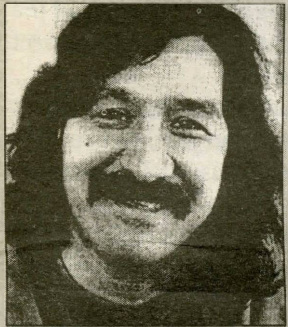


MESSAGE TO THE NEXT PRESIDENT

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MUNDO OBRERO

Elecciones en E.U.

Análisis del sistema electoral
antidemocrático de E.U. 12

50¢

Gore won't say it but

U.S. elections are racist

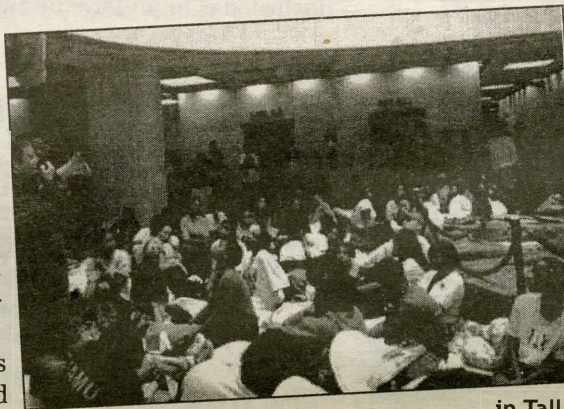
By Monica Moorehead

The big-business media have strained to put a positive spin on the weeklong stalemate in the outcome of the 2000 presidential elections. But the mouth-pieces of the ruling class have not been able to disguise the inherently undemocratic nature of the capitalist elections.

In fact, the Bush-Gore stalemate has helped to unearth the deeply entrenched racist discrimination suffered by Black communities and others in Florida who were attempting to exercise their democratic right to vote. Thousands of undocumented immigrant workers were excluded from this process as well.

Reports of African Americans, Haitians and others being denied their voting rights reveal another blatant form of racial profiling—resulting in a scandal of monumental proportions. The mainstream media haven't begun to do justice to the roots of this inequity, which will have a lasting social impact no matter which capitalist politician wins the presidency.

The Nov. 11 New York Times reported that local African Amer-



in Tallahassee Nov. 9.

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African American students
sit-in at Florida State Capitol

ican and Haitian leaders are demanding a revote in Florida. This is not an unreasonable demand—if for no other purpose than to publicly expose the racist practices of the state and local boards of elections. Consider the reasons.

Many African Americans stated that their names did not appear on the lists of registered voters. Polling places were so understaffed that there were not enough volunteers to deal with all the problems and discrepancies.

State Representative Alcee L. Hastings, who is Black, com-
Continued on page 7

Delegation reports on Palestinian uprising

Left, Palestinian women protest outside Israeli settlement in Gaza. Bottom left, prison-like gate was once the only entrance to Dheisha refugee camp; residents tore down the surrounding walls but left the gate as a reminder of their struggle to return home. Below, International Action Center Co-director Sara Flounders, Gaza activist Sami Abu-Salem and Al-Awda's Randa Jamal at Nov. 14 solidarity meeting in New York. Flounders and Jamal were part of an IAC fact-finding delegation that visited occupied Palestine in late October-early November. See page 11



IAC PHOTO: SARA FLOUNDERS



WW PHOTO: MARSHA GOLDBERG

Boy Scouts

Gay ban claims another victim

By Deirdre Sinnott

The latest victim of the Boy Scouts of America's ban on gay members and volunteers is also one of the highest-ranking to face the bigots' wrath so far.

On Oct. 17, at a Santa Barbara, Calif., County Supervisors meeting, BSA Regional Council Executive Director Leonard Lanzi announced that he was gay.

Lanzi told the supervisors, "I am a private person and I am gay. I uphold the Boy Scouts' policies. I would not work for the Boy Scouts if I did not know that they save lives. I made my statement today because, as a Scout, I have to be credible. I could not speak up without some people saying I was hypocritical."

The meeting was held to decide if the County Supervisors should continue their relationship with the BSA in light of its anti-gay policies. In a 5-4 decision June 28, the U.S. Supreme Court upheld the BSA's right to

ban gay scouts and scout leaders, as well as agnostics and atheists.

Despite Lanzi's dedication to the Scouts, he was fired, or "decommissioned," after coming out. Lanzi worked for the BSA for 14 years.

The BSA's decision to fire Lanzi may be illegal. California has non-discrimination laws to protect employees on the basis of sexual orientation.

James Dale, whose case went before the Supreme Court, was a volunteer, not an employee. A gay student activist and long-time scout member and leader, Dale was ousted by the BSA in 1990.

Enforcing anti-gay bigotry

What is crystal clear is that the BSA continues to enforce anti-gay bigotry. In the words of BSA national spokesperson Greg Shields, "We don't feel an avowed homosexual is a role model for [the BSA's founding] values, and we don't extend roles for leadership to those people."

The BSA Web site claims that "Scouting's record of inclusion is impressive by any standard."

A number of Scout troops have taken issue with that statement. In Harlem, N.Y., Santa Barbara and other places, troop leaders have taken steps to distance themselves from what they term "discriminatory and bigoted" policies.

To find out more about challenges to the BSA's anti-gay stand, readers can visit the Web site www.scouting-forall.org. The site was founded by Eagle Scout Steven Cozza.

Cozza asks all visitors to the site to read page 46 of the new Boy Scout Handbook. It says, "You should respect and defend the rights of all people."

"Now ask yourself," Cozza says, "are the Boy Scouts of America violating their own Scout Oath when they discriminate against gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered people?"

Another question people must ask is, can society create an organization that is open to all, that can teach children to value themselves, others and the natural world? And is it possible under capitalism, a system that thrives on racism, women's oppression, class oppression, and anti-lesbian/gay/bi/trans bigotry?

Norway says 'Free Mumia'

Election Day protest hits U.S. Embassy



PHOTO: SUPPORT COMMITTEE FOR MUMIA ABU-JAMAL IN NORWAY

On Nov. 7—Election Day in the United States—a group of Norwegian activists seized the roof of the U.S. Embassy in Oslo to demand freedom for Mumia Abu-Jamal. The seven members of the Support Committee for Mumia Abu-Jamal in Norway, dressed in black-and-white striped "prisoner suits," shouted pro-Abu-Jamal slogans from the roof while about 30 supporters rallied on the street below in pouring rain. The seven were arrested after an hour on the Embassy roof.

The Support Committee gave onlookers a leaflet headlined "Election—but no choice..." It said in part: "Today, the Americans vote for president. This election will have impact far beyond the borders of the USA."

"In a human rights perspective, the election gives little reason for optimism. Neither candidate Gore nor Bush is against the use of the death penalty. As governor of Texas since January 1995, George W. Bush is responsible for over 140 executions, 21 percent of the total of 660+ executions in the USA since 1976. ...

"None of the leading candidates in the election for president plan to do anything about the world's fastest growing industry, the incarceration industry, [or] to give prisoners human rights. ...

"Start treating prisoners as humans now! Stop the torture and abuse in American prisons! Abolish the death penalty! Freedom for Mumia Abu-Jamal!" —G.B.

The Roots of Lesbian & Gay Oppression

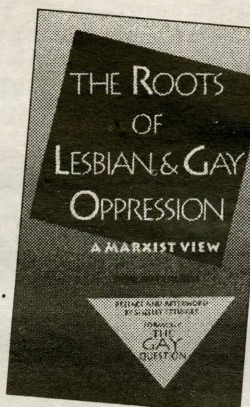
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By Bob McCubbin

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WW CALENDAR

DETROIT

Sat., Dec. 9

Public meeting on the ideological roots of Workers World Party. Fighting for a communist perspective. Part of a series. 5 p.m. Dinner served. At 5920 Second Ave. For info (313) 831-0750.

NEW YORK

Sat., Nov. 18

Rummage sale to benefit the International Action Center. 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. At 55 W. 17 St., 5th Floor, Manhattan. Donations welcome. For info (212) 255-0352.

Tue., Nov. 21

New York region planning meeting for the Jan. 20 March Against the Inauguration. 7 p.m. At IAC, 39 W. 14 St., Room 206, Manhattan. For info (212) 633-6646.

Sat., Dec. 2-Sun., Dec. 3

"The Socialist Answer to Capitalism: Building a Revolutionary Movement in the U.S." Workers World Party National Conference. Speakers, panels and workshops. To register phone (212) 255-0352 or e-mail register@wwpublish.com.

Sat., Dec. 9

March & Rally for Mumia Abu-Jamal. Dec. 9 is the 19th anniversary of the incarceration of Mumia Abu-Jamal. Noon gather at 96th St. & Broadway, Manhattan for a march to 137th St., Harlem. Rally at historic Mother AME Zion Church (est. 1796), 140 W. 137th

St. For info Int'l Concerned Family & Friends of Mumia (215) 476-8812 or International Action Center (212) 633-6646.

Tue., Dec. 12

Colombia: Is the U.S. launching a new Vietnam War? A special forum featuring former U.S. Attorney General Ramsey Clark, who is leading a fact-finding trip to Colombia. 6:30 p.m. At Martin Luther King Auditorium-1199/SEIU, 310 W. 43rd St., Manhattan. For info (212) 633-6646.

Every Tuesday

Weekly volunteer meetings. 6:30 p.m. At the International Action Center, 39 W. 14th St., Room 206. For info (212) 633-6646.

PLYMOUTH, MASS.

Thu., Nov. 23

31st National Day of Mourning. Dedicated to freeing Native political prisoner Leonard Peltier. Sponsored by UAIINE. Noon. At Cole's Hill, above Plymouth Rock. For info <http://idt.net/~uaine19>.

SAN DIEGO, CALIF.

Sat., Nov. 18

Eyewitness report from Palestine. Featuring Richard Becker, a member of the IAC delegation to Palestine, and Ruba Fakhoury of San Diego IAC. 3 p.m. At North Park Recreation Center, 4044 Idaho St. For info (619) 692-4422.

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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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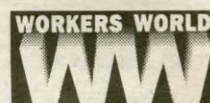
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Workers World

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Organizers gear up for counter-inauguration march

By Greg Butterfield
New York

"Who's the next president? How will the election mess affect the march against the inauguration?" asked International Action Center/Millions for Mumia leader Larry Holmes.

For a number of weeks, he said, the IAC and other organizations have been making plans for a massive march against the inauguration of the next president, which will take place in Washington on Jan. 20.

Workers World spoke with Holmes, a key march organizer, about the effort.

"The principal purpose of the march is to demand an end to the racist death penalty, freedom for Mumia Abu-Jamal and an end to the death machine of corporate globalization," Holmes reported.

This is a critical moment in Abu-Jamal's case. A pending appearance before a federal judge could determine whether or not the revolutionary Black journalist gets a new trial or remains on Pennsylvania's death row. Supporters maintain that Abu-Jamal was framed for the 1981 killing of a Philadelphia cop.

Holmes said, "When we started planning the march against the inauguration, no one could have known that the election would turn into a big mess demonstrating just how corrupt and undemocratic the corporate-controlled elections really are."

Both candidates back legal lynchings

Both George W. Bush and Al Gore support the death penalty. Both have refused to speak out against what anti-racists call the unjust conviction of Abu-Jamal.

The Nov. 7 presidential election is now locked in a stalemate with charges that thousands of Southern Florida voters—including many African Americans and Haitians—were cheated of their votes.

Besides turning up the heat on behalf of Abu-Jamal, Holmes said, the election fiasco gives the march another dimension.

"No matter who the next president is, the Jan. 20 national march against the inauguration holds the potential of becoming the people's mass response to the whole racist, anti-worker system," he told WW.

Already the Jan. 20 march sports an impressive list of initiators and endorsers, including: IAC/Millions for Mumia; International Concerned Family & Friends of Mumia Abu-Jamal; the MOVE Organization; the New York Free Mumia Coalition; Al-Awda, the Palestinian Right of Return Coalition; the Texas Death Penalty Abolition Movement; Refuse & Resist; Rainbow Flags for Mumia; and the Hunter College Student Liberation Action Movement.

Also: Queers for Racial and Economic Justice; Citizens United for Alternatives to the Death Penalty; Jahahara Alkebulan-Ma'at, the National Coalition

of Blacks for Reparations in America; the League of Indigenous Sovereign Nations; Homeless Action for Necessary Development; Writers for Mumia; Vieques Support Campaign; Haiti Support Network; California Prison Focus; and many more.

Spreading the word

Organizers are spreading the word at every opportunity. Holmes was invited to make a presentation about the march to a packed meeting organized by the MOVE Organization in New York Nov. 11. The audience also heard talks about the Philadelphia police war against MOVE and about new developments in Abu-Jamal's case, said IAC activist Sara Catalinotto.

Another important opportunity to reach out will be a Dec. 9 demonstration marking the 19th anniversary of the incident that led to Abu-Jamal's conviction. At 12 noon supporters will march from 96th St. and Broadway on Manhattan's Upper West Side to 137th St. in Harlem. A rally will follow at 3 p.m. at Mother AME Zion Church.

Imani Henry, a national coordinator of the lesbian/gay/bi/trans solidarity movement Rainbow Flags for Mumia, told WW that work is already being done to establish focuses to organize for the counter-inauguration in a variety of communities.

"We want to build a massive, multinational demonstration that includes communities of color, women's organizations, the lesbian, gay, bi and trans movement, foes of the death penalty, disabled activists, youths and students, and the labor movement," Henry said.

A New York regional planning meeting for the counter-inauguration march is set for Nov. 21 at 7 p.m. It will be held at the IAC's office at 39 W. 14 St., Suite 206, in Manhattan. "This will be a great place to find out what other activists are planning and doing," said Henry.

"We need money to get to Washington," Henry added. "We desperately need funds to pay for posters, flyers, mailings and transportation so that young people, students and poor people can get to Washington on Jan. 20."

Readers can send donations to the International Action Center-Jan. 20. Tax-deductible donations over \$50 can be made to People's Rights Fund/Anti-Death Penalty Project. Send donations to 39 W. 14 St., Suite 206, New York, NY 10011 or make a credit card donation on-line at www.peoplesrightsfund.org.

To endorse the Jan. 20 march or to set up an organizing center in your city or on your campus, write to the IAC, call (212) 633-6646 or send e-mail to iacenter@iacenter.org. Updates can be found on the Web at www.mumia2000.org.

Clemency for Leonard Peltier?

Calls, protests urged to free Native prisoner

By Greg Butterfield

Supporters of Native political prisoner Leonard Peltier are gearing up for a new round of actions before year's end. The stakes couldn't be higher.

Peltier, who's been held in federal prison for 24 years, continues to suffer declining health. This year his case gained a wide new audience with the release of his book, "My Life is a Sun Dance." A recent cable TV special has many asking why an innocent man is still behind bars.

The American Indian Movement warrior was charged with killing two FBI agents during an April 1975 shoot-out at South Dakota's Pine Ridge Reservation. The government agents were there to terrorize the Lakota people and try to repress their moves toward self-determination.

The prosecutor in Peltier's case long ago admitted, "We don't know who shot those agents." Some independent studies contend the two agents were likely downed by "friendly fire" from other FBI goons.

In 1995 Peltier's lawyer, former U.S. Attorney General Ramsey Clark, and other supporters petitioned President Bill Clinton for clemency, asking him to do the right thing and let Peltier go. Clinton ignored the petition.

But, according to a Nov. 12 bulletin from the Leonard Peltier Defense Committee, that could change—if the progressive movement intervenes forcefully.

The LPDC says Clinton has publicly confirmed that Peltier's clemency petition has reached his desk. A decision one way or the other is likely before he leaves office in January—perhaps even before the so-called "Thanksgiving" holiday Nov. 23.

Flood White House with calls

"Congratulations to everyone who has worked so hard the last many years for Leonard. You have brought this case right up to Clinton's desk," says the LPDC alert. "But now we must work harder than ever for the next few weeks. We are down to the wire and this is literally a matter of life and death."

"It is now or never for telling the White House how we feel about the case. We are asking people to call every single day, starting now and up through Dec. 1."

"While it is possible that a positive decision might take longer, we must make very sure that Leonard's case is not dropped from the list in the early stages."

According to the LPDC, the FBI is mounting its own anti-Peltier phone campaign demanding that no clemency be issued. "We must drown them out," says LPDC. "Leonard's support across the country is huge, but we must make ourselves heard more than ever."

To register your demand for Peltier's freedom, call the White House Comments Line at (202) 456-1111.

Day of Mourning dedicated to Peltier

Peltier supporters are also taking their demand for clemency to the streets.

The United American Indians of New England have dedicated their National Day of Mourning in Plymouth, Mass., to Peltier's freedom struggle. The annual event is held on "Thanksgiving" and continues the Native people's fightback against centuries of genocide and oppression since the European invasion of North America.

"Join us as we dedicate the 31st National

Day of Mourning to our brother, Native political prisoner Leonard Peltier," says a UAINE announcement circulated on the Internet. "Add your voice to the millions worldwide who demand his freedom."

"Help us in our struggle to create a true awareness of Native people and demonstrate Native unity. Help shatter the untrue glass image of the Pilgrims and the unjust system based on racism, sexism and homophobia."

The Day of Mourning activity begins at 12 noon on Nov. 23 at Cole's Hill, above Plymouth Rock. For more information, call UAINE at (781) 331-3690 or e-mail uaine19@idt.net. For transportation information from New York, call the International Action Center at (212) 633-6646.

Walk for Truth Dec. 10

A national Walk for Truth to the United Nations on behalf of Peltier is planned for

Dec. 10, Human Rights Day. "This will be a time for us to send a positive and united message of support for Leonard Peltier's freedom, as a gesture of truth and reconciliation for all Indigenous peoples," says the New York LPDC chapter.

Peltier supporters will gather at 12 noon at New York's Union Square Park and march to the UN's Dag Hammarskjöld Plaza. There will be a candlelight vigil, speakers and traditional music from 2-4 p.m. Members of the Pine Ridge Lakota Nation and Peltier's family will lead the march.

"Come show your solidarity by representing your Native nation, church, organization, union, or just yourself," says LPDC. To get involved, call (785) 842-5774 or e-mail lpdc@idir.net. Updates are available from the New York hotline at (212) 539-6027 or on the Web at www.freepeltier.org.

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What's next after election?

WWP conference to plan 2001 actions

By Brian Becker

Political activists, workers and revolutionary youths from all over the United States will be meeting at the annual Workers World Party conference in New York on the weekend of December 2-3.

The annual conference of WWP is an opportunity to discuss, assess and analyze the most important issues and political developments of the past year.

"One year ago our conference met on the eve of the Seattle mass protests. The political situation has changed radically since then with the emergence of a militant anti-capitalist protest movement that rocked the streets of Washington in April, Philadelphia and Los Angeles in August, and then moved on to Prague and Boston," notes Larry Holmes, a WWP leader.

"This year's conference will provide a much-needed opportunity for evaluation

and analysis of this new movement and its overall political direction," Holmes said. "We will also evaluate the impressive movement that built up around Ralph Nader's presidential campaign, which is an extension of the new progressive movement that burst forth in Seattle."

"Key to the survival of any progressive movement is its ability to reach the hearts and minds of those who suffer racism and national oppression. We will not only evaluate the past year but also propose strategies and specific initiatives to help this movement grow," Holmes reported.

An important highlight: Monica Moorehead and Gloria La Riva, the presidential and vice-presidential candidates of WWP, are scheduled to be prominent speakers at the conference.

The conference will discuss the political implications and lessons of the now-deadlocked bourgeois presidential election.

Conference participants will also have the unique opportunity to hear the firsthand report of a delegation that just returned from the front lines of the Palestinian revolution. The status of the Colombian revolution and the fight against U.S. intervention in Colombia will also be among the featured presentations.

Fighting for Mumia

A central feature of the current work of WWP is the fight to save the life of death-row political prisoner Mumia Abu-Jamal. There will be workshops and strategy sessions for organizers and activists to help build for the Jan. 20 counter-inaugural protest in Washington. The demonstration will take place around the theme: Stop the Death Machine.

The Jan. 20 protest will feature the demand for a new trial for Abu-Jamal and an end to the racist death penalty. The

demonstration literature connects the rise of the U.S. prison-industrial complex with the International Monetary Fund's economic war against the poor in Africa, Latin America, the Middle East and Asia.

Another highlight of the WWP conference will be a discussion on how to rebuild the movement for socialism and specific measures to help build a vanguard working-class party based on revolutionary Marxism.

"This will be the most exciting political meeting of the year," stated Marsha Goldberg, a WWP organizer in New York. "This is a unique opportunity for revolutionary activists from all over the country to meet, discuss and strategize together."

To get more information or to register for the conference, contact WWP at 55 W. 17 St., New York, NY 10011; phone (212) 255-0352; or send e-mail to register@wwpublish.com.

In Pacifica interview

Slick Clinton tops Bush-Gore lies

By Gary Wilson

President Bill Clinton is so accomplished at the Big Lie you'd think he'd invented the practice.

Clinton's lies didn't start or stop with his statements about what he was doing to "that woman." Consider his Nov. 7 telephone call to Pacifica Radio's Amy Goodman and Gonzalo Aburto.

In a half-hour interview, Clinton appears to have made up his answers as he was going. Clinton's claims during the interview were at least as false as Al Gore's or George W's during the presidential debates.

From his statements about the economy and the destruction of the environment to his assertions denying that U.S. sanctions on Iraq are killing 5,000 children a day, everything Clinton said was inaccurate, if not a deliberate lie. A slick liar always leaves you wondering if maybe there's truth in what is being said.

There's no need to make a word-by-word analysis of what Clinton said. Just looking at his favorite theme, the economy, is enough to see the distortions. The other answers are equally if not more misleading.

Clinton opened with a bald assertion that "for the first time in 30 years, the in-

comes of average people and lower income working people have gone up 15 percent after inflation."

Later in the interview, Goodman asked Clinton how he answered those who say he has moved the Democratic Party to the right. Clinton again turned to the economy, asserting that poverty is at a 20 year low, that child poverty has been cut by a third, that incomes have gone up 15 percent, and much more.

Not one word of his statement was true. In fact, in some cases the exact opposite is true. These were really big lies.

A dose of economic reality

Here are some of the economic realities. All of the figures come from the Economic Policy Institute, a liberal think tank in Washington. The EPI's founders include Clinton's former labor secretary Robert Reich and Ray Marshall, the labor secretary for Jimmy Carter, as well as Lester Thurow, an MIT economist and economic adviser to Lyndon Johnson. This is not an organization that would cook its statistics against the Democratic Party or Bill Clinton.

- Income inequality continues to grow. From 1995-1998 the real income of the

poorest 20 percent of households grew 1.9 percent each year, while it grew 3.2 percent for the wealthiest 20 percent. The gap between rich and poor continued to increase.

- Because the value of employer-paid health insurance and pensions fell during the Clinton years, any wage gains were substantially eroded.
- A substantial part of the reported growth in income came because the average household increased its work hours by about 246 to 3,885 hours during the year 1998 over 1989. That's about six extra full-time weeks a year. For African American households, the average was even more—about 4,278 hours per year, or over 500 hours per year more than white households.
- During the 1990s "boom," the poverty rate reached 12.7 percent in 1998, a full percentage point higher than it was almost 20 years before in 1979.
- In 1998, one in five children in the U.S. lived in poverty, or 18.9 percent. That is much higher than the child poverty rate of 16.4 percent in 1979.
- The biggest area of job growth is in jobs paying poverty-level wages, defined as an hourly wage so low that a worker employed full time cannot support a household of four above the poverty line. In 1998, 29 percent of all workers were in jobs paying poverty-level wages, a significantly larger share than it has been in the past decades.

This is the reality. Nothing like the phony stuff Clinton kept throwing up during his interview.

The economic boom is a boom for the rich. The rich really are richer and the poor have gotten close to zero in comparison.

There is no economic system that is more unstable than capitalism. The possibility of a sudden bust and recession or worse is the only constant.

This is reflected in the reports in the back pages of the "business" section of the newspaper. There are now more frequent reports of a pending recession. Worse are the predictions of mass layoffs.

The New York Times Business Section Sept. 9 led with the phrase, "With economic data pointing to a slowdown..."

Business Week on Oct. 30 pointed to a financing squeeze. "The slowdown is al-

ready weakening corporate profits," it reports. Worries have "sent the stock market south." The Standard & Poor's 500-stock index has dropped 13.5 percent since March and the Nasdaq has dropped 60 percent in the same time, "with no firm bottom in sight," the magazine adds.

Job instability is already at record levels. As part of the high rate of mergers and acquisitions, jobs lost averaged 300,000 every week in 1999, according to a report by the Aspen Institute. Most workers who lose their jobs are forced to take new jobs at substantially lower pay.

Job security is the number-one concern among all workers. Al Gore, George W. Bush and Bill Clinton did not touch this issue.

The capitalist boom may have reduced unemployment, mostly by creating poverty-level jobs. But there is no protection of the right to a job. No one believes that unemployment will stay low. Every worker, especially those at poverty level, wonders every day how much longer she or he will have a job. There is no stability to capitalist prosperity.

If every worker were guaranteed a job at a living wage, that would be something to brag about.

The presidential candidate that spoke to this issue was Monica Moorehead of Workers World Party. Moorehead called for tripling the minimum wage and protecting every worker's right to have and keep a job. Only socialism can offer the kind of job stability that capitalism will never have.

The full interview with Clinton can be found on the Web at www.democracynow.org/news/clinton.html.

Prisons are capitalism's new sweatshops

Special to Workers World
New Paltz, N.Y.

Monica Moorehead, the Workers World Party candidate for president in the recent election, was the principal speaker Nov. 13 at a meeting on "America's Criminal Injustice System" that drew an audience of 120 people at the State University of New York in New Paltz, N.Y.

"The prison system in the United States is becoming capitalism's newest sweatshop," she said in describing the exploitation of inmate labor by large corporations. "Prisoners are paid \$5 an hour booking airline flights—one-third the pay of free labor." She urged trade

unions to organize prison workers.

Other speakers at the meeting included Nancy Hammond, executive director of New Yorkers Against the Death Penalty; Safiya Bukhari, an advocate for political prisoners representing the Jericho Movement; Jack A. Smith of the Mid-Hudson National People's Campaign and International Action Center, co-sponsors of the meeting; Michael Chameides, a Bard College student activist arrested during demonstrations at the Republican Convention in Philadelphia this summer; Sandra Oxford of the Coalition for Parole Restoration; and Robert Robinson of NORML.

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The myth of majority rule

By Fred Goldstein

The entire capitalist establishment are biting their nails about the Gore-Bush dog-fight over the White House. They're aghast at the conflict's escalation as each side tries to counter the other.

But the tension in the boardrooms, media and think tanks isn't over which candidate will come out on top. It's about how the system will fare.

Who wins and who loses undoubtedly concerns particular factions of the ruling class. But the broader establishment's anxiety is over how to insure—in the face of all the contradictions and reported irregularities—that the masses of people at home and abroad see the elections as “legitimate” and that the “process” of so-called democratic majority rule works.

The capitalist media's job is to manipulate the debate so that, whatever happens, bourgeois ideology triumphs and the masses see the issues in the narrow framework defined by them.

Media remove racism from debate

In the quest for legitimacy, every detail of the balloting process, electoral law and political maneuvering is being chronicled by the corporate media. But one thing that has been hermetically sealed off from the debate is the enormous issue of racist disenfranchisement of millions of Black and Latino people. This has been accomplished through laws taking away the voting rights of those labeled “convicted felons.”

In fact, none of the mainstream U.S. media picked up on a story in the *Guardian* of Britain Nov. 14. It states, “Al Gore may have lost America's presidential election not because of a badly designed ballot, dubious counting practices in Florida or the defection of Ralph Nader, but because of the criminal justice policy he and Bill Clinton have pursued for eight years.”

The article, using Sentencing Project statistics, shows that 4.2 million people were not allowed to vote Nov. 7 and that about 1.8 million of them were Black. “The Clinton-Gore administration,” continues the *Guardian*, “has been heavily criticized by penal experts for its ‘war on drugs’ which has led to more than 400,000 people being jailed, a disproportionate number being Black and Latino.”

The *Guardian* quotes Cedric Muhammed, editor of the *Blackelectorate.com* Web site, who wrote that “if [Gore] and his supporters are honest, they may have to blame the Clinton-Gore administration and a criminal justice system that locked up Blacks wholesale over the last eight years for non-violent offenses.”

Sasha Abramsky, writing in *Mother Jones* Nov. 8, estimated that three quarters of a million people in Florida alone were disenfranchised because of the felon laws. Florida is one of 13 states that bar people from voting for life if they are convicted of a felony.

In a pre-election *Mother Jones* article Oct. 17, Abramsky cited the New York-based Brennan Center for Justice, which filed suit against this practice in Florida on Sept. 21. The suit showed that more than 6 percent of Florida's voting-age population cannot vote.

'Felon' laws harken back to Jim Crow

The last time so many Black people were legally prevented from voting, said a Brennan Center attorney, “was before

the Voting Rights Act, when you had literacy tests and poll taxes and so on.”

“All of these laws were overturned,” wrote Abramsky, “except for the web of laws created in the late 19th and 20th centuries, relating to those convicted of felonies. These laws were specifically designed by antebellum Southern politicians to bar Blacks from the ballot box. Indeed, when Alabama adopted such a law in 1901, John Knox, the politician presiding over the constitutional convention, stated that the aim of such provisions was to help preserve white supremacy without directly challenging the Constitution of the United States.”

It's estimated that 33 percent of all Black males in 13 Southern states are disenfranchised as a result of this legacy of slavery and segregation.

If the Gore forces had wanted to, they could have long ago made a huge issue out of this, and they probably would have won hands down. But being representatives of the racist ruling class first and foremost, just as the Bush forces are, they would rather jeopardize their own chance for the White House than to open up a struggle against the racist denial of democratic rights for millions of Black and Latino people.

This is perhaps the most important social and political fact brought to light by the election fight. And it cries out for a voting-rights struggle to overturn these so-called “felony” laws, as well as the “tough-on-crime, war-on-drugs” policies of the Reagan-Bush and Clinton-Gore years. These are vicious forms of racial profiling.

Furthermore, Gore, Warren Christopher, William Daley and other high Democratic officials have not addressed the exclusion of ballots and the racist harassment on Election Day in heavily Black districts of Palm Beach county. They haven't addressed the sit-in by Black students from Florida A&M, Tallahassee Community College and Florida State University against the Democrats' arch-enemy, Bush loyalist and Florida Secretary of State Katherine Harris. Nor have they denounced the racist pro-Bush thugs who attempted to block a West Palm Beach rally called by Jesse Jackson.

Myth of 'majority rule'

Rather than focus on fundamental issues such as racism, the capitalist media have the entire population riveted on the increasingly ugly details of the

political knife fight between the capitalist parties.

What the media are really fighting to preserve is the fundamental concept, drummed into the head of every school child, that democracy means the majority rules and the masses of people get their legitimate political representation through the two-party electoral process.

If Bush should win the electoral vote with a minority of the popular vote, this would call into question the Electoral College system. The ruling class, much to its dislike, might have to engage in a debate about correcting the system. This in itself is destabilizing.

If Gore should win with the majority of the popular vote, the ruling class could breathe a sigh of relief on the question of majority rule. But they would probably still have to go through a process of reassessing the Electoral College. New York Senator-elect Hillary Rodham Clinton has already called for its abolition.

The Electoral College is a reactionary institution designed by landed aristocrats, slave owners and businessmen in 1789 to flout the will of the masses should they get out of hand. Of all the electoral systems employed in the modern imperialist countries, it is the most unfavorable to independent electoral action by the working class and progressives. Certainly the workers and oppressed should take the opportunity to intervene in any struggle over the revamping of this system.

But it must be understood that, even if Gore emerges the winner, his popular-vote victory does not legitimize the election results for the masses. If Bush wins with a minority of the popular vote, it is not this alone that casts the election's legitimacy into doubt.

The people don't rule—the rich do

The entire election process is illegitimate as an exercise in majority rule.

Whatever the outcome, the majority of the people will not rule—they will be ruled by a tiny minority of the rich.

Two rich white men are running at the head of two parties controlled by billionaires with world corporate empires that exploit hundreds of millions of workers every day. This is the class truth about this election and every presidential election in this country over the past century.

Corruption and political dirty tricks, bribery and unprincipled partisanship are rife in capitalist elections, particularly when the parties are fighting to get their

hands on the right to dispense close to \$2 trillion to their friends and collaborators and to make thousands of political appointments.

But even if every vote winds up being counted correctly—that is, the way the voter intended—and even if every improperly excluded vote were included, the assumption that this election thereby becomes legitimate is a complete fraud.

Ronald Reagan won by a significant majority in 1980 and proceeded to open up a huge anti-labor offensive, a racist attack on the poor and a \$2-trillion military buildup. Lyndon Johnson won in 1964 by the biggest landslide in history against Barry Goldwater, and then proceeded to send half a million troops to Vietnam. He sent U.S. troops into Detroit's Black community during a rebellion against racism and poverty, killing many.

The majority of the people are workers, including a large number who bear the burden of national oppression as well as class oppression. As a class, they are not enfranchised in any capitalist election. On the contrary. Their oppressors have the legal and political right, under the capitalist U.S. Constitution, to continue upholding the system of exploitation, racism and imperialist expansion.

The majority of the people make society run. They do all the work. If they really ruled, there would not be people sleeping on the streets while the rich lived in luxury.

If the majority really ruled, 1 percent of the population would not have as much wealth as 90 percent of the people. There would be no racist police shooting and beating people. There would not be hundreds of thousands of families waiting for childcare. There would not be 43 million people without health care or a 20-percent child-poverty rate.

If the majority ruled, they would not permit the epidemic of occupational deaths and injuries or environmental destruction. Every worker would have a union. The elections would not be controlled by the rich.

None of these evils would exist because the majority—if they really ruled—would abolish them immediately. After all, it's the majority that suffers from these evils. But they are unable to eliminate them as long as the capitalists, their state, and their parties are in charge.

There's no such thing as a “fair election” when the workers are confined to the program and candidates of their class enemy.

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The Moorehead-La Riva factor

Using election to build the struggle

By Marsha Goldberg

Why do communists run in capitalist elections? It's not because they think the elections can create real change.

One reason is to take advantage of all the election hype to get out a revolutionary message. In the United States, it's an advance just to let working and oppressed people know that a revolutionary party exists here.

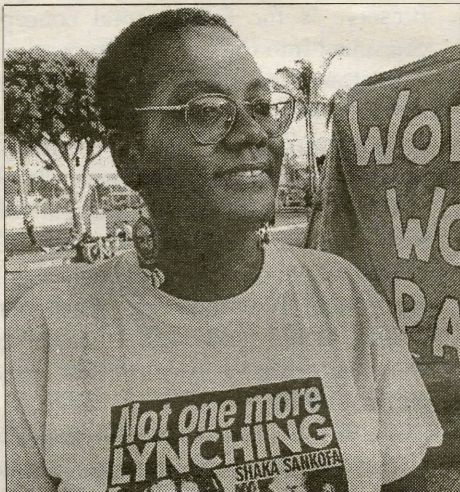
When the controversial Palm Beach County ballot was shown over and over again on national television in early November, viewers saw something new. Workers World Party's candidates—Monica Moorehead for president and Gloria La Riva for vice president—were listed.

This was a breakthrough for the campaign because the corporate media make it their business not to cover working-class candidates.

Because of the coincidence that the votes for Moorehead and La Riva in Florida matched the difference first reported between Al Gore and George W. Bush, some commentators—including C-SPAN and a very offensive Jay Leno—asked, "Who is Monica Moorehead?"

There were even comments about the "Monica Moorehead factor" in the election.

"This Modern World," a progressive comicstrip by Tom Tomorrow that backed Ralph Nader in the election, chuckled that Workers World voters were enough "to tip the balance between Gore and Bush five times over." This was after the first recount



Monica Moorehead and Gloria La Riva.

showed Bush and Gore within a few hundred votes of each other.

The real Monica Moorehead factor

There definitely was a "Monica Moorehead factor" in this election. But it's not the one being used as filler by the media's talking heads.

Moorehead and La Riva injected revolutionary politics into this sham election. They made racism and the death penalty—including the case of death-row political prisoner Mumia Abu-Jamal—major issues wherever they traveled.

At every stop they explained what the capitalist profit system is and what the elections are really about—continuing the rule of the super-rich bankers and bosses. They showed how socialism is the answer for the workers and oppressed.

As two women of color and two workers



WW PHOTOS: BILL HACKWELL

they were able to bring that revolutionary message to whole new audiences.

The WWP candidates worked hard to use the media's obsession with the elections to their advantage. Wherever Moorehead and La Riva were able to break through and get exposure, it generated excitement about their campaign and their message. That was clear from the response they got when they traveled around the country, and by the election results.

Votes in four states

On the four states where Moorehead and La Riva were on the ballot, a total of 4,525 people voted for WWP candidates, according to the latest statistics provided by ABC.com and CBS.com.

In Florida, recounts are still going on at this writing. But the latest count shows 1,814 votes for Moorehead-La Riva.

When the candidates visited Florida in October, they spoke on college campuses in Miami and West Palm Beach. Moorehead was interviewed the day before the election by the student newspaper at Florida A&M, a predominately Black college in Tallahassee.

Campaign literature was distributed in English, Spanish and Creole.

The repressive atmosphere in Florida was evident when Wil Van Natta, the state chairperson for the WWP campaign, was arrested on election eve on trumped up charges stemming from a demonstration against Iraq sanctions three months earlier. He was released after being held for 19 hours—more determined than ever to continue fighting.

In Washington state, Moorehead and La Riva had received 1,452 votes as of Nov. 14. Mail-in ballots are still being counted and the WWP total continues to grow.

Organizers there report that phone calls, e-mails and letters were still coming in after Election Day asking about the candidates and WWP. Students in Seattle heard La Riva speak in September.

Many people read about the Moorehead-La Riva campaign in the Voter's Guide distributed to voters throughout the state. This is an example of how WWP took advantage of the elections to get its revolutionary message out to a wider audience.

The campaign used its space in the Voter's Guide to raise a socialist perspective on prisons and the environment, defend women's right to choose and show

RIGGED ELECTIONS IN 1876

Black freedom crushed by Electoral College

The following is excerpted from Chapter 34 of "Market Elections" by Vince Copeland, entitled "1876: Stuffing ballots, smothering Black freedom."

This story of rigged elections begins with the election of 1876, the one that was really the fountainhead of modern political corruption—that is, the legal and illegal corruption of imperialist democracy.

When the election returns of Nov. 7, 1876, had all come in, the Democratic candidate, Samuel J. Tilden, had beaten the Republican, Rutherford B. Hayes, by 4,288,546 popular votes to 4,034,311, and 184 Democratic votes in the Electoral College to 165 for the Republicans.

After several months of maneuvering and of almost unbearable tensions throughout the country, however, it was announced on March 2, 1877, that Hayes, not Tilden, was the victor, with 185 electoral votes to Tilden's 184. ...

The extra votes for Hayes were supplied by South Carolina, Florida, and Louisiana—three states whose elections had been challenged by the Republicans on the morning of November 8, 1876.

What compelled these states to reverse their votes and give the election to the party that had prosecuted a war against the ruling class of these very states just a decade before?

A national Electoral Commission controlled by the Republicans formally effected the change. But as part of the deal, it promised these states' rulers, and in fact the whole South's rulers, that Reconstruction would be definitely ended and the last

of the then-revolutionary Union troops would be withdrawn from their occupation of the South.

On the other hand, it really was true that these states—and nearly all the Southern states—had rigged the elections, particularly against the Black voters. But if the Republicans had initiated a drive to reverse this, it would have meant a continuation of Reconstruction, something they themselves did not want.

The story of the 1876 switch of votes is not only one of corruption at the polls but of a betrayal of colossal proportions. It was directed first of all against the Black people, second against the white majority of the North who had sacrificed so much in the Civil War, and third against the poor whites of the South, who were now slowly turned into lynch-mad servants of the very class that oppressed them most.

Thus the election of 1876, although not the first or the last rigged election in U.S. history, was clearly the worst.

Set stage for modern capitalist politics

It definitely pronounced the end of Black democracy in the so-called Reconstruction, and, partly for that reason, set the stage for the Tweedledum-Tweedledee character of modern capitalist politics.

In restoring so much of the power of the Southern ruling class, it gave these reactionary Bourbons more legislative power—by population—than they had ever had before.

The old "five for three" clause in the

Constitution had been eliminated by the war. (Every five nonvoting Black slaves had been counted as three people in determining population for congressional representation.) Five Black people were now counted as five.

The only catch was that, as in slave days, they still could not vote. ...

To further understand the scope of the betrayal of 1876, we have to remember that the Republican Party was the organizer of the North in the Civil War, the chief political advocate of Black liberation. Its smaller radical wing in Congress identified itself to a great extent with the Black masses, fighting hard but unsuccessfully for the division of the plantations into free farms for the oppressed.

The Democratic Party, on the other hand, had been the party of reaction, the party of the slaveholders, and even in the North was generally their ally. Tilden himself had opposed the "war between the states," as the Democrats called it.

Then how, it might be asked, did the Democrats of those days get enough votes in the North to tip the balance?

For one thing the cities were now growing very fast, and the big businessmen were now riding so hard and heavy upon the workers that Democratic Party machines grew fat by "attacking" big business and the Republicans. (Of course, the Democratic bosses secretly took bribes from the Republican capitalists whenever they could get them. The principal graft of Tammany Hall, for instance, came from its shakedowns of rich Republicans.)

Secondly, the corruption of the Republican administration of Ulysses S. Grant had been so great it disgusted many of the very people who had supported the war the most.

This is a very well known fact of U.S. history. What is not so well known or well understood is that big business had waged the war in the first place not just for personal and "political" corruption, but fundamentally for land-swindling, treasury-plundering, people-robbing capitalist "development"—only incidentally and grudgingly "freeing" the slaves.

So the Democratic Tilden ran as a "reformer," although he had secretly allied himself with the extremely corrupt Boss Tweed of New York City's Tammany Hall before being maneuvered to join the powerful New York Times campaign against Tweed. ...

Northern capital in the saddle

The Northern Democrats who before the Civil War were the subordinate ally of the slaveholders now became the dominant ally. Tilden, for instance, did not even have to "balance" his ticket with a Southern vice-presidential candidate to get the Southern Democratic vote.

... [A]lthough the Northern Democrats were now the dominant ally of the Southern Democrats in national politics, they stood for restoring as much of the slaveholders' former power as was compatible with Northern capitalist rule of the whole country.

The Republicans supposedly were against this.

Gore won't say it but

U.S. elections are racist

solidarity with the lesbian/gay/bi/trans movement, to name a few issues.

Support in most R.I. towns

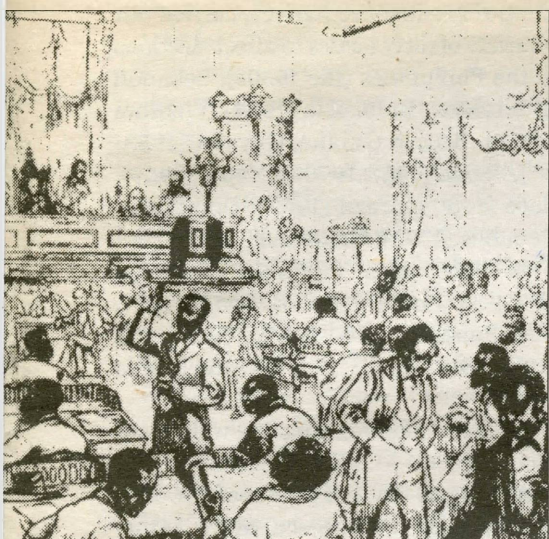
In **Rhode Island**—a state which is comparable in size and population to Palm Beach County—Moorehead and La Riva received 199 votes. Official returns showed that they received votes in almost every town in the state.

A series of meetings held there prompted an article in the Sept. 29 Providence Journal, a newspaper read throughout Rhode Island. In it, Moorehead urged a vote for WWP as a "protest vote against all that is unfair and unjust about this system."

In **Wisconsin**, Moorehead and La Riva received 1,060 votes, according to the major TV networks. During their campaign they spoke to students at three University of Wisconsin campuses, including Nader supporters. They also spoke at the College of the Menominee Nation and community meetings in Milwaukee.

Getting votes was never the main object of the campaign. That's why the candidates also spoke in many states where WWP wasn't on the ballot this year, including California, Illinois, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, New York and Ohio.

In keeping with the activist message of the campaign—against capitalism, for socialism, for a powerful, independent, **united multinational movement**—Gloria La Riva left for Havana the day after the elections. She is attending the Second World Conference of Friendship and Solidarity with Cuba.



Before the betrayal of Reconstruction in 1876, Black elected officials played a leading role in the South Carolina legislature.

But the majority of the Republican leadership had been secretly helping the former slaveholders to regain their former political power in the South—first of all by allowing them to beat down the Black people.

The election deal that promised the Southern ruling class a free hand in the South was thus only the parliamentary side of the bloody counter-revolution that the Democratic Southern ruling class had already carried out. Its consummation set the seal of legality, Republican consent, and finality to the armed suppression of Black freedom. ...

Both Republican and Democratic parties were, from then on, the exclusive parties of U.S. big business with no other significance (besides the enrichment of professional bourgeois politicians) than to continue the rule of big business with one or another reformist or reactionary method.

Continued from page 1

mented that the voter turnout in a number of African American communities was as high as 85 percent and that staffing in a number of polling areas was grossly inadequate to deal with these large numbers.

According to the Nov. 12 Palm Beach Post, almost half of the over 28,000 ballots thrown out in Palm Beach County were from areas heavily populated by Black and elderly voters. This amounted to 16 percent of the ballots cast by people of color and 10 percent of the ballots cast in precincts where most voters are over 65.

Roadblocks were set up by police in Volusia and Hillsborough counties to intimidate and harass Black voters.

In Miami, four ballot boxes full of votes were "found" after the elections. These votes came from neighborhoods heavily populated by people of color.

Black students turned away, stage sit-in

Bethune-Cookman and Florida A&M are two important historically African American colleges in Florida. Both held significant and successful voter registration drives. But when students showed up to vote, they were told that their names were nowhere to be found on the rolls.

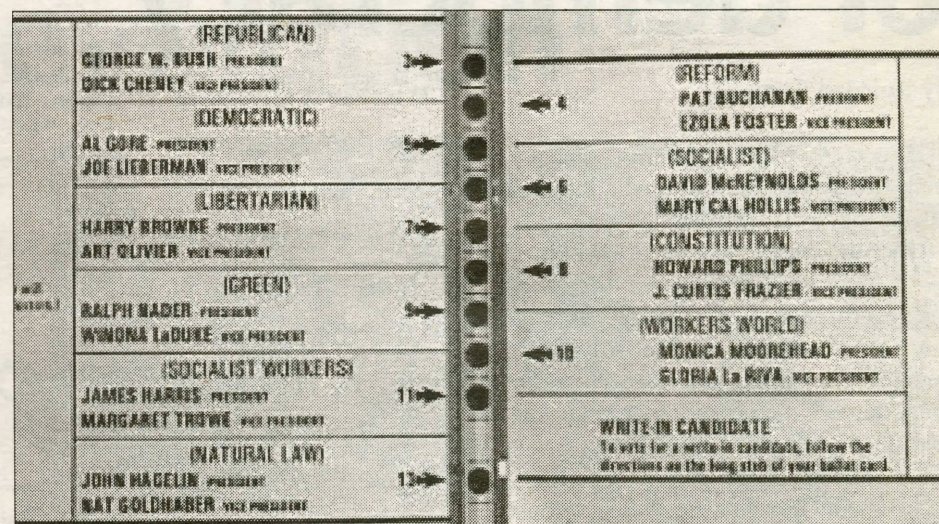
Those students who forced the issue wound up having to present their driver's license or some other photo identification. Other students became so frustrated that they ended up not voting.

Student Ursula Harvey stated that she was turned away from a polling place where she had voted two years earlier. Harvey was told that she had to go 120 miles to another polling place, which she was unable to do.

While trying to argue her point, she held up a picture of a 1960s voting-rights demonstration. The photo showed Southern racists physically assaulting Black demonstrators.

Five hundred predominantly African American students from Florida A&M, Tallahassee Community College and Florida State University held a 22-hour sit-in at the State Capitol in Tallahassee Nov. 9. Their main demand was to talk with State Attorney General Katherine Harris, who did not have the decency to meet with the students to hear their grievances. Harris actively campaigned for George Bush.

The Haitian community has joined the chorus of outrage over how they were treated on Election Day. Many Haitians said there were no Creole interpreters to assist them in some Miami polling stations. In others poll watchers were not allowed to assist them. A number of Haitians



The ballot seen 'round the world.

were threatened with deportation while seeking help at the polls.

Haitian voters, like African Americans, were unceremoniously dismissed if they did not have their voter registration cards or if their names were missing from the rolls.

The Voting Rights Act of 1965 was passed due to the pressure that the Black masses put on the federal government at the height of the civil-rights struggle. This civil-rights legislation was part of Black people's ongoing battle to finish the democratic revolution that began after the Civil War with Reconstruction.

Over the years, the state and federal courts have eroded the effectiveness of the 1965 act, especially in the area of proportional representation. Voting districts with a majority of people of color have been more likely to elect nationally oppressed representatives. This right has been severely restricted by the courts, which have allowed officials to redraw the districts to guarantee a majority of white voters.

Close to one in three African American men in Florida have lost their right to vote because they've been branded with the title "convicted felon." In many ways Florida is a modern-day plantation with Gov. Jeb Bush as head slave master.

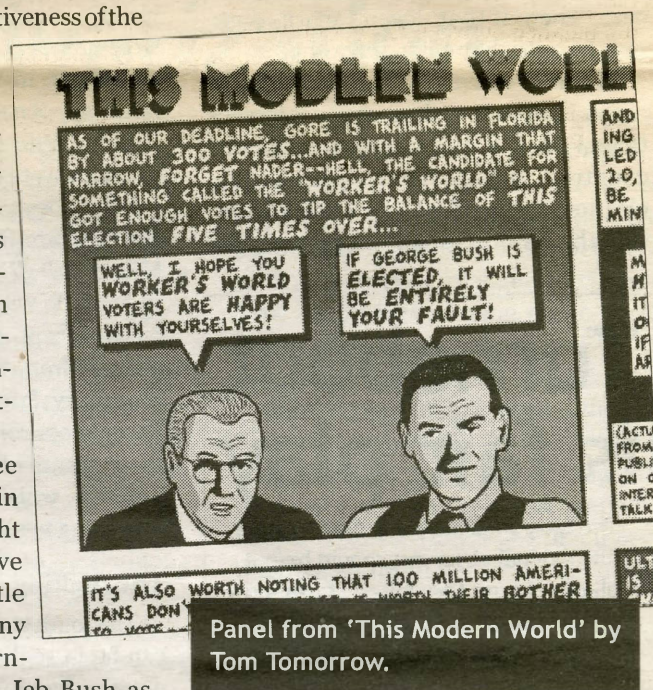
Federal gov't part of the problem

The NAACP is holding hearings in Miami to take testimony from those who were denied the right to vote. So far hundreds have spoken out. The NAACP and others hope the federal government will carry out an investigation of this scandal. That is unlikely to happen unless a groundswell of protest can be organized

and sustained over a period of time.

It's important to understand that the federal government is part of the problem, not part of the solution. The federal government is the big component of the capitalist state. It wants to downplay any irregularities within the electoral process, especially where racism is concerned.

The federal government—like the Gore and Bush camps—wants to see this election resolved as quickly as possible because it is more concerned about the political and economic stability of the capitalist system. A mass struggle focusing on racism, separate from the bankrupt program of Democrats and Republicans,



Panel from 'This Modern World' by Tom Tomorrow.

would be a threat to this stability.

Gore understands that the majority of African American people in Florida supported him over Bush. The fact that he has not spoken out against this intense level of disenfranchisement indicates his gross insensitivity and dismissal of the rights of oppressed people.

The bottom line is that voting for Gore or Bush does not offer any real solution to the needs of working and poor people. Equally important is the duty of every activist to defend the right to self-determination of the most oppressed—including the right to one person, one vote. Fighting for this right is key to building class solidarity.

It remains to be seen where this struggle for the democratic right to vote will lead. Every anti-racist activist should look for signs that this struggle for bourgeois-democratic rights will help spark an independent revolutionary struggle by the entire multinational working class for real political and economic rights.

Moorehead was Workers World Party's 2000 presidential candidate.

MARKET ELECTIONS

By Vince Copeland

HOW DEMOCRACY SERVES THE RICH

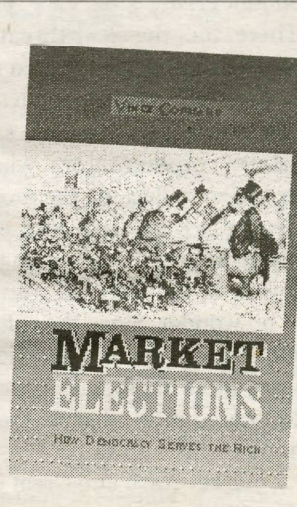
Every four years, big money chooses the presidential candidates. Their war chests filled to the brim, they are then packaged by the media as 'the people's choice.' It's U.S.-style democracy—of the rich, by the rich, and for the rich.

But how do these chosen politicians win the votes of the millions as well as the millionaires?

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VOTERS BEWARE!

Intervention in the name of democracy

By Deirdre Griswold

How many times in recent days have we heard politicians and media pundits invoke the "will of the people"?

Once the messy recounts are over and a president has been chosen, they say, the government can go about its normal business of carrying out the "will of the people." That is the American Way, the great democratic process that begins at the ballot box in the United States.

The problem with this view is that, stuffed ballot boxes or not, U.S. elections certainly do NOT serve "the will of the people." This political system was designed to uphold the will of the privileged few. It didn't start with this election, but has been going on for over 200 years.

However, the false issue of democracy has been used so often by administrations in Washington to intervene around the globe that a short review of how elections are used to advance imperialist schemes is in order.

Excuse for Yugoslav intervention

The claim by "experts" in Washington that elections in some other country have been flawed has been used more than once as an excuse for intervention. First comes political and economic pressure. Then, if that doesn't work, there may be outright military invasion.

The most recent and flagrant example of this is, of course, the massive intervention of the U.S. and European capitalist countries in Yugoslavia's presidential election. Little effort was made to conceal the millions spent on posters, fax

The loudest shouting about democracy can be the excuse for massive election fraud. With help from the media, the people chosen by Washington to carry out its agenda are given 'legitimacy' in elections bought and paid for by the U.S.

machines, television ads and other means to propel the candidacy of Vojislav Kostunica. This plus threats of a new war and promises to rebuild the shattered country evidently succeeded in winning him the popular vote.

We say evidently because, now that the media are paying so much attention to the U.S. election, it is obvious that there are many, many ways to change the outcome of voting—from "losing" ballots to intimidating voters to disenfranchising large numbers of people. Maybe this didn't happen in Yugoslavia, but it has certainly happened here, in the country that appointed itself to decide if Yugoslavia's elections were fair.

Why does the U.S. ruling class prefer Kostunica to former President Slobodan Milosevic? "Democracy" hasn't got a thing to do with it. Kostunica is committed to accepting economic and political dictates from the U.S., the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank. Foreign corporations are already taking the measure of Yugoslavia's state-owned industry, which the new "reformers" are preparing to sell to the highest bidder.

The making of President Yeltsin

The loudest shouting about democracy can be in reality the excuse for massive election fraud. With the help of spin masters in the media, the people chosen by Washington to carry out its agenda are given "legitimacy" in elections bought and paid for by the U.S.

For example, the International Monetary Fund openly gave Boris Yeltsin a \$10-billion loan just before the Russian election in 1996 to buy him the presidency. It allowed him to outspend the Communist Party candidate, Gennadi Zhuganov, by 10,000 to one at a time of great economic crisis.

There, too, the clear threat that there would be a dangerous return to the Cold War if the left won helped tip the vote.

"Democracy is served," said all the Western commentators when Yeltsin won. He soon became the most unpopular leader in Russian history, earning a 5-percent approval rating that put him below Ivan the Terrible and Rasputin. And no wonder. Since the collapse of the Soviet Union, living conditions for the masses in all its former republics have deteriorated more sharply than did conditions in the capitalist West after the stock market crash and Great Depression of the 1930s.



WW GRAPHIC: TONY MURPHY

All this has been done in the name of "American democracy." Should we be so surprised at how hollow that now turns out to be?

Some of the bloodiest conflicts of recent times have come after U.S. pressure actually prevented a real election from taking place.

Election sabotaged in Vietnam

Take the U.S. war against Vietnam, for example—that ruinous, one-sided, high-tech assault on a poor peasant country trying to break free of colonial bondage. Its roots go back to 1954, when the Vietnamese liberation forces had just defeated the French colonialists at Dien Bien Phu. Under enormous pressure from the U.S. at international peace talks in Geneva, the Vietnamese reluctantly agreed to a temporary partition of their country. Within two years, however, there were supposed to be nationwide elections.

Not one among all the international experts on Southeast Asia doubted that, if real elections were held, the next president of Vietnam would be Ho Chi Minh. He was the hero of the independence movement, having led the fight against both the French and Japanese colonialists for decades.

The nationwide elections were never held. The Eisenhower administration dug up Ngo Dinh Diem, an expatriate living in New Jersey, and spent millions to establish him as "president of South Vietnam."

In October 1963, after the U.S. military had become directly involved in Vietnam and massive demonstrations had begun in the south against the Diem dictatorship, the Kennedy administration had Diem and his brother assassinated so it could put in someone less known and hated by the Vietnamese people. What the CIA giveth, it can taketh away.

Thus began the hand-picking of a long string of "heads of state" in South Vietnam by the great democrats in the U.S. ruling class—until a furious anti-war movement at home and an unstoppable resistance in both north and south Vietnam combined to force an end to the war.

Italy, Lebanon, Chile, Guyana, etc.

In the book "Rogue State," published

by Common Courage press, former State Department officer William Blum summarizes a long history of U.S. efforts, mostly successful, to throw elections in countries where there were strong political movements that resisted control by U.S. corporations and banks.

Blum shows how U.S. operatives, often but not always working for the Central Intelligence Agency, carried out a variety of dirty tactics to affect elections in the Philippines (the 1950s), Lebanon (the 1950s), Indonesia (1955), Vietnam (1955), British Guiana/Guyana (1953-64), Japan (1958-1970s), Nepal (1959), Laos (1960), Brazil (1962), Dominican Republic (1962), Guatemala (1963), Bolivia (1966), Chile (1964-70), Portugal (1974-5), Jamaica (1976), Spain (1981, 82), Panama (1984, 1989), Nicaragua (1984, 1990), Haiti (1987-89) and Bosnia (1998).

All these interventions are well documented.

As long as this list may seem, it does not exhaust the subject. Much information has come out in recent years, for example, on how in 1948 the CIA spent millions to produce a victory of the Christian Democrats in Italy against the Communist Party. The CP enjoyed immense popularity among the workers because it had led the Partisan resistance to Mussolini's fascist regime.

What does all this show us about the recent U.S. presidential elections and the "will of the people"? That when the issue has been settled, regardless of which candidate and party come out on top, the Pentagon, the CIA, the State Department and all the other institutions of the state that have been shaped over many generations to serve the interests of the class of super-rich capitalists will continue to do their thing.

However, the peek that millions of up-to-now unaware people in this country have had at the sordid workings of the political system should bring out some healthy skepticism the next time the rulers of the empire try to enlist their support behind the export of "democracy" abroad via U.S. dollars and guns.

Turnabout is fair play

The Star, Johannesburg, South Africa: "International observers should be put in place because the United States must join the established democracies."

The Mail, South Africa: "It is a shameful reflection on our continent that, in the United States' hour of need, we were not there beside our American brothers and sisters to help and advise where we could."

Association of Democratic Nigerians Abroad: "May we suggest that a delegation from the Organization of African Unity be dispatched forthwith to investigate? And as in Africa, where political reform has gone hand in hand with structural adjustment, the OAU can pass on the lessons we have learned under the tutelage of the World Bank and the IMF, beginning with an end to agricultural subsidies, cuts in defense spending and social services, drastic reductions in tariff barriers, and above all, expatriate monitors in the U.S. Treasury."

Cuban Foreign Minister Felipe Roque Perez: "I believe that those in the United States who have always tried to become judges of elections that take place elsewhere must be receiving a lesson of modesty and humbleness." He added that Cuba would gladly send monitors for a new election if asked.

HAVANA

4,000 world delegates salute Cuban Revolution

By Teresa Gutierrez
Havana

Over 4,000 delegates from 116 countries participated in the Second World Conference of Friendship and Solidarity with Cuba in Havana from Nov. 11-14. The conference was an overwhelming expression of international solidarity and a show of the tremendous support the people of the world have for socialist Cuba.

The theme of the conference was based on a quote from Cuba's national hero José Martí: "All of the land should be one great embrace." It was packed with reports on Cuba's current situation and presentations from approximately 400 international delegates.

In addition, Cuba's Institute of Friendship with the Peoples organized a number of memorable cultural and social events. A sentiment shared by many at the conference was that Cuba has not only survived the special economic period, but today is strong and vibrant in every way.

The only thing holding Cuba back from flourishing even more is the continuing genocidal and illegal U.S. blockade.

Cuban leaders speak

Cuban leaders Carlos Lage, Ricardo Alarcon, Felipe Perez Roque and Sergio Corrieri gave excellent and detailed reports of Cuba's economic and political situation. Lage, the minister of economic relations, made a thorough comparison of Cuba's economy today with 1994, at the time of the first world solidarity conference.

Alarcon, president of the National Assembly, provided an historical description of U.S./Cuba relations and pointed out that recent measures passed in the U.S. Congress have intensified the blockade.

Prominent participants in the conference included radical theologian Frei Betto of Brazil, Sandinista leader Daniel Ortega from Nicaragua, FMLN leader Shafik Handal from El Salvador, Cuba-China Friendship Association President Qi Huayuan, Communist Party of India (Marxist) General Secretary Harkishan Singh Surjeet, Palestine National Council member Fatah Abuel el Arda and Puerto Rican Independence Party hero Rafael Cancel Miranda. The Congress of South African Trade Unions sent a large and spirited delegation.

The Rev. Al Sharpton made a short but memorable visit. While in Cuba, Sharpton held a two-hour interview with WLIB, a radio station based in New York's African American community. Pastors for Peace

leader the Rev. Lucius Walker was a guest and answered questions from WLIB listeners.

Sharpton got a standing ovation from all 4,000 delegates when he was introduced as a leader of the struggle against police brutality in the U.S.

The largest international delegation was from the U.S., with 600 participants. This fact inspired the Cubans and the other international delegates. They recognized the intimidation and repression U.S. delegates may face when they return home.

10,000 rally against blockade

On Nov. 14, the last day of the conference, the delegates participated in an early-morning rally and cultural event in front of the U.S. Interests Section. Along with the 4,000 delegates, the Young Communist Union organized thousands of students from the School of Latin American Education and other universities to participate.

The José Martí Plaza was constructed outside the U.S. government installation during the struggle to bring Elián González home. President Fidel Castro told the delegates that the fixture would remain as long as U.S. aggression against Cuba continues.

The 8:30 a.m. rally, titled "An anti-imperialist tribunal," heard representatives of movements from around the world denounce U.S. aggression. The event was closed by Walker, who gave a stirring, powerful talk that brought the 10,000 demonstrators to their feet. His hard-hitting speech had everyone pointing at the U.S. Interests Section building and shouting "Shame, shame!" as he recited Washington's crimes against Cuba, Palestine, Mumia Abu-Jamal and all the people of the world.

The International Action Center, which brought the largest group of U.S. delegates, distributed thousands of pieces of literature about Cuba and many other issues. This material was well received because the international movement recognizes the importance of building a strong anti-imperialist movement in the United States.

While in Cuba, IAC leader and Workers World Party vice presidential candidate Gloria La Riva participated in a nationally televised roundtable discussion about the U.S. election debacle. She also talked about the recent measures passed by the U.S. Congress tightening the blockade.

Further coverage of the conference will appear in next week's WW.



Cuban President Fidel Castro and the Rev. Lucius Walker of Pastors for Peace were among 10,000 who rallied against the U.S. blockade Nov. 14 in Havana.

SOUTH AFRICA

Strikes planned vs. privatization

Tens of thousands of South African municipal workers in the Gauteng, Cape Town and Johannesburg areas are planning strikes and demonstrations Nov. 14-17 to protest moves toward privatization of municipal services and the threat of layoffs.

The unions involved in the work actions—the South African Municipal Workers Union and the Independent Municipal and Allied Trade Union—have also called for messages of solidarity from supporters around the world.

According to a release from SAMWU on Nov. 9, the unions will begin marching Nov. 14 in Greater Vaal, and the next day 20,000 SAMWU and IMATU members will put their tools down in Johannesburg and converge on the Library Gardens.

Marches are set to continue in the following days in Gauteng and in Thabazimbi, where 2,000 members are protesting the privatization of sanitation jobs. SAMWU's Cape Metro Branch, with 18,000 members, pledged to strike on Nov. 16, with the action set to spread across all municipalities of the Western Cape and include 25,000 workers in all.

SAMWU and IMATU oppose the plans to carry out iGoli 2002—a proposal for restructuring municipal government that involves the privatization of many municipal services. They argue that it opens the door to fraud and corruption while eliminating many jobs and services.

SAMWU has asked that letters of support be sent to samwu@sn.apc.org.

—John Catalinotto

NEW YORK

Drawing links between Haitian, African American struggles

On Nov. 9 the Haiti Support Network brought together activists from New York's Haitian and African American communities to discuss how the struggle for justice, democracy and jobs in Haiti connects to the struggle against the death penalty and racist police brutality in the United States.

With a national vote looming at the end of November, Haiti Progress newspaper Co-director Maude Leblanc gave a brief history of elections in Haiti. Pam Africa, coordinator of International Concerned Family & Friends of Mumia Abu-Jamal and MOVE Organization member,

talked about the case of Borgela Philistin. A Haitian living in Philadelphia, Philistin wound up on death row in Pennsylvania alongside Abu-Jamal after he successfully defended himself against a police attack.

"The attack by the Philadelphia police on Borgela is part of the attacks of the Philadelphia police, the CIA and the FBI against MOVE and the Black community of Philadelphia," Africa said.

Ray Laforest, an activist in the Haitian and immigrant communities, chaired the meeting. Ernst Ford, a Haitian-born taxi driver from Philadelphia, also gave details of the Philistin case.

—G. Dunkel

CUBA 2001

The International Peace for Cuba Appeal has produced a beautiful 2001 wall calendar. It features 15 full-size original black-and-white photographs taken by well-known photographer Bill Hackwell, who has traveled widely in Cuba. In addition, each month highlights important dates in Cuban history. Proceeds go to the International Peace for Cuba Appeal's mobilizations against the blockade and for shipments of medical journals and medicines to the Cuban people.

Calendars: \$10 each (1-4), \$8 each (4-9), \$7 each (10 or more) (Add \$3 shipping for one, \$2 each add'l). Send check with your order to Peace for Cuba Appeal/IAC, 39 W. 14 St., #206, New York, N.Y. 10011. (State quantity ordered, your name, address, and phone number).

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editorial

Climate & class struggle

The expression "long, hot summer" used to mean the time of year when people beset by racism, overcrowding, unemployment and police brutality reached the boiling point. In the new century, it may mean all that plus just what it says—intolerable climate conditions around the world.

Scientists are now predicting a rise in average temperatures over this century of from 5 to 11 degrees. The repercussions from such an immense change in the earth's environment are staggering to envision. Polar ice and glaciers are already starting to melt. Vast areas that are now land will be under water. Severe weather—both droughts and floods, as well as hurricanes, twisters and typhoons—will increase. Many more species of plants and animals will face extinction.

The culprit is greenhouse gases, caused by burning fossil fuels—coal, oil and gas. Mostly carbon dioxide, they form a blanket around the earth, trapping heat. The U.S., with just 4 percent of the world's population, emits 25 percent of the greenhouse gases.

Anxious delegates from around the world ran into a wall in mid-November when they met in The Hague at the Sixth Session of the Conference of Parties to the UN Climate Change Convention. They had hoped to get compliance with the 1997 Kyoto Protocol, which requires industrialized countries to cut their greenhouse gas emissions by 2012 to 5.2 percent less than the 1990 level. Such a change would not reverse global warming, but at least it would be a start.

They found that the U.S. government—and that includes Al Gore, a self-styled environmentalist—isn't the least bit interested in ratifying the agreement it had signed earlier. Instead, the flacks from Washington were pushing a scheme whereby polluting U.S. corporations could sidestep limits on greenhouse gases by buying up the pollution quotas of poor, underdeveloped countries.

There is already an industry and a market in this, called "emissions trading."

This piggish response to an earth-shaking problem infuriated the rest of the world, including many Europeans, who have started experiencing unprecedented weather—floods in Britain right now and violent windstorms in France two years ago. They join Vietnam, Honduras, Mozambique, Venezuela, Bangladesh, India, north Korea and many other poor countries that have been devastated by storms in recent years.

Environment Minister Jan Pronk from The Netherlands, a country with vast areas below sea level, got applause from Third World delegates when he said, "It's ironic that developing countries, which are least of all to blame for this predicament, will suffer the most devastating consequences ... and on top of that ... it is they whose economic resilience is lowest."

Russia, whose economy has imploded since the collapse of the Soviet Union, now emits only 37 percent of the greenhouse gases it did in 1990. Many countries must fear that this is what U.S. imperialism has in store for them—the destruction of their industry, rather than a planned conversion to cleaner technologies. They will suffer all the consequences—hunger, poverty, deprivation—while the U.S. and other capitalist giants continue to pollute the world.

The argument for a revolutionary reconstitution of human society, for a planned, socialist economy controlled by the working class, grows stronger every day.

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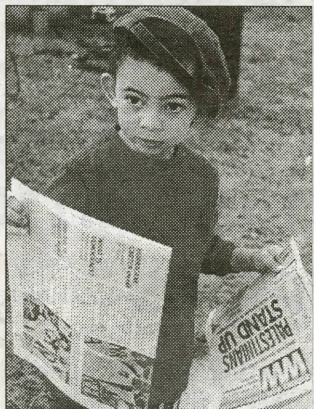
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Israel uses DU shells

Anti-war group demands investigation

By John Catalinotto

A major anti-war organization in the United States is calling for an international investigation of Israeli use of depleted uranium shells in its attempt to repress the Al-Aqsa Intifada—the uprising of Palestinians against the occupation.

International Action Center Co-director Sara Flounders told Workers World Nov. 12 that the IAC was calling upon "international organizations, NGOs, environmental and health organizations to investigate the Israeli military's use of prohibited weapons in the West Bank and Gaza, and to mobilize to stop it. These weapons include dumdum bullets, CS gas and depleted uranium weapons."

Flounders was in occupied Palestine from Oct. 28-Nov. 2 as part of a four-person IAC delegation. The delegation was on a fact-finding mission and also delivered medical supplies to Palestinian clinics and hospitals in the territories.

"Such use of DU weapons," says Flounders, "adds to the crimes the Israeli forces are committing against the Palestinian population. Israeli helicopter gun ships are firing into densely populated areas. According to international law these attacks on civilian areas are war crimes, as is the long-term destruction of the environment from depleted uranium contamination."

"The radioactive materials enter into the land, the water and the whole food chain, contaminating the densely-populated West Bank and Gaza, where water is a scarce resource. The wanton radioactive contamination of this region is a crime against all of humanity and a threat to the entire region now and for generations to come."

"We urge scientists, doctors and soldiers who have handled these weapons to come forward with information. Information supplied this way in Puerto Rico, Okinawa and south Korea recently have helped mobilize against DU use and put the Pentagon on the defensive. This crime and its long-term impact must be fully exposed and stopped."

Pentagon hid DU use

The draft of a paper on DU the IAC intends to release Nov. 16 shows that in Vieques, Puerto Rico, and in Okinawa, Panama and south Korea, the Pentagon had either kept secret or denied using DU until popular organizations challenged the U.S. military.

Following the protests, the Pentagon was forced to admit DU use. In Okinawa the U.S. apologized and promised not only to no longer use DU but also to begin to clean up spent DU shells.

In addition, movements in France, Italy and other NATO countries occupying Kosovo have sparked official investigations of the dangers their troops face from exposure to DU from shells fired by U.S. planes during the 1999 war. There are reports that the Portuguese government will withdraw its troops because of DU dangers.

Flounders told how the IAC delegation witnessed "Israeli attack helicopters, which people described to us as 'Apache' helicopters from the U.S., firing shells and rockets at targets in and around Ramallah. We then examined a small office used by the Fatah organization that the projectiles hit and destroyed."

Israeli authorities seized IAC's materials

"We also saw Israeli tanks and other armored vehicles firing machine-gun rounds and larger projectiles at youthful demonstrators in Ramallah," Flounders added. "We collected some of the shell casings and metal fragments from the different target areas to bring back to the United States for evaluation and testing."

Flounders said: "As we were preparing to

leave from Ben Gurion Airport in Tel Aviv, members of our delegation were stopped, searched and interrogated. The shell casings and metal fragments were confiscated. While this prevented us from doing our own tests, it made us even more suspicious that the Israeli forces were using DU shells."

A 1995 report from the U.S. Army Environmental Policy Institute asserts that Israel is one of the countries with DU munitions in its arsenal. Given Israel's own nuclear program and well-developed military industry, the IAC believes Israel is quite likely a manufacturer of its own DU ammunition.

The "Apache" and the Cobra helicopters—both used by the Israeli armed forces—are equipped to fire DU shells. Also, the Israeli Sabra tank is modeled on the Abrams M1A1 tank, which is also capable of firing DU shells.

DU is a waste product of the process that produces enriched uranium for use in atomic weapons and nuclear power plants. Because it is extremely dense, when turned into a metal DU can be used to make a shell that penetrates steel. It's also pyrophoric; that is, it burns when heated by friction when it strikes steel.

When DU burns, it spews tiny particles of poisonous and radioactive uranium oxide into the air. The small particles can be ingested or inhaled by humans for miles around. Even one particle, when lodged in a vital organ, can be dangerous.

At least 600,000 pounds of DU and uranium dust was left around Iraq, Kuwait and Saudi Arabia by U.S. and British forces during the 1991 war against Iraq. A symposium in Baghdad in December 1998 found higher rates of childhood leukemia and other cancers in people living around Basra, and attributed this to DU contamination. For some cancers the rates were 5 to 10 times higher than normal.

A reason to refuse duty

DU is also considered at least a contributing cause to the 120,000 reported cases of "Gulf War Syndrome." Numerous international studies in Britain, the United States and Iraq have linked Gulf War Syndrome to the use of radioactive weapons in the bombing. The chronic symptoms of this ailment range from sharp increases in cancers to memory loss, chronic pain, fatigue and birth defects in the veterans' children.

While the Pentagon continues to deny any great dangers from DU, the 1995 U.S. Army Environmental Policy Institute study, entitled "Health and Environmental Consequences of Depleted Uranium in the U.S. Army," stated: "If DU enters the body, it has the potential to generate significant medical consequences. The risks associated with DU in the body are both chemical and radiological.... Personnel inside or near vehicles struck by DU penetrators could receive significant internal exposures."

DU is also used to make tank armor and is used in heavily armored Israeli vehicles. Exposure to radiation for those remaining in the tanks for a long time or from handling weapons can be another source of danger.

"Like the U.S. generals who are the main supplier of Israeli weapons," said Flounders, "the Israeli general staff are indifferent to protecting the long-term health of their own rank-and-file soldiers, not to speak of their racist contempt for the Palestinians."

"For groups inside Israel who oppose the repression of Palestinians, challenging DU use could increase the conscientious resistance from individual Israeli troops that has already surfaced."

For more information on the campaign against DU weapons, visit the IAC Web site at www.iacenter.org or read the book *Metal of Dishonor*, which can be ordered on-line from www.leftbooks.com.

Morale is a weapon

Palestinian resistance stuns Israel, U.S.

By Sara Flounders

For decades the struggle for Palestine's liberation has played a pivotal role in the Arab people's struggle to break imperialism's stranglehold on the Middle East.

Although only a few million people, the Palestinians have been heroic in their determination to survive as a nation. This struggle against overwhelming odds despite many setbacks has revived again and again.

The courage of youths confronting Israeli tanks day after day with stones and slingshots is once again changing the equation of forces in the entire region.

As powerful as the 1987 Intifada was, the scope of the new uprising is greater. It has gone beyond the occupied territories, spreading within the 1948 borders of Israel and mobilizing people throughout the Arab world.

Millions of outraged people have mobilized support, from Lebanon to Egypt, Morocco and Yemen. The Palestinian struggle has aroused a mass movement in these countries that inspires mortal fear in the thin ruling strata. These demonstrations are increasingly targeting U.S. imperialism.

This new chapter in the Palestinian struggle began Sept. 28 when Israeli general Ariel Sharon visited Jerusalem with over a thousand troops to declare Israeli sovereignty over the Al-Aqsa Mosque. This calculated provocation would have been impossible without the Barak government's approval.

Barak authorized a massive Israeli military presence the following day, the Moslem day of prayers. As thousands streamed out of the mosque after prayers, the first clashes began. Now a whole generation has awakened to resistance.

Divide and rule

This new wave of resistance has brought down the whole U.S.-orchestrated plan to use coercive diplomacy and overwhelming force to impose a permanent state of dependent reservations or Bantustans on the Palestinian people.

The Oslo "peace process" provided that the Palestinian Authority would administer these impoverished and fragmented cantons. A lightly armed Palestinian police force was to collaborate with U.S. and Israeli overall control and repress any forces that attempted resistance.

Israel spent the seven years of negotiations building and reinforcing settlements in the West Bank and Gaza. There are now over 170 militarized settlements for over 200,000 Israeli settlers. The number of settlers doubled during the

"peace process."

The Israeli regime uses the settlements to justify a large Israeli military presence and an invasive system of super-highways connecting the expanding settlements throughout the West Bank to Israel. These highways also divide the Palestinian segments from each other and from their center in Jerusalem.

End of collaboration

The plan was a calculated effort to divide and weaken the Palestinians geographically—and even more important, politically. A key strategy of the Oslo Accords was to subvert and co-opt a section of the Palestinian movement and use it against the rest.

As part of the peace process PA President Yasser Arafat's forces were given tens of millions of dollars to combat "terrorism." This did not mean reining in the ongoing terrorism of Israeli settlers, but Palestinian police were supposed to arrest and jail all the forces committed to continuing the fight against Israel.

Now that an uprising has broken out, increased Israeli repression and terror tactics have led to increased resistance with each passing day. The U.S.-Israeli plan to shape a section of the Palestinian police into a repressive army of collaboration has collapsed.

In October, CIA Director George Tenet was shown on television seated next to Secretary of State Madeleine Albright and just across from Arafat at a key meeting in Paris. But what has become of Tenet's plans to build collaboration between the armed forces of oppressor and oppressed? It has collapsed. Israel has launched a missile attack on the headquarters of Arafat's personal security forces. The PA responded by releasing all Palestinian political prisoners from jail.

On Nov. 9 Israeli troops carried out a rocket attack and assassination of Hussein Abayat, a regional commander of the Tanzim militia in the West Bank. In return, on Nov. 11 Palestinian guerrillas ambushed two armed settler-convoys, the first daylight operations by Palestinians in Israeli-run areas of the West Bank.

Morale and political unity decisive

The balance in war is not decided by weapons alone. Though U.S.-supplied Israeli weapons are far superior to the small arms of the Palestinians, protracted struggle is decided by morale, by the level of popular support and the level of political consciousness.

Israel is facing a serious crisis of morale. Political divisions are tearing the state apart. The escalating brutality and repression have demoralized many.

The whole Israeli state is built on the

false promise of a secure and prosperous lifestyle, heavily subsidized by Washington. Subsidized housing, with large apartments, lush lawns, swimming pools and sports clubs attracts Israeli settlers to the militarized West Bank settlements.

But now, as Israeli violence escalates, Palestinian guerrilla fighters are responding by targeting the settlements. Settlers travel only in armed convoys. Many settlements are practically empty.

In contrast, the Palestinians are more united and cohesive than they have been in a decade. Their anger at seven years of fraudulent peace talks while settlements expanded all around them has finally exploded. Now each escalation in Israeli repression and terror tactics brings not fear but new levels of outrage and organized resistance.

Change in the whole region

The heroic Palestinian youths who day after day challenge Israeli tanks with stones and slingshots have inspired and aroused people throughout the Middle East. Millions have taken to the streets in solidarity with their struggle, denouncing not only Israel but U.S. imperialism.

In the last six weeks this shift in political climate has weakened U.S. imperialism in the Middle East and unraveled its plans.

Iraq, Syria and Iran are forging new relations. Iraq is openly challenging the no-flight zones that U.S. and British aircraft carriers and jet bombers have enforced with impunity for 10 years. Planes from many countries are flying directly to Baghdad to challenge the sanctions strangling the Iraqis. The charged political climate makes it harder for the Pentagon to threaten or to intervene aggressively.

Collapse of Israeli economy

Washington's plans to make Israel the high-tech engine of the region have collapsed. Promising business deals and trade offices have closed.

The crisis has derailed the Euro-Mediterranean partnership, a European Union-inspired process to bring "southern Mediterranean" countries into a free-trade area. Now Syria and Lebanon are threatening a boycott because of Israel's participation. The real beneficiaries of a free-trade zone are always the developed countries with the strongest economies—the U.S., Israel and the West European countries.

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The tourist industry, a mainstay of the Israeli economy, has totally closed down. Flights to Tel Aviv are almost empty. The arrivals section echoes. Departing flights are booked solid with no available seats. At the airport and in every shopping or gathering area the mood is tense and security is all-pervasive.

U.S. tax dollars are once again the only real prop of the Israeli economy. Congress has promised a new infusion of both military hardware and economic subsidies.

The military clampdown is even more destructive to the fragile Palestinian economy. The enforced closing for weeks at a time of many small businesses and endless roadblocks mean that it is difficult to get to market even the olives and agricultural produce that are a mainstay for many families.

Workers can't get to their jobs. The 40,000 Palestinians who had permits to work in Israel and the 60,000 who worked there illegally are without an income.

Although this creates enormous privation and hardship for the Palestinians, it has also undermined joint business deals with Israel. World Bank and International Monetary Fund long-term investment projects that dramatically increased the dependence of the Palestinian economy on Israel are the first casualties. Accommodation is no longer an option for the thin layer of the population who benefited from collaboration.

A new era of continued resistance will revive the movement for the liberation of Palestine. It will inspire anti-imperialist struggles worldwide—and that will make it harder for the billionaire transnational corporations to use oppressed countries as a cheap labor pool.

The working-class and progressive movement here has a great stake in this struggle. Its support for the righteous demands of the Palestinians—for full sovereignty, the right to an independent state with its capital in Jerusalem and the right for return for all refugees—is vital.

A shameful vote

Congress is poised to approve another huge aid package to Israel, thereby underwriting the current war against the Palestinian people.

The groundwork was laid Oct. 25 when the House of Representatives passed a resolution, by a lop-sided 365-30, that exonerated Israel and placed all the blame for the violence on the Palestinians.

At the time the resolution was passed, 137 people had been killed—129 of them Palestinians. The death toll has now more than doubled. Israel is using

heavy weapons against rocks and slingshots.

Among the Democrats who had the courage to vote against the resolution were David Bonior, John Conyers, Jesse Jackson Jr., Barbara Lee, Cynthia McKinney, Jose Serrano and Maxine Waters.

Those who voted for it, however, included such liberals as Barney Frank, John Lewis, Major Owens, Nancy Pelosi and Charles Rangel. Bernie Sanders abstained.

—Deirdre Griswold

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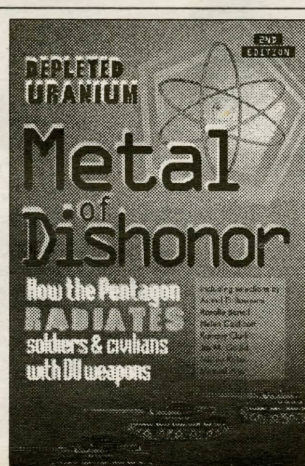
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Estancamiento Bush-Gore

Partidos del gran capital se batan en duelo por despojos de la Casa Blanca

Por Fred Goldstein

El estancamiento insólito en las elecciones presidenciales ha temporalmente superado el cansancio popular con el proceso electoral capitalista, el lo cual solamente la mitad de los votantes elegibles participaron, como siempre.

Millones de trabajadores y gente progresista ahora se sienten consternados y preocupados porque, aunque el candidato Al Gore ganó el voto popular por pocos votos, por el 8 de noviembre, este está en peligro de perder en el Colegio Electoral al Republicano George W. Bush.

Agravando la situación aún más hay acusaciones de fraude masivo en la Florida, el estado que podría lanzar a Bush más allá de los 270 votos electorales necesarios para ganar la presidencia.

La corrupción conforma una parte integral del sistema electoral de los Estados Unidos. Richard Nixon perdió en las elecciones de 1960 a John F. Kennedy por menos que la mitad de un punto de porcentaje porque la máquina política del Partido Demócrata arregló el voto fraudulentamente en Chicago. En aquel instante, Nixon se decidió no crear una crisis política y dejar permanecer el resultado electoral.

Más allá que la corrupción, la clase dominante está confrontando una vergüenza mayor y una perplejidad creada por el Colegio Electoral poco democrático, las maquinaciones de lo cual era poco familiar a las masas.

Gore y no Nader tuvo la culpa

Uno pensaría que Gore, con la ventaja de pertenecer a una administración que por ocho años disfrutó a una expansión económica, debe haber ganado fácilmente. Ahora, sus propagandistas están buscando alguien a quien culpar por su actuación débil.

La campaña de Gore ha acusado a Ralph Nader, el candidato del Partido Verde que ganó un 3 por ciento del voto nacional, de entregar la victoria a Bush. Pero Nader básicamente tuvo razón cuando dijo en una conferencia de prensa el 8 de noviembre que fue Gore quien derrotó a Gore.

Un resultado progresista de la elección fue que unos 2,6 millones de personas rehusaron ser intimidadas para votar por el malo menor e insistieron a votar por Nader. Ellos declararon su independencia de los dos partidos grandes capitalistas, sino del capitalismo mismo.

El sistema electoral de "el ganador se lleva todo" de los Estados Unidos asegura que un voto por la izquierda no va a resultar en cualquier representación política, si haría bajo un sistema de representación proporcional. Pero a pesar de esto, los que votaron por Nader no sacrificaron sus principios.

No hay ninguna crisis social o política al fondo del desastre electoral actual. Como ha explicado Nader varias veces, los dos partidos están peleando para ver quien gana la Casa Blanca para poder recibir los mandos de combate del gobierno corporativo detrás del escenario.

La lucha sobre los despojos de un presupuesto de \$2 trillones de verdad puede volverse en una pelea muy amarga. Mientras que los dos partidos están jurando respetar la ley, etc., van a pelear con todo sus armamentos para ganar la presidencia. Cualquier cosa puede pasar.

Ni los trabajadores, ni las comunidades de gente oprimida, ni tampoco los jóvenes militantes deben inmiscuirse en apoyar un partido capitalista o el otro en su lucha por la presidencia. Pero deben estar al tanto por cualquier oportunidad para avanzar sus propias demandas independientemente de su clase.

Sistema electoral ata las masas a partidos de gran capital

La mayoría de los habitantes de los EE.UU. piensan que están votando a favor de los candidatos, pero en realidad están votando a favor de una lista de electores en cada estado escogida por los grandes partidos. Estos electores en cada estado deben votar en diciembre, después de las elecciones populares, por los candidatos de sus partidos. El número de electores de cada estado es equivalente a la suma de sus miembros en el Congreso.

El candidato que recibe la mayoría o la pluralidad del voto popular —no importa si es por un solo voto— gana todos los votos electorales de ese estado.

Este sistema fue diseñado por aristócratas hacendados, ricos comerciantes y esclavistas que prepararon la Constitución en 1789. Ese documento fue escrito con la intención de asegurar que las elecciones se quedarían en las manos de la élite de electores, escogidos por los ricos, acaso una elección popular se escapó de su control y resultó en contra de los intereses de la clase gobernante.

Este sistema que tiene como lema 'el ganador se lleva todo' limita a las amplias masas año tras año a un programa y candidatos de los dos partidos que responden a las exigencias de las grandes corporaciones. Este impide a que las fuerzas progresistas y de la izquierda ganen cualquier terreno en la arena electoral y lancen sus mensajes a gente.

En cada elección, el viejo y pragmático lema es anunciado, "No mal usen sus votos." Dándole crédito a Nader, él ha rehusado a dejarse dominar por esto y ha permitido que la gente se exprese su oposición a la dominación por las grandes corporaciones sobre la política.

Gore se lleva la mayoría de los votos progresistas

Gore se llevó el voto popular a pesar de su campaña totalmente demagógica y sin inspiración. Pero debido a la movilización de las organizaciones africana-americanas, el sacó más del 90% del voto de los africano-americanos, según las encuestas por la CNN el 8 de noviembre. También obtuvo el 62% de los votos por las organizaciones laborales.

Las mismas encuestas mostraron que Gore obtuvo el 62% del voto latino; el 55% del voto asiático; el 54% de voto femenino total y el 58% del voto por mujeres traba-

jadoras; el 70% del voto lesbiano y gay. Trabajadores con salarios de menos de \$30.000 al año, el anciano y los jóvenes también dieron su voto a Gore.

El se llevó a ciudades de 500.000 habitantes o más con un margen de 3-1. Bush obtuvo una gran parte de sus votos de pequeños pueblos y áreas rurales. Gore tuvo más fuerza en el noreste y oeste del país, mientras que Bush tuvo más fuerza en el área de la vieja Confederación.

Desde un punto puramente democrático, si Bush gana en el Colegio Electoral, los votos de los afroamericanos, latinos, sindicatos, mujeres, lesbianas, gays, trans y todos los trabajadores más pobres que votaron por Gore serían revocados por un sistema electoral anticuado y reaccionario.

Tanto como los sectores progresistas votaron por temor a las políticas reaccionarias de Bush, la elección de Gore no les traería salvación. Tanto Wall Street como los grandes negocios están contentos con ambos candidatos. El sistema de Colegio Electoral ha salido a relucir porque la clase gobernante está de alguna manera preocupada sobre Gore que es muy liberal o muy radical.

Clinton-Gore crearon un clima de extrema derecha

El sistema de Colegio Electoral ha entrado en juego porque las elecciones han sido tan estrechas. Y es así por los ocho años que la administración Clinton-Gore han empujado al Partido Democrático hacia la derecha. Cuando Clinton firmó el proyecto de ley que destruyó al programa

del bienestar público—llevado a millones de mujeres y niños a una pobreza profunda—él proclamó que "la era del gobierno omnipotente se había acabado."

Clinton-Gore hicieron del balance del presupuesto—o sea, dando grandes sumas de dinero a los obligacionistas—la sagrada misión de su administración. Y también hicieron muchas otras cosas reaccionarias. Todo esto cambió el clima político en el país.

Bush hizo un campaña contra "el gobierno omnipotente." Gore respondió diciendo que el también estaba en contra de esto. Pero esta frase es la palabra clave para la clase gobernante para dar ayuda a las masas de personas son que victimadas por el desempleo, la pobreza y la falta de educación, viviendas y los cuidados de la salud—todos los demonios del capitalismo.

Es cierto que los Republicanos están a la derecha de los Demócratas en muchos temas. Pero Gore no pudo desenmascarar a Bush porque él está amarrado a la misma política fundamentalmente.

El proceso electoral fue puesto en su verdadera perspectiva por la campaña de Monica Moorehead/Gloria La Riva del Partido Mundo Obrero. Ellas llevaron una campaña educacional contra la explotación capitalista y una virulenta opresión nacional. Su mensaje fue que las elecciones bajo el capitalismo no resuelven nada fundamental; que la única y verdadera vía al mejoramiento de la vida de los pueblos es por medio de una masiva movilización y lucha de clases.



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