presidente Álvaro Uribe Vélez, acusados de rebelión. Hay orden de captura para 14 miembros más de nuestra asociación. Ahora empezamos la campaña por la libertad de nuestros detenidos, y por los otros muchos presos políticos en el país. . . Les invitamos a solidarizarse con nuestra campaña y hacer conocer en los EEUU la situación de represión tan galopante que existe en Colombia”.

Desde el Congreso Palestino Americano, Sucursal de Boston, leemos que, “Los imperialistas están . . . tan desesperados que están tratando de crear más Karzai’s en el Medio Oriente, desde Irak hasta el Líbano y Palestina. No tuvo éxito en Afganistán y no tendrá éxito en ninguna otra parte del mundo árabe. Unamos a l@s trabajador@s, campesin@s, estudiantes y a tod@s l@s revolucionari@s del mundo. Pongamos a esta bestia de rodillas”.

Debido a problemas organizativos, los mensajes de la Izquierda Nueva — Círculos Caamañistas en la República Dominicana, y del sindicato SINALTRAINAL de Colombia llegaron demasiado tarde para ser incluidos en este artículo pero pueden ser leídos en el sitio de la red.

Peligro de una guerra contra Irán. El Polo del Renacimiento Comunista en Francia (PRCF) escribe que, “En la época cuando [el presidente de Francia] Sarkozy ha empezado a poner la política exterior francesa en la órbita del imperialismo estadounidense, nos sentimos más que nunca cercan@s a l@s militantes progresistas de los Estados Unidos en su lucha por detener la agresión estadounidense contra Irak y las amenazas contra Irán”.

El Campamento Anti-imperialista (CAI), con sucursales en Italia, Austria y en otros países europeos, escribe que el régimen de Bush “está cambiando de velocidad en su guerra preventiva. Para solucionar los problemas de su control del mundo ellos quieren atacar a Irán. Más que otra batalla desde el 1991 ésta que viene decidirá el futuro del mundo ... Estamos segur@s que al igual que Yugoslavia, Afganistán, Palestina, Líbano, Venezuela, Cuba, e Irak, una vez más cooperaremos apoyando esta lucha contra la intervención militar imperialista”. □