

NO MATTER WHO WINS

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ISRAELI TERROR, U.S. HYPOCRISY

EDITORIAL 10

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Election problem for big business

Look 'fair' or end it quick?

By Fred Goldstein

The producers of public opinion are staging a demonstration of stern impartiality focused on the Supreme Court of Florida.

The judges are seen in their majestic robes, sharply questioning both sides. No impeachment-style mud slinging or partisan ranting is allowed in court.

The way the capitalist media spin it, this cutthroat knife fight between the two camps of unprincipled political fortune seekers is being arbitrated with dignity. There is only polite argumentation back and forth as both sides get their day in court. When it is all over, judicial wisdom will reconcile the conflicting statutes and decide on deadlines versus inclusion.

The federal statutory deadline when electors are supposed to be chosen is Dec. 12, the date passed in 1876 after the Tilden-Hayes betrayal marked the end of Reconstruction.

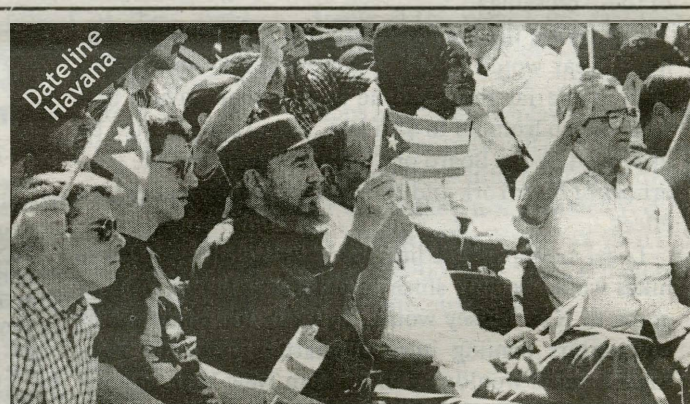
Should this date have superior legal status over the right of the canvassing boards to petition for voting recounts? Should the authority of the Florida secretary of state be upheld against the state attorney general? Should the statute allowing manual recounts, which may take more than one week, override the statutory one-week post-election deadline for certification of votes? Is it fair to all the voters in Florida to have recounts in only three counties, which happen to have Democratic Party majorities?

Etc., etc., etc., ad nauseam.

Stripping away all the legalese, here's the real issue: Will the Bush legal and public-relations team have enough political muscle and disinformation to overcome Gore's lawyers and spin doctors, who have turned heaven and earth in a desperate, massive fishing expedition for votes?

The struggle keeps heating up, despite all appeals for restraint. The Bush forces accused the Gore camp of being

Continued on page 5



Panama

Attempt to kill Cuban leader foiled

By Gloria La Riva

Luis Posada Carriles, a notorious anti-Cuba fascist responsible for the bombing deaths of scores of people, was captured Nov. 17 along with three accomplices after infiltrating Panama in an attempt to assassinate Cuban President Fidel Castro.

The revolutionary government in Havana has called for Posada's extradition to face trial for his many crimes against Cuba. But the U.S. government is pressuring Panama not to do it.

As the struggle unfolds, the Cuban people will undoubtedly mobilize until justice is served.

Posada is a well-known CIA operative. He contracted two Venezuelan men to place a bomb on a Cubana Airlines plane

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PANELS & WORKSHOPS

- Fighting racism. Building a movement to free Mumia and Leonard Peltier & all political prisoners. End the death penalty.
- Building our unions: Organizing the unorganized.
- Why capitalism can't be reformed.
- Why we should shut down the prison-industrial complex.
- From Wall Street to the sweatshop: Globalization & capitalism today.
- Class origins of Lesbian/Gay/Bi/Trans oppression.
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- Building a revolutionary party in the U.S.
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- Colombia, Venezuela, Mexico and Ecuador: the struggle in Latin America.
- Fighting police brutality.
- The Cuban Revolution: Still firm after 40 years.
- Profits vs. the environment.
- And much more.

SEE ARTICLE, PAGE 3

the Socialist answer to Capitalism

BUILDING A REVOLUTIONARY MOVEMENT IN THE U.S.

Since mass protests against the World Trade Organization swept Seattle last year, a revolutionary movement has been growing rapidly.

Since mass protests against the World Trade Organization swept Seattle last year, a new radical movement has been growing against capitalism. As it fights against globalization, racism and the death penalty, the movement must also show the socialist alternative to corporate exploitation and oppression.

On the weekend of Dec. 2-3, a conference in New York will bring together activists from all over the United States to discuss the past year's events, present political analysis and plan future actions to further the struggle. This will be a unique opportunity to learn about Marxism and the socialist alternative to capitalism.

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**New
York
City**

Port Authority applies for \$400 million fare hike

By G. Dunkel
New York

The Port Authority of New York and New Jersey owns and operates the bridge and tunnels that connect New Jersey to New York. These were used by more than 121 million vehicles in 1998.

It owns the PATH trains that carry people on 65 million trips per year between the two states.

The agency, funded by the two states, has an annual budget of \$3.6 billion.

So when the PA announced Nov. 16 that it was applying to raise tolls for cars from \$4 to \$7, double the PATH fare from \$1 to \$2, increase tolls for trucks and boost fees for New Jersey buses that use its midtown Manhattan terminal, the New York-New Jersey media might have done a little arithmetic.

Simple multiplication would have shown that these price hikes will take about \$400 million a year from the budgets of working people, the predominant users of these crossings.

But saying the PA wants to raise tolls by \$400 million a year would have far more impact—and potentially incite far more public anger—than saying that tolls will go from \$4 to \$7 a trip. The proposal must be approved by the Board of Commissioners and the governors of New York and New Jersey before it goes into effect.

Local newspaper editorials proclaimed that these hikes would be fair, since commuters coming from or going to New Jersey would then pay the same toll as commuters coming into Manhattan from the east. PATH riders would pay more than New York subway riders, but the PATH hasn't had a hike since 1978, they said, so this one will make up for lost time.

Reports on the "unfairness" of the current PATH price ignore the fact that most PATH users also take the subway after they get into New York. So they pay two fares. Some commuters have to take a bus to the PATH, so they pay three fares.

Two other wrinkles in this proposal need to be examined. One is the idea of "congestion" pricing—that is, charging users more during rush hour and other peak times—and the emphasis on spreading E-ZPass to enable this kind of pricing.

A real solution to congestion

E-ZPass is used from Maine to Virginia. It's a plaque attached to the windshield near the steering wheel. It is automatically scanned as the vehicle rolls through a tollbooth. The applicable toll is then deducted from a pre-paid account.

E-ZPass—as a byproduct of its toll taking—also keeps track of when and where a car has been.

Once the New Jersey turnpike was completely equipped with E-ZPass earlier this year, the Turnpike Authority laid off hundreds of part-time and temporary toll takers. More layoffs can be expected as more and more cars are equipped with E-ZPass.

The Port Authority claims that "congestion" at the

Hudson River crossings costs the New York metro area \$9 billion a year. That's another reason being offered to charge more at certain times of the day.

But there's a better, healthier and more obvious way to relieve congestion: Make mass transit cheap or free. Run more buses and trains into Manhattan on Amtrak lines. Run more trains to ferry terminals. Build more and bigger PATH trains. If more drivers and conductors are needed, hire and train laid-off toll takers.

This could easily be done by taxing Wall Street stock transactions. It's the bosses, after all, who profit from the labor of all those people commuting to and from work.

U.S. capitalism is so welded to the automobile—that cornucopia of wealth for the auto and oil companies—that even in New York, the only metropolitan area in the U.S. where a majority of trips to work are made on public transportation, it's not seen as an alternative to congestion. Rather it's an excuse for more convoluted pricing schemes to pull more and more money out of working people's pockets.

WW CALENDAR

DETROIT

Fri., Dec. 8

Meeting in solidarity with the Palestinian uprising. Sara Flounders, co-director of the IAC, who was part of a recent delegation to Palestine. 7 p.m. At 5920 Second Ave, north of Wayne State University. For info (313) 831-0750.

Sat., Dec. 9

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

NEW YORK

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. & Broad-

way, 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 UAINE. Noon. At Cole's Hill, above Plymouth Rock. For info <http://idt.net/~uaine19>.

WORKERS WORLD PARTY

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

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

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Transgender Liberation

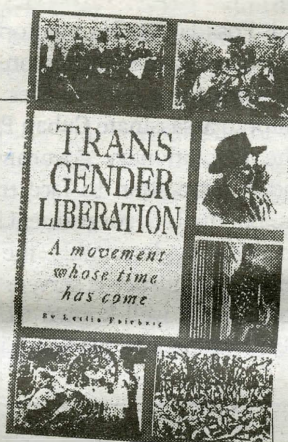
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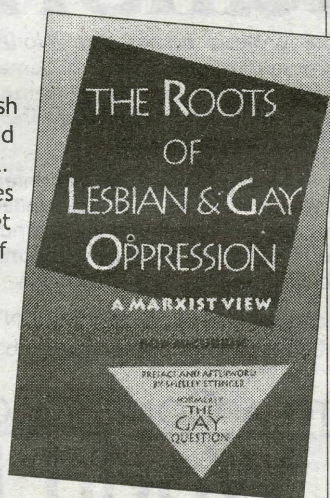
By Bob McCubbin

Originally published in 1976, during the first flush of the modern lesbian and gay liberation movement. This updated edition gives a clear, dispassionate, yet utterly partisan review of a history of pain, persecution, courage and pride.

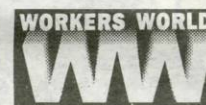
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Workers World

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Workers World Party to meet Dec. 2-3

Conference called 'Step to building new movement'

By Brian Becker

After a year of street struggles from Seattle to Philadelphia, revolutionary activists against capitalist globalization and the racist death penalty will gather at a conference in New York on the weekend of Dec. 2-3. There they will assess this new movement and evaluate the world political situation using the tools of Marxism.

"The Workers World Party annual conference comes at an exciting and challenging time for those who are trying to organize against capitalism," states Larry Holmes, a WWP leader.

"Thousands of young people have heroically battled against the International Monetary Fund, the World Trade Organization and the conventions of the Republican and Democratic parties," he says. "They have filled Madison Square Garden for Mumia Abu-Jamal and raised his case at Antioch College and campuses and high schools around the country.

"Our conference will be a step in building this movement. It will be a unique educational weekend. The movement must connect revolutionary activism with the-

ory, history and analysis," Holmes concludes.

Many conference participants will have just returned from Havana, where they attended a world conference in solidarity with socialist Cuba. More than 4,000 people from 116 countries participated.

"The revolution in Cuba took place in an underdeveloped country ravaged by colonialism," explains Sarah Sloan, a 20-year-old leader of the International Action Center and a first-time visitor to Cuba. "Yet the lessons learned from that revolution are of great significance for activists fighting for change inside the United States."

Assessing the elections

Monica Moorehead and Gloria La Riva—WWP's presidential and vice presidential candidates—will also be featured speakers at the conference.

"The political significance of the deadlocked presidential election will be assessed at the conference from the point of view of the working class and all oppressed people," Moorehead told Workers World.

"The leaders of both the Democratic and Republican parties represent the tiny U.S. capitalist class. This ruling class owns the country's vast wealth and dominates the biggest banks and corporations," she explains. "They are fighting among themselves to see who will gather the spoils of this corporate-controlled system.

"Most of the media coverage over the deadlock conceals that essential point," Moorehead asserts.

"But what is also coming out is that the electoral system is overtly racist. Florida police and other authorities systematically harassed African American voters. Thousands of Haitian Americans were essentially disenfranchised. And a huge number of potential African American and Latino voters were deprived of their rights through arrests and convictions.

"Our conference will help chart an independent path away from both parties of big business," Moorehead adds.

'Special opportunity,' says trans activist

"The party conference will be a special opportunity for lesbian, gay, bi and trans

activists to review our struggle and to connect it with others who are fighting racism, sexism and war," says trans author and activist Leslie Feinberg. Feinberg, who is well known for her books and appearances on college campuses, is also scheduled to speak.

A key part of WWP's work is the fight to save death-row political activist Mumia Abu-Jamal. There will be workshops and strategy sessions to help activists and organizers build for the Jan. 20 counter-inaugural protest in Washington. The demonstration is expected to draw people from all over the country to demand "Stop the death machine" and "A new trial for Mumia."

The conference will also feature eyewitness reports from the rebellious streets of the West Bank and Gaza and the liberated zones of Colombia.

There will be panel discussions, workshops and video displays. A wide array of Marxist literature will be available.

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

Army detains 1,700 at School of Americas

Thousands defy rain, chill to resist murder academy

By Dianne Mathiowetz
Columbus, Ga.

Thousands of opponents of the School of the Americas at Ft. Benning in Columbus, Ga., defied a steady downpour and frigid temperatures to carry out a massive act of political resistance on Nov. 19.

From El Salvador to Argentina to Colombia, graduates of this U.S. Army training school have been involved in numerous military coups, massacres, political murders, rape and torture of prisoners, "disappearances" of civilians as well as drug-running and other crimes. Washington has supported all the governments and agents carrying out these crimes.

Dressed in black shrouds, carrying coffins and crosses inscribed with the names of those killed by SOA-trained troops throughout Latin America, over 3,500 people entered Ft. Benning in a solemn procession.

After marching nearly a half-mile onto the military camp, protesters lowered the coffins to the ground and poured red paint on the shrouded and masked lead contingent, who then fell to the wet ground, refusing to get up.

Military police picked them up and placed them on canvas litters in order to take them to be processed. The hundreds of crosses put into the ground created a symbolic cemetery of the School of the Americas' victims. "No mas, no more," chanted the demonstrators.

A second wave of protesters, carrying giant paper mache puppets, crossed onto Ft. Benning. These anti-globalization activists and puppeteers, whose street theater has enlivened protests from Seattle to the country's capital, created a colorful display of popular resistance.

Randy Serraglio, who spent six months in a federal prison for trespassing on Ft. Benning in previous years, explained that they would plant corn seeds on the military property. "Corn is life," Serraglio said of that powerful Latin American cultural symbol. "We are talking about hope for the future."

Link U.S. military to globalization

The addition of anti-globalization forces underscored the expanding awareness of the link between U.S. military policy and corporate domination in the world.

Katherine Cristiani, a senior at Oberlin College in Ohio, explained why she was participating in the action. She said, "I think the School of the Americas is a symbol of the role of violence and exploitation that the U.S. has played in South America."

More than 1,700 people were held by military authorities, who established their identities and handed them letters banning them from the base for five years.

The U.S. attorney's office will determine if any of the protesters will be prosecuted on charges of trespassing, resisting arrest or assaulting law-enforcement officers. In 1999, 65 people were cited out of the over 6,000 who crossed onto the base. Post Commander Major General John LeMoyne said he decided to cite more demonstrators this year to "give us an opportunity to engage in dialogue about the school."

Starting in 1946, with the school located in Panama, the U.S. began training the militaries of Latin America as part of its Cold War strategy of containing popular movements. The 1977 Panama Canal Treaty that turned the waterway over to the Panamanian government also forced the School of the Americas to relocate to

Ft. Benning. This took place in 1984.

Close to 60,000 members of the militaries of 22 Latin American countries have received advanced training at the SOA in its more than 50 years of existence.

For Father Roy Bourgeois, founder of SOAWatch, which initiated the campaign to close the School of the Americas, it was events in El Salvador that revealed the deadly impact of this "advanced training."

SOA-trained soldiers massacred over 900 men, women and children in the village of El Mozote. They carried out the assassination of Archbishop Oscar Romero as he celebrated mass. The school's graduates also murdered six Jesuit priests, their housekeeper and her 15-year-old daughter on the grounds of the University of Central America in San Salvador.

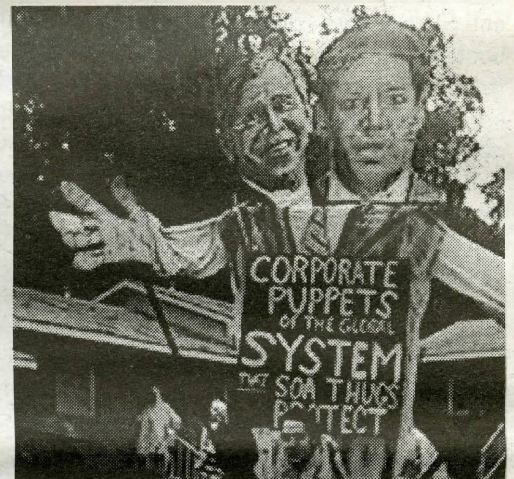
Torture and murder 'optional'

Ten years of protest have put a spotlight on the SOA's role in the repression exercised by military and police throughout Latin America.

An SOA training manual openly suggested the establishment of bounties and the summary execution of suspected "guerillas." When this manual was discovered, U.S. military officials at the School dismissed this instruction as "optional."

While the Pentagon claims that the school offers "human rights" training and strengthens "democracy," the record shows that under the rule of SOA graduate Rios Montt of Guatemala, hundreds of thousands of Indigenous people were murdered, tortured, disappeared and forced into exile.

Likewise, in Argentina, when SOA graduate Leopoldo Galtieri led the military,



more than 30,000 civilians were killed or disappeared in what is known as the "dirty war." In Colombia, where the U.S. has just authorized an additional \$1.3 billion in aid, mostly for high-tech weaponry, half of those cited for human-rights violations were trained at the SOA.

These and many other examples are fueling the movement to end Congressional funding to the school.

'New name, same shame'

The U.S. military has attempted to defuse and confuse the movement by officially closing the SOA on Dec. 15 and reopening it on Jan 17, 2001, with a new name, the Western Hemisphere Institute for Security Cooperation.

The "new" school will have an oversight board of civilians and require mandatory human-rights courses. Signs at the protest saying "New name, same shame" indicate that no one was taken in by this public-relations ploy.

The next national action of SOAWatch will take place in Washington from March 29-April 3 to demand that the new Congress and president close the School of the Americas for good. For more information, call (202) 234-3440 or visit the Web site www.soaw.org.

ON THE PICKET LINE

Seattle newspaper strike imminent

Over 900 Pacific Northwest Newspaper Guild members, along with 180 Teamsters Local 763 members, voted Nov. 15 to strike against the Seattle Times and the Seattle Post-Intelligencer. The Guild represents reporters, photographers, sales and customer service representatives, composing room workers and others. The Teamsters represent the mailers—the workers who assemble the newspaper sections.

Delivery drivers represented by Teamsters Local 174 and press operators represented by Graphic Communications International Union Local 767-M have pledged to honor the picket lines.

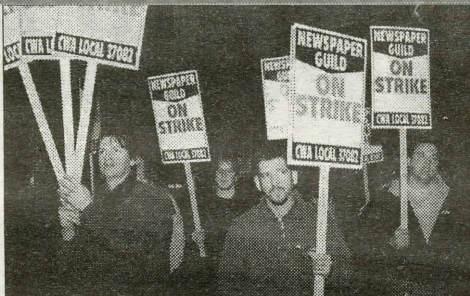
The Post-Intelligencer is a Hearst Corporation paper. Knight-Ridder owns 49.5 percent of the Seattle Times and the Blethen family owns 50.5 percent. Both papers are produced by the Seattle Times under a joint operation agreement.

The Guild has set a strike deadline for 12:01 a.m. on Nov. 21. The date was chosen to disrupt production of the Thanksgiving Day paper, the largest and most profitable edition of the year. The deadline was announced Nov. 15 at a rally of hundreds of Guild members, Teamsters and supporters. It was held across the street from the Seattle Times' downtown headquarters.

The Times responded by erecting a chain-link fence around that facility and the suburban printing plant. Jack-booted security goons were brought in from Detroit to guard the hallways and offices. Threatening letters have gone out to all the workers.

Rather than intimidating anyone, these measures are strengthening the workers' resolve.

A strike headquarters has been set up in the Bricklayers Hall and pledges of support and material aid are flow-



ing in. A strike paper—to be called The Union Record—is in the works. The original Union Record was a radical labor paper published during the 1919 Seattle General Strike.

On Nov. 18 the unions held picket-captain training conducted by Boeing engineers and technical workers. Over 400 workers attended. The Boeing workers' union is donating its phone bank and expertise. Boeing workers won a strike last spring against the giant airplane and weapons builder.

The newspaper workers have been without a contract since July 22. Workers at both papers are demanding an end to the erosion of their wages and the two-tier pay scale. Consumer prices have gone up 43.9 percent in the Seattle area over the last 10 years. But the Guild contract minimum wage has gone up only 21 percent.

It's not like the bosses are broke. The Blethen family recently bought a string of newspapers in Maine for \$212 million. They're paying off that investment in five years rather than the 10 originally projected. A suburban printing plant was also paid off ahead of schedule. The downtown Seattle Times facility is currently being remodeled into a Blethen showcase. Hearst, meanwhile, is involved in a \$700-million-plus takeover of the San Francisco Chronicle.

Both papers are flush with cash. Their average annual take is 21 percent profits. Newspaper workers are demanding to share in the wealth they create.

— Charles (Kaz) Suzat
Asst. Chapel Chair
GCIU 767-M
Seattle Times Chapel

Amazon.union?

Customer-service workers at Amazon.com's Seattle headquarters have started a union drive with the Communications Workers. They call themselves Day2@Amazon.com. The group is working to gather support from a majority of the 400 customer-service representatives with the goal of winning union recognition and a collective-bargaining agreement. The union drive comes at the start of the holiday shopping season—the on-line book-seller's most profitable time of year.

In other local labor news, Seattle-based United Airlines machinists are slowing down holiday travel to demand justice from management. Graduate students and teaching assistants at the University of Washington recently joined the Auto Workers and passed a strike authorization vote. The university refuses to recognize the union.

All of this is taking place as the anniversary of last year's historic demonstrations against the World Trade Organization approaches. Protesters plan commemorative events on Nov. 30.

—Workers World Seattle bureau

New York teachers rally

Raucous and resolute, 20,000 New York teachers rallied outside City Hall Nov. 16 to demand a new contract. The United Federation of Teachers, which represents 78,000 employees of the Board of Education, called the rally.

The Teachers' contract expired Nov. 15, but the city has refused to bargain



with them since early September. Two days before the rally, Mayor Rudolph Giuliani threatened UFT President Randi Weingarten with jail if she called a strike. Public-employee strikes are illegal in New York state under the Taylor Law, which mandates that every employee pay a fine of two days pay for every day on strike.

Weingarten said that while she has not ruled out any options, a strike is not under consideration right now.

The union is demanding a 20-percent pay hike over two years. This would bring city teachers, paraprofessionals and clerical staff up to the level of their suburban counterparts. Teachers are also calling for reductions in class size that would benefit both teachers and students. Class sizes in the city are about 20 percent higher than in the suburbs.

The city will make its formal contract proposal at the end of November. Officials claim they will offer a "generous" pay hike in return for the teachers working an extra one-and-a-half hours per day, giving up tenure protection and agreeing to a "merit pay" scheme.

The union responded that the city's definition of "generous" was probably different from the members'.

Paddy Colligan, a high-school librarian, asked, "How can the city and state pretend they want to educate students when they keep on cutting our budget and driving good teachers to the suburbs?"

A number of labor leaders and elected officials took the stage to support the teachers. A speaker from the New York State United Teachers—a joint body of the American Federation of Teachers and the National Education Association—said the group would support the Teachers' efforts to modify the Taylor Law. Weingarten has called for the Taylor Law's penalties to be reduced in cases where employers refuse to bargain.

Barbara Bowen is president of the Professional Staff Congress, which represents the faculty and staff of the City University of New York. She said that education for children of color, children of immigrants and the daughters and sons of the working class is under attack. She pledged that the PSC would support the Teachers in resisting this attack.

—G. Dunkel

Appeal denied in MOVE 9 case

By Greg Butterfield

On Nov. 17, Philadelphia Judge Gary Glazer turned down a post-conviction relief appeal for the eight surviving members of the MOVE 9. MOVE Minister of Communications Ramona Africa said, "Once again this system, through its courts, has demonstrated its contempt for justice and its obvious intent to keep the MOVE 9 in prison despite their innocence."

The eight—Chuck Africa, Debbie Africa, Delbert Africa, Edward Africa, Janet Africa, Janine Africa, Mike Africa and Phil Africa—have spent 22 years behind bars, convicted of killing Police Officer James J. Ramp during a 1978 police assault on a MOVE house. All are serving sentences ranging from 30 to 100 years.

Supporters call the MOVE 9 political prisoners who were targeted for daring to advocate Black armed self-defense during Frank Rizzo's reign as mayor of Philadelphia.

Merle Africa, the ninth member, died

in prison in 1998 under mysterious circumstances.

When the post-conviction appeal was filed in July 1999, MOVE 9 attorney Paul J. Hetznecker said, "The trial was a travesty of justice. The result cannot be just if the process of trial is unjust." He said the original judge, Edwin Malmed, "acted as an advocate for the prosecution."

Hetznecker said the nine defendants, who were representing themselves, were illegally removed from the courtroom. They were saddled with ineffective court-appointed lawyers.

Ramona Africa said prosecutors withheld vital evidence, including a February 1977 secret memo outlining plans for a police attack to "eradicate MOVE."

Police finally did attack and bomb the MOVE house in May 1985. The resulting fire killed 11 MOVE members and burned down 60 homes in the surrounding African American neighborhood.

The MOVE 9 have vowed to continue their struggle for freedom.

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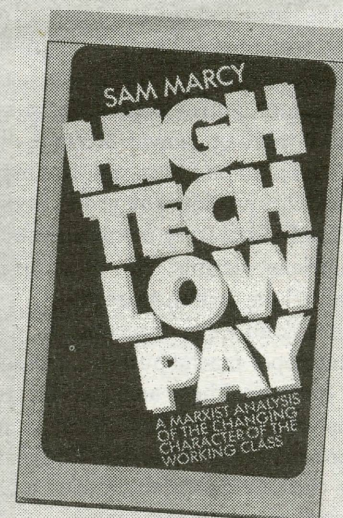
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Election dilemma for capitalists

Look 'fair' or end it quick?

Continued from page 1

"anti-military" because Democratic officials threw out a slew of absentee ballots lacking the proper postmark that came from military bases. The Bush team put forward Gen. Norman Schwarzkopf, that so-called great defender of democracy who waged a genocidal aerial and ground war against the Iraqi people. Schwarzkopf declared the exclusion of soldiers' ballots "a shame."

This was the Democrats' opportunity to raise the exclusion of thousands of African American voters who had been turned away from the polls or whose ballots were thrown out. But instead of addressing this ever-widening scandal, which includes the exclusion of 400,000 Floridians, many of them Black, under the so-called felon laws, the Gore camp responded with the flag of surrender. Joseph Lieberman agreed with the Republicans and came out for special consideration for military absentee voters.

Will capitalist parties share the spoils?

The capitalist class and its advisors are becoming increasingly concerned over how far the warring parties will go in the struggle. They are afraid to cut off the recount because it will look like Bush stole the election. They are afraid to do the recount because if Bush loses he may then escalate the confrontation.

The pundits are all advising caution and moderation, calling for both sides to rein in their attacks. Each side is being told it must contemplate giving in. And each side is being given advice on how to mend the situation once the question of the presidency is resolved.

Business Week in its Nov. 20 on-line edition even went so far as to script reconciliation for whoever wins. "Whatever happens now," they wrote, "nearly half the country will believe this presidential election was stolen."

To overcome the inevitable alienation of the electorate, Bush and Gore were both advised to appoint ranking members of the opposite party to the cabinet. Business Week advised a summit meeting between the rivals and bipartisanship on Capitol Hill.

But moderation is much easier for the pundits and advisors than for the two gangs of pirates at odds over the richest prize in the world—the White House—and a budget close to \$2 trillion.

The Electoral College system, by which the winning party in a given state gets all the state's electors, was designed to keep the masses from gaining any influence in national elections. It is the most restrictive system of elections among the imperialist countries for the working class and progressives.

But it is precisely this winner-take-all Electoral College system of choosing the president that has conditioned each of the parties over the last 200 years to regard it as their sacred right to find a way to win the national election so they can get all the positions of authority and all of the loot. Sharing the spoils has been an alien concept in U.S. capitalist politics and has been practiced only on rare occasions.

Bill Clinton, as part of his strategy of moving the Democrats to the right, ap-

pointed Republican William Cohen as defense secretary. John F. Kennedy, having won by only the slightest margin over Richard Nixon in 1960, appointed Republicans Robert McNamara of Ford Motors and Dean Rusk of the Rockefeller Foundation to his cabinet. But these are exceptions.

Now, with such a close vote, the system has come back to haunt big business. The parties they have created are undermining Washington's image on the world arena and making the masses at home increasingly cynical about bourgeois politics. Furthermore, the struggle is laying the basis for long-term, intensified political warfare between the parties

at a time when industrial production in the U.S. is slowing down and the bosses are fearful of an economic downturn.

So the bosses are looking to the least democratic of all institutions, the courts, to rescue capitalist democracy from itself. The warring parties are being pressured to submit to the Florida Supreme Court. It remains to be seen if they can be constrained by a court decision at the state level. There will be intense pressure from the ruling class for one or the other to submit, depending upon the outcome.

Thus the media campaign to imbue the Florida Supreme Court decision with great importance and treat it with such gravity that the masses feel they have a great democratic stake in the outcome.

Behind capitalist democracy: the club of the state

No one in the major media contrasted the rhetoric on democracy with the fact that on Nov. 19, 1,700 people were detained at Fort Benning in Columbus, Ga. They had been demonstrating against the School of the Americas, which trains death-squad commanders for all of Latin America. These commanders have been responsible for hundreds of thousands of deaths in El Salvador, Guatemala, Argentina, Uruguay and other countries.

On Nov. 16, the Seattle Post-Intelligencer reported that the "Seattle police are prepared to make mass arrests during the upcoming anniversary of the World Trade Organization protests." Seattle Police Chief Gil Kerlikowske has drawn up a plan that includes "demonstration management platoons," "prisoner processing

teams," "chemical agent response teams" and uniformed and plainclothes arrest teams, according to the newspaper.

While the media are trying to convince the masses that the great system of democracy works because the voters will ultimately choose a president, the military in Fort Benning and the police in Seattle are tearing up the democratic right to protest against the global crimes committed by the Pentagon and the transnational corporations.

In fact, this is a textbook example of how capitalist democracy works. The big-business parties fight each other every four years to capture the reins of government, calling it democracy. Behind them are all the financial and corporate capitalists gobbling up contracts, writing the laws and fighting for influence. Meanwhile, the slightest rebellion against the tyranny of capital is met with repression.

In Seattle last year the WTO protesters were met with tear gas, rubber bullets, clubs and arrests. In the April 2000 protests in Washington against the International Monetary Fund and World Bank, police raided the headquarters of the organizers, carried out preventive arrests of 700 demonstrators against the prison-industrial complex, and jailed and beat other demonstrators. All be-

cause the protesters opposed massive economic strangulation of the oppressed countries by the transnational corporations.

The same type of repression was visited on demonstrators at the Republican and Democratic conventions this year. Police beatings, jailings, high bails, rubber bullets, mace and clubs were ordered for demonstrators by the two big-business parties. And now these parties are fighting each other in the name of defending what they call the sacred democratic right to have an accurate vote count.

Two years ago, when African American organizers tried to hold the Million Youth March in Harlem, the New York authorities, under Mayor Rudolph Giuliani, carried out a massive campaign of police intimidation, filling the streets with battalions of cops, flying helicopters menacingly overhead and finally attacking the rally.

In 1992, when the Black community of Los Angeles rebelled against the racist verdict that had freed the cops who were videotaped beating Rodney King for all the world to see, the racist Los Angeles Police Department backed by the National Guard killed close to 40 people and arrested thousands.

Two million people are incarcerated in prison in a permanent campaign of intimidation and punishment against a generation of African American and Latino youths, as well as poor whites.

During the bitter Newspaper Guild strike in Detroit in the mid-1990s, when the Knight-Ridder corporation launched a campaign to break the union, the courts issued injunctions severely limiting picketers and opening up the way for scabs to break the strike. Police used violence to enforce the court ruling against the workers.

Similar tactics were employed against the Caterpillar strike, the Bridgestone/Firestone strike and other strikes during that period.

Break with the capitalist parties

Strikebreaking, racist police brutality, suppression of protest, and endless forms of social, economic and political oppression exist 365 days a year under capitalism. The only way to break with the capitalist parties is to break with the capitalist system.

business is the capitalists' way of seeking from the masses the validation of their rule over the masses.

No matter who wins the presidency, Gore or Bush, the bosses will still control the cops, the courts, the military, the media and the entire economy. No majority vote for a bourgeois candidate is a victory for the workers and the oppressed.

The fact that Bush may win by a minority or Gore by a majority is of little consequence. Many presidents in this century, from Herbert Hoover to Lyndon Johnson to Ronald Reagan, have won the presidency by a majority. But after every election they have committed crimes against the people at home and abroad.

The first step to putting an end to this situation is to break with the two capitalist parties and open up a mass struggle against the reactionary policies of both of them.

**2 million in prison
dozens killed in L.A.,
1,700 detained at
Ft. Benning, demon-
strators threatened
by Seattle cops—
that's the face of
U.S. 'democracy.'**

MARKET ELECTIONS

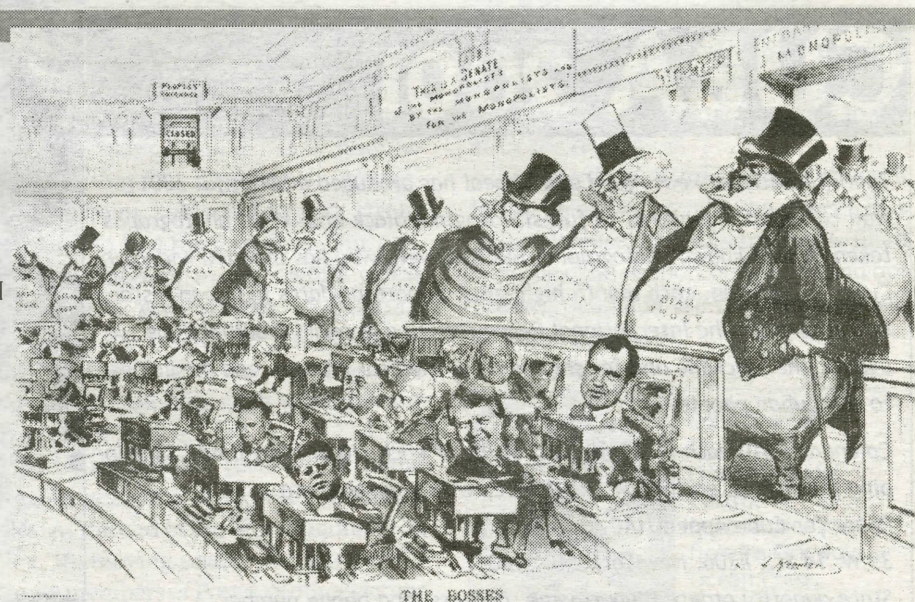
HOW DEMOCRACY SERVES THE RICH

By Vince Copeland

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.'

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



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Solidarity Conference—Cuba stands strong

'Six years have gone by and here we are'

By Teresa Gutierrez
Havana

When 4,000 solidarity activists traveled to Cuba in early November, it was at great sacrifice. Travel costs were very high thanks to the profit-driven airline industry.

Some participants recounted horror stories, such as the Indian delegates who were forced to make long, out-of-the-way stops in Europe before finally reaching Havana.

The delegates were traveling to a blockaded country where fuel and airplane shortages are part of everyday life. In fact, many more people would have attended the Second World Conference of Friendship and Solidarity with Cuba Nov. 10-14 if not for the travel limitations caused by the U.S. blockade.

But the delegates were more than happy to make the sacrifice to travel to socialist Cuba and show their utmost solidarity with the revolution.

The Cuban Institute for Friendship with the Peoples (ICAP) hosted the conference. ICAP President Sergio Corrieri set the tone when he opened the meeting Nov. 10. Corrieri thanked the delegates for their efforts to attend the conference.

When the First World Conference met in 1994, Corrieri recalled, "Our economic free-fall had touched bottom." At the same time, Washington tightened the blockade and the Cuban American right wing in Miami stepped up its hostile acts. These counter-revolutionaries thought the end of the revolution was near.

"For many people everywhere, it was surprising, even inexplicable, that the revolution did not surrender in the face of such very serious difficulties," Corrieri said. "Six years have gone by and here we are, in revolutionary Cuba, in the Cuba of Fidel, of Martí, of Che, in the Cuba of all of us who have not come to terms with an unjust, oppressive and cruel world."

Number of solidarity groups tripled

Since the First World Conference, Cuba solidarity groups and associations have more than tripled, he said. Since 1994, 167 national meetings have been held in solidarity with Cuba in 40 countries. There have been 16 regional meetings attended by 36 countries, plus nine



Teresa Gutierrez.

WW PHOTO: HENRI NEREAUX



Participants at the Second World Conference of Friendship and Solidarity with Cuba. Nov. 10-14, Havana



WW PHOTOS: BILL HACKWELL

continental meetings on five continents in which 81 countries participated.

Solidarity brigades to Cuba have grown too. More specialized groups are coming to see Cuba than ever before. Labor unions and student organizations are increasing their activity around the world.

Corrieri acknowledged the "outstanding role" the solidarity movement played in the recent struggle to free little Elián González and send him home to Cuba.

He recognized that the solidarity movement is not homogenous. But that is its strength, he said, and all are welcome.

Corrieri also acknowledged the complex circumstances in which the battle to defend Cuba is being waged.

That is why "we have never intended that each measure or decision taken in Cuba should be immediately understood and unconditionally accepted by our friends. This world is too complex for that," Corrieri said.

But each measure and decision was explained over and over because "when the truth is multiplied, friends multiply."

In closing, Corrieri quoted Cuban independence hero José Martí: "He who rises up today for Cuba, rises up for all time."

"[This] saying is totally relevant today," Corrieri said. "The servile yoke of which Martí spoke still crushes and degrades some. But his star illuminates and shows us the way to victory."

"No one, no country can achieve peace by itself. The world must have solidarity or there will be no world."

"A beautiful flower has blossomed forth out of the bloody and bitter ground of our common struggle—the flower of friendship and solidarity. Let us take care of it; it

is the daughter of rebelliousness and of the refusal to put up with injustice."

With these words the solidarity conference began.

Commissions offer action proposals

Three commissions were established to discuss the solidarity movement's work: "The fight against the blockade," "Information and misinformation about Cuba in light of the globalization of information" and "Exchange of ideas and experiences for solidarity work with Cuba."

Each commission put forth ideas for solidarity campaigns. These ranged from "A Day of World Solidarity with Cuba" on Oct. 10, 2001, to a "Boycott Bacardi" campaign to support the next U.S./Cuba Friendship Caravan organized by Pastors for Peace.

Ocean Press will publish a book containing the conference resolutions and speeches.

The meeting undoubtedly strengthened the Cuba solidarity movement around the world. Unlike the U.S. government, which is globalizing imperialist exploitation for profit, the Cuban government shows those struggling against the imperialist yoke that there is a way out of the misery. Indeed, it was solidarity that was globalized in Havana on Nov. 10-14.

Assassination attempt on Cuban leader

Is it any wonder, then, that a right-wing lackey of U.S. imperialism was caught trying to kill President Fidel Castro in Panama just days after this historic conference?

Cuba has survived all attempts to sabotage the revolution. It has survived the Spe-

cial Period of dire economic hardship that came after the collapse of the socialist camp.

However, it is still tough going for the Cuban people. Getting to and from work, for example, is still very difficult. But the Cuban people are more united than ever.

'Majority still has faith in the revolution'

Cuban Vice President Carlos Lage pointed out at the world conference: "We cannot say that all Cubans have been prepared to suffer the material limitations of these years, nor that all Cubans have had the strength to trust and believe in the revolution. Not all Cubans have been capable of understanding the material difficulties nor the inequalities which have arisen."

He added that some let themselves be led by a lack of confidence and understanding. He stressed that this is a natural and inevitable consequence of such a difficult situation.

"The most remarkable thing is not that there are people who have lost faith in the revolution," Lage said. "The extraordinary thing is that the vast majority of the population still has faith in the revolution and has been able to face limitations, and that despair has not found sufficient breeding ground to destroy the revolution."

This is one reason why the international delegates left feeling so strong.

There were 4,000 solidarity activists in Havana from Nov. 10-14, including 600 from the United States. But they represented millions around the world.

Together these 4,000 voices told the U.S. government: Lift the blockade of Cuba now!

Cubans demand extradition

U.S.-backed anti-Castro terrorist nabbed in Panama

Continued from page 1

departing from Barbados in 1976. The bomb destroyed the plane in flight, killing 73 people, including the Cuban national fencing team.

Posada has also boasted about his role in the bombings of four Havana hotels in 1997—attacks that were financed by the Cuban American National Foundation and resulted in the death of an Italian tourist, Fabio di Celmo.

Fidel blows lid off assassination plot

Castro, who had just arrived in Panama City's airport for the Tenth Ibero-American Summit on Adolescents and Children, made an immediate declaration to the press announcing Posada's presence in Panama. Castro revealed that Posada sneaked into Panama on Nov. 5 with false papers and an array of weapons and explosives.

"I have the duty of informing you... that terrorist elements, organized, financed and directed from the U.S. by the Cuban American National Foundation, which is an instrument of imperialism and the extreme right wing of that country, have been sent to Panama City for the purpose of physically eliminating me," said President Castro.

He added, "I make this declaration upon arriving here... to make it perfectly clear that no danger or threat can intimidate the presence of Cuba." When a journalist asked him how Cuban security forces found out about Posada's presence, he replied, "We have many friends everywhere."

It is clear that Cuba's state security has not only friends, but a superb intelligence force that keeps a vigilant eye on right-wing terrorists intent on wreaking destruction on the socialist island and its leaders. These terrorists have been thwarted many times in the past.

On Nov. 21, in the third roundtable de-

voted to the case on Cuban television, Foreign Minister Felipe Pérez Roque revealed the identities, addresses, occupations and other vital data on each of Posada's accomplices, including several who have so far eluded capture. He listed the cars they were driving in Panama, the routes they took and the weapons they possessed.

Six of the eight are Cuban-born, he said. Four are now U.S. citizens living in the Miami area.

About 20 pounds of C-4 explosives belonging to the terrorist gang were found in the house of Jose Hurtado, Posada's driver. Unofficial sources said they were supposed to be used at the University of Panama, where Castro spoke to thousands of students on the last night of his visit.

Posada was taken into custody by Panamanian police within hours of President Castro's announcement. He was using a Salvadoran passport under the alias of Franco Rodriguez Mena. Cuba officially requested his extradition Nov. 21 to face trial for numerous crimes, including the 1976 Cubana airlines bombing.

Posada was convicted in Venezuela for his role in the bombing. But he managed to "escape" from a prison there in 1985.

Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez may also request Posada's extradition to face outstanding charges for that crime.

CIA sheltered Posada

Until his arrest, Posada traveled throughout Central America almost at will, sowing terror. For example, he supplied arms to the Nicaraguan contras in their war against the Sandinista revolution. Posada was sheltered by the CIA as he did its dirty work.

In 1997 Posada paid a young Salvadoran, Rene Cruz Leon, to plant bombs in Cuban hotels to intimidate foreigners from traveling to Cuba. Fabio di Celmo, the Italian tourist, was killed in a bomb blast in the lobby of the Copacabana Hotel.

In Cuba, news of Posada's arrest was



Participants fly flags of Palestine and the African National Congress.

WW PHOTO: BILL HACKWELL



Fidel Castro at center of crowd at Solidarity Conference, Havana.

WW PHOTO: BILL HACKWELL

met with great enthusiasm, but also mistrust about what the U.S. government might do to free him. There is a deep sense of anger that the U.S. government has not only harbored this terrorist but financed and supported him in its campaign of sabotage against Cuba.

On the Cuban TV roundtable, host Rogelio Polanco noted: "It is unquestionable that the Panamanian government is being subjected to very strong pressure to free the terrorists. Our people are confident in the dignity of the people and government of Panama, who with the support of the peoples of Latin America and the world will be capable of resisting such pressure and to act with justice."

Di Celmo's father pleaded for Panamanian authorities not to free Posada Carriles. At the end of the first roundtable on Nov. 18, moving scenes of testimony by family members of Posada's other victims were shown. One young man, whose father piloted the Cubana airplane in 1976, said: "I will never forget my father's last

words. The horror will live with me the rest of my life."

This latest assassination attempt on Fidel Castro is part of U.S. imperialism's constant war of aggression against Cuba. Because support for Cuba is growing around the world, U.S. imperialism may resort to more covert tactics to try to destroy the revolution.

Against these attacks, Cuba's strength lies in its ability to rally the masses in a united defense. As in the struggle for Elián González, the support of workers and oppressed people in the United States will be key in this battle.

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/IIAC, 39 W. 14 St., #206, New York, N.Y. 10011.

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'Shut down the globalization death machine'

Mass march to greet new U.S. prez

By Greg Butterfield

Whoever the next president is—Gov. George W. Bush or Vice President Al Gore—state-sponsored executions will continue.

But the next president will also have to confront a growing, youthful and militant new movement dedicated to ending the racist death penalty.

That's the message death-penalty foes, community activists, union members, students and anti-war forces around the United States plan to send with a mass march in Washington on Inauguration Day, Jan. 20.

The march, entitled "Shut Down the Globalization Death Machine," also targets what sponsors call the extension of racist, anti-worker U.S. policies through the World Trade Organization, Pentagon intervention in Colombia and Iraq, and U.S. support for Israeli repression against the Palestinians, among other issues.

During the election campaign, Gore said, "I support the death penalty." Later he said he would not enact a national moratorium on executions despite mounting evidence that the death penalty is applied in a racist way.

Among Democrats Gore is considered even more devoted to the death penalty than President Bill Clinton—who left the campaign trail in 1992 to personally officiate over the execution of a mentally disabled man in Arkansas.

Bush, who has presided over 147 Texas executions, said, "No innocent

person has been executed in Texas." Yet Shaka Sankofa/Gary Graham, who had powerful evidence to clear his name, never got a hearing in a court of law. He was lynched by the state of Texas last June 22. And Sankofa/Graham is far from being the only example.

Bush would have killed John Paul Penry on Nov. 17 if the U.S. Supreme Court hadn't stepped in to grant the prisoner a 60-day stay after an international outcry. Penry, a mentally disabled man, has the comprehension of a 6-year-old child.

On Nov. 15, James Thessin, acting legal adviser for the Clinton State Department, admitted that the U.S. violated international law when Arizona executed two German brothers, Karl and Walter Legrand, without granting them access to the German Consulate.

Germany, like most of Washington's European capitalist rivals, has abolished the death penalty.

Thessin, at a hearing at the World Court in The Hague, apologized to Germany for what he called "a breach" in U.S. obligations under Article 36 of the Vienna Convention. But Thessin rejected German calls for reparations.

Why? Because denying foreign citizens their consular rights is common in U.S. death-penalty cases. Bush, for example, has claimed that since Texas "never signed" the Vienna Convention, his state is under no obligation to grant foreign citizens their rights.

This was one of the issues in the case of Mexican national Miguel Angel Flores,

who was executed in Texas Nov. 9 despite numerous appeals from the Mexican government and the immigrant community.

Growing movement to stop legal lynchings

The movement to stop racist legal lynchings has grown rapidly in the past year. Already it has won a moratorium on executions in Illinois and passed resolutions in dozens of U.S. city councils demanding a national moratorium.

The movement has brought the racist, anti-poor character of U.S. executions into the media spotlight, especially highlighting the case of political prisoner Mumia Abu-Jamal in Pennsylvania.

Throughout the campaign Gore and Bush did their best to ignore this sea change. But both faced anti-death-penalty protests all over the country, especially after the execution of Sankofa/Graham. Ending legal lynchings was a major demand of mass protests at both the Republican and Democratic conventions last summer.

"More than 2 million people will observe Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s birthday in U.S. prisons," noted march organizer Johnnie Stevens of the International Action Center and Millions for Mumia. "Mumia and nearly 4,000 others wait on death row. U.S. big business makes big profits from prison construction and prison labor.

"We must stop capitalist deathonomics at home and abroad," Stevens asserted. "U.S. transnational corporations and

banks, along with their puppet institutions like the WTO, the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank, continue to impose globalization on the world. They reap super-profits while more than a billion people go hungry and at least 2 billion live in abject poverty."

Growing list of endorsers

Stevens told WW that the list of endorsers is growing daily. It includes the International Action Center; International Concerned Family & Friends of Mumia Abu-Jamal; Al-Awda, the Palestinian Right of Return Coalition; Refuse & Resist; Rainbow Flags for Mumia; the Canadian Coalition Against the Death Penalty; Jahahara Alkebulan-Ma'at, the National Coalition of Blacks for Reparations in America; Hunter College Student Liberation Action Movement; the League of Indigenous Sovereign Nations; Queers for Racial and Economic Justice; and many more.

Interested readers are urged to buy bus tickets and to organize others—including co-workers, classmates, union members, etc.—to come to Washington Jan. 20. A list of organizing centers and bus information will be available soon on the Web site www.mumia2000.org.

Posters, flyers and fact sheets for Jan. 20 can also be downloaded from the Web site. Financial contributions are urgently needed. Volunteers are needed at many mobilization offices.

To have your group listed as an endorser or mobilizing center, send an e-mail to iacenter@iacenter.org.

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VIETNAM AND COLOMBIA

Clinton talks trade, U.S. prepares new war

By Deirdre Griswold

Even as President Bill Clinton was in Vietnam on Nov. 17-19 declaring that this much-abused country was no longer "the enemy," Pentagon advisors were on the other side of the world doing the same kinds of things that led to the disastrous war in southeast Asia almost 40 years ago.

Clinton's visit was welcomed by the Vietnamese as a formal recognition by the U.S. government that the war is indeed over and that relations between the two countries should be normalized. It is characteristic of the right-wing nature of U.S. politics, however, that such a trip had to be made by a lame-duck president who brought few guarantees with him.

The militarists and patriotic breast-beaters will probably never get over the photos of Clinton standing below a giant frieze of Ho Chi Minh, leader of Vietnam's liberation struggle against French, Japanese and U.S. imperialism. It was a satisfying sight, however, for all those around the world who had struggled to end imperialist intervention in Vietnam.

This is not to say that the U.S. president's agenda was all peace and good intentions. He was there as a salesperson for U.S. corporations that want to increase business with Vietnam, both for the immediate profits to be gained and because they hope to influence its social development in a capitalist direction.

Clinton had to admit, however, that 3 million Vietnamese people died in the war. After having paid such a price for their independence—which to the Vietnamese means having the right to build a socialist society—they are not going to let it slip away just because Coca-Cola and Nike are investing there.

Does Clinton's visit mean that U.S. imperialism has learned the lessons of the Vietnam War? Not if you look at what is happening today in Colombia.

Vietnam and Colombia

Vietnam and Colombia have very different histories. Nevertheless, U.S. intervention in Colombia is unfolding in a way that is eerily reminiscent of Vietnam.

The U.S. began pouring money into the French colonial war in Vietnam in the 1950s. By 1960, the French were out and the Pentagon was sending military "advisors" to prop up the hated dictatorship of Washington puppet Ngo Dinh Diem. Before the public in the U.S. was even aware of what was going on, U.S. soldiers had begun to die in Vietnam.

Who were the "enemy"? For the most part, ordinary Vietnamese peasants who had been resisting foreign domination for generations. During the colonial period, they organized self-defense units under the leadership of the Vietminh, the Vietnamese communist movement. It was to break their will that Diem's troops, backed by U.S. arms and money and trained by U.S. advisors, forced whole villages into "strategic hamlets," beating, torturing and murdering those who refused to live in these concentration camps.

It was all part of the war on communism and the "domino theory." All of

Asia was so ripe for revolution that if the communists won in Vietnam, said U.S. strategists, all the other countries would "fall" like dominoes.

While the U.S. today seems on top of the world since the breakup of the Soviet Union, in fact the strategists for imperialism are deeply worried. Their system, which sucks the wealth out of the Third World through direct investment and through the mechanism of financial control via the International Monetary Fund and World Bank, has created an increasingly intolerable situation in scores of countries in Africa, Latin America and Asia.

The area of Ecuador, Colombia, Peru and Venezuela is undoubtedly red-flagged in the situation rooms of the CIA and Pentagon. Poverty, unemployment, and stifling debts to the imperialist banks have brought the masses of people into militant struggle for social change.

In Colombia, the government is weak and allied with right-wing death squads. Two guerrilla movements have liberated large areas of the country. The main one, the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia-People's Army, known as the FARC-EP, controls an area in the south as large as Switzerland.

The FARC is led by Marxists and has been struggling for revolutionary change for 40 years. It has broad sup-

port among the oppressed workers and peasants of Colombia. The National Liberation Army—ELN—also has a base of support in the population and has liberated territory.

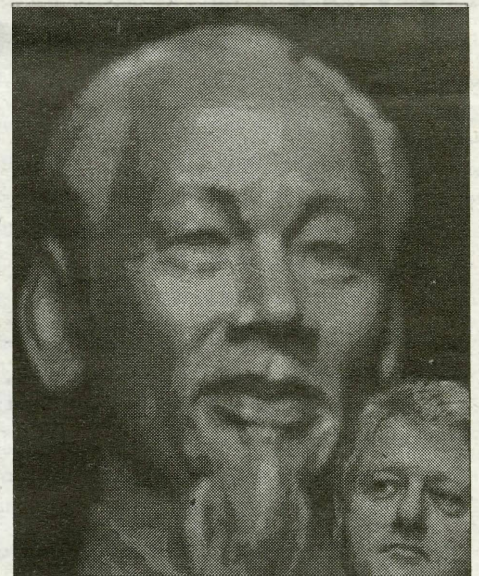
On the right are death squads that are in fact clandestine arms of the government and the military. They have carried out horrible massacres in many villages in an effort to keep the peasants from having any contact with the guerrillas.

Nevertheless, the guerrilla armies continue to grow and to show their strength. Recently, the FARC shot down a Black Hawk helicopter supplied to the Colombian Army by the U.S.

Agent Orange all over again

As in Vietnam, the U.S. is now spraying large areas of Colombia with herbicides, killing anything green while exposing present and future generations to what is proven to be toxic and genetically damaging substances. The excuse then was that the ground cover had to be destroyed because it sheltered the guerrillas.

Now a new excuse has been found for poisoning the soil and water and depriving the peasants of their crops. It is the "war on drugs." It is not the peasants but their illicit crops that are the target, says the Pentagon.



The liberation fighter towers over the imperialist politician

However, the phony "war on drugs" story is already viewed with great skepticism by people everywhere, including in the U.S.

Especially since the officer in overall charge of the U.S. anti-drug operation, U.S. Army Col. James Hiatt, was convicted of money laundering and his wife jailed for sending nearly a million dollars worth of heroin and cocaine to the U.S. from the U.S. Embassy in Bogota, this flimsy excuse for the chemical assault on Colombian peasants is winning few supporters.

Breaking sanctions

Greek delegation flies to Iraq

By Sue Harris
Baghdad, Iraq

A 100-person delegation flew from Athens, Greece, to Baghdad, Iraq, Nov. 10 to protest the sanctions imposed by the United Nations since August 1990, during the buildup to the 1991 Gulf War. The Olympic Airways flight was the first by a West European national carrier since sanctions were imposed. By defying the ban on civilian flights, it constituted a statement of solidarity with the people of Iraq.

Margarita Papandreou, former first lady of Greece, led the delegation. The Greek contingent included many parliament members, journalists, physicians, artists and activists. There were also contingents from Canada, Britain and the United States. They included a television crew from Canada's Vision TV, WBAI-Pacific Radio journalist Barbara Nimri-Aziz, journalist/activist Michael Parenti and representatives of the International Action Center and Peoples Video Network.

The UN Sanctions Committee's many attempts to prevent this flight were unsuccessful.

When the plane landed at Saddam Hussein Airport in Baghdad, everyone from the greeters carrying juice and yogurt to the customs officers welcomed the delegation with terrific warmth. Felicity Arbuthnot, a long-time British activist against the sanctions, said she couldn't believe she had actually flown

into Baghdad instead of driving for 12 hours from Amman, Jordan.

The airfield was almost completely deserted. Parenti noted that the desolation the delegates saw in this modern airport was an example of how the sanctions have been used to move a modern industrial country back in time.

Tariq Aziz addresses delegation

During their brief stay in Baghdad, the group visited Children's Hospital, the Al Amariya bomb shelter where over a thousand women and children were killed by U.S. missiles, a market place and various local landmarks. They met with an Iraqi women's group and heard an address from Deputy Prime Minister Tariq Aziz.

The Iraqi minister made it clear that he did not expect sanctions to be overturned in the UN Security Council. He was encouraged, however, by the numerous countries that had decided to open trade relations with Iraq and were flying into Baghdad in defiance of U.S. and British imperialism.

Aziz said he was also encouraged by the worldwide protests against the injustices done to the Iraqi people.

Shortly after the Olympic Airways plane landed, a Bulgarian Airlines charter flight arrived with a delegation led by British Labor parliament member George Galloway.

Galloway described how he evaded British restrictions. He chartered a Bulgarian plane to fly to Sofia after checking

to see how they felt about re-routing to Baghdad.

Then, when the plane was flying over Sofia, he radioed in to change the flight destination to Baghdad and was on his way.

Sanctions crumbling

A Washington Post editorial reprinted in the Nov. 14 International Herald Tribune reported, "A trade fair in Baghdad recently drew hundreds of companies from 45 countries, most of them European." The editorial also reported on recent flights by Russian, Jordanian and French parliamentarians, journalists and dignitaries.

The Russian airline Aeroflot has set up regular weekly flights between Moscow and Baghdad. While the Post editorial deplored these breakthroughs and advocated a stiffening of the sanctions, it is clear the sanctions are beginning to crumble.

On Jan. 11, the International Action Center in the United States will launch the next Iraq Sanctions Challenge, adding to the growing tide of people determined to take a stand against genocide. The IAC and its founder, former U.S. Attorney General Ramsey Clark, have been leaders in the international anti-sanctions struggle. For more information on the Iraq Sanctions Challenge, readers can call the IAC at (212) 633-6646 or visit the Web site www.iacenter.org.

editorial

Israeli terror, U.S. hypocrisy

The Israeli apartheid regime raised the level of terror another notch Nov. 20. It dispatched helicopters and ships that fired shells into densely populated areas of Gaza City. Israeli occupation forces shelled Palestinian Authority offices and the headquarters of Yasser Arafat's Fatah party. At least 20 people were wounded.

Tel Aviv used a bomb attack on an armed school bus carrying settlers' children as the excuse to turn Gaza into a free-fire zone as it meted out collective punishment to the Palestinian population. But this Israeli crime really follows directly from the regime's ongoing policy of shooting live ammunition at youthful Palestinian demonstrators. Since Sept. 28 heroic Palestinian youths have resisted Israeli tanks with stones and slingshots.

A letter posted on the Internet by an Israeli described the situation in Gaza well: The author called Israeli settlers "people who live at the expense of the Israeli taxpayer in the most beautiful of houses and gardens in the midst of one of the biggest refugee camps in the world—1,200 settlers surrounded by more than 1 million refugees with nothing to eat."

So blatant was Israel's aggression that even its staunchest backer—U.S. imperialism—had to publicly distance itself from this latest crime. U.S. spokespeople condemned the attack on the bus first, of course, then chided the Israelis for an excessive response.

But these words too are blatant hypocrisy. Even as the Clinton administration scolds Israeli leaders, it has applied to Congress for an additional \$450 million in military aid for the Israeli army. Israel is already the recipient of the largest amount of U.S. aid in the world—almost all of it military aid.

In its attempt to continue posing as an "honest broker," U.S. imperialism is still trying for a public image of even-handedness. But the U.S. ruling class has a special relationship with its clients in Israel. It has been and still is a relationship based not on solidarity with Jewish victims of Nazism, but on protecting and expanding U.S. domination of the oil-rich Middle East.

What better tool for imperialism than a settler state that has seized the land of the original inhabitants and therefore remains in a constant state of aggression against its neighbors? A government that is completely dependent on U.S. military, economic and diplomatic aid?

Behind Israeli aggression, expansion and terror against the Palestinians is the greed of U.S. finance capital and U.S. oil companies.

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WW PHOTO: PAT CHIN

Roundup of protests, meetings about Palestine

Special to Workers World

The new Palestinian uprising or Intifada and the attempt by the Israeli military to repress it with brutal force had its impact within the United States during the third week of November. By Nov. 20, some 243 people had been killed in the West Bank and Gaza, almost all of them Palestinians shot by Israeli troops or settlers, and 8,000 people were wounded.

On one side, to reinforce U.S. control of Middle East oil wealth, the Clinton administration asked Congress Nov. 14 to approve a last-minute, \$750-million Middle East military and economic aid package.

The package includes \$450 million for Israel. For public consumption, these funds are supposed to help support its withdrawal of troops from southern Lebanon. But it comes in the midst of the uprising against Israeli colonial rule on the West Bank and Gaza.

Israel is dependent on U.S. economic, military and diplomatic aid. In return the Israeli state will strike out at any liberation movement that threatens U.S. imperialist interests.

The aid package includes \$225 million in military assistance to Egypt, a less stable U.S. client state, and \$75 million for Jordan.

On Nov. 6, Clinton had already signed a foreign-aid bill that increased the funds sent to Israel.

In addition to this governmental aid, Israeli officials were in the United States trying to raise funds from supporters here. This presented an opportunity for those who wanted to show solidarity with the embattled Palestinians. And they took it.

Chicago

Three thousand protestors turned out on a freezing night Nov. 13 to protest an appearance by Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak in Chicago. Palestinians and other Arabs from Chicago and nearby cities were joined by up to 400 supporters in a spirited and militant demonstration.

Police attempted to confine the demonstration in a parking lot surrounded by an eight-foot iron fence, on the opposite side of Harrison Street from a United Jewish Communities "gala" where Barak was speaking. But hundreds of protestors climbed over the fence and confronted mounted police in a block-long line.

Scores of youths, some waving Palestinian flags, stood on the top rail of the fence, climbed into trees or scaled traffic lights to shout: "Free Palestine! Barak is a murderer! End the occupation now!"

Religious and community organizations in Chicago's Arab community came in over 20 chartered buses. A dozen Jewish protestors with signs like "Indiana Jews say end the occupation now" and "I am Jewish and the Israeli government is not my mouthpiece" took a prominent place at the front of the protest.

Many progressive organizations built for the action, including the Chicago Committee to Free Mumia Abu-Jamal, the Eighth Day Center for Justice and Voices in the Wilderness. One banner read, "Left Queers for a Free Palestine."

As the action progressed, demonstrators pressed through police lines onto Racine Avenue and contested every foot of space. They shoved metal barricades back inch by inch and briefly climbed onto massive dump trucks parked in the intersection of Racine and Harrison as a roadblock. "It's like a checkpoint in Palestine," said Hatem Abudayyeh of the Arab-American Action Network, which initiated the demonstration.

One organizer reported, "A cop asked me, 'Can't you contain these young Palestinians?' I told him, 'It hasn't worked in Nablus and Ramallah.'"

New York University

The following afternoon at New York University in Manhattan, young Palestinians organized by Al-Awda, the Palestinian Right of Return Coalition, and their supporters confronted two Israeli Defense Force soldiers who were speaking at NYU as part of a tour around the U.S. The youths walked into the meeting and, after putting on scarves and clothes that showed what side they were on, began to pose questions that put the Israelis on the defensive.

The two soldiers tried to claim that the Israelis used only rubber bullets, which were "like tennis balls." The Palestinian youths set the record straight before they were forced to leave.

Outside a large group, with voices loud and signs high, demonstrated right in front of the building. They chanted, "IDF, what do you say? How many kids have you killed today?" When the Israeli soldiers tried to leave, two demonstrators managed to confront them, calling them "murderers."

Buffalo, N.Y.

International Action Center Co-director Brian Becker told a multinational audience of 50 people in Buffalo, N.Y., Nov. 14 that progressives everywhere need to support the Palestinian people's right to self-determination.

Becker stated that the Palestinian uprising against Israeli occupation, as well as the struggles of the people of Iraq and Yugoslavia, are part of the movement against U.S. and western imperialism. He also said that the worldwide movement against corporate globalization, the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank must link itself to the international struggle against imperialism.

Workers World Party organizer Ellie Dorritie, Palestinian community activist Taher Abdellatif and Ezo from the Buffalo Activist Network also spoke.

Eyewitness reports coast to coast

IAC organizers who made a fact-finding and solidarity trip to the West Bank and Gaza Oct. 28-Nov. 2 have been speaking at meetings around the country about their experiences. They witnessed the Intifada and Israeli repression.

West Coast IAC Coordinator Richard Becker and Los Angeles Coordinator Preston Wood spoke in Los Angeles Nov. 4. Becker spoke Nov. 5 at the IAC office in San Francisco and Nov. 17 at Sonoma State University in Santa Rosa, Calif. The following evening, he shared the platform in San Diego with local activist Ruba Fakhouri. He was scheduled to speak Nov. 21 at Mission College in San Jose.

On the East Coast, IAC Co-director Sara Flounders and Al-Awda's Randa Jamal have been speaking on campuses and at community meetings. They were in Boston for an IAC meeting on Nov. 5, then spoke at Sarah Lawrence College in the New York suburbs on Nov. 7.

They spoke at the IAC office in New York on Nov. 14. Other meetings were held in Philadelphia on Nov. 15, organized by the IAC, and at nearby Swarthmore College on the same day.

The IAC eyewitnesses were scheduled to speak at a meeting of the American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee on Nov. 25 in Philadelphia, at the University of Maryland on Nov. 28 and at the University of Delaware on Nov. 29.

For information on scheduling an IAC speaker for your school, union or group, call (212) 633-6646 or send e-mail to iacenter@iacenter.org.

Ellie Dorritie in Buffalo and Lou Paulson in Chicago contributed to this article.



WORKERS AROUND THE WORLD

By ANDY MCINERNEY

SOUTH AFRICA

Public sector workers strike

Civil-service workers in Johannesburg, South Africa, took their fight against privatization to the streets on Nov. 15. Thousands of city workers walked off the job for a two-day strike against the iGoli 2002, a government plan to restructure municipal services by privatization and cutbacks.

Bus service in Johannesburg, the country's capital, was at a virtual standstill. Trash stayed on the streets as sanitation workers stayed off the job. Electrical workers also stayed home.

Some 2,000 workers—members of the South African Municipal Workers Union and the Independent Municipal and Allied Trade Union—rallied downtown. Congress of South African Trade Unions General Secretary Zwelinzima Vavi promised that municipal workers would make Johannesburg “ungovernable” if the government proceeded with iGoli 2002.

The government in Johannesburg tried to win a legal injunction to prevent the strike, but failed. But courts did prevent SAMWU members from striking in Cape Town.

Unions have threatened to continue strikes to fight iGoli 2002. A weeklong strike is planned, and could take hold as soon as Nov. 21.

RUSSIA

Bolshevik Revolution Commemorated

People across the former Soviet Union marked the Nov. 7 anniversary of the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution with marches and rallies. The Russian Revolution, led by V.I. Lenin and the Bolshevik Party, was the first time that workers successfully took and held state power and was the beginning of a historical process to build a society without the capitalist class of bosses and bankers.

The biggest commemoration rallies took place in the Russian cities of Leningrad and Tyumen, where all left parties marched together. In Moscow there were two demonstrations—one led by the moderate Communist Party of the Russian Federation (KPRF) and a more militant one that included the Russian Communist Workers Party (RKRK).

A vital question for the communist movement in Russia has been what

attitude to take toward the Russian state, which has been in the hands of capitalist-oriented forces since 1991. This was reflected in the two demonstrations in Moscow.

According to a report by RKRK supporter Viktor Bourenkov sent to Workers World, KPRF leader Gennady Zyuganov “called for reestablishing the superpower and building a strong state instead of overthrowing it, failing to distinguish between Soviet proletarian patriotism and Russian national patriotism.”

The key demand of the parallel demonstration, Bourenkov reported, was that “the existing government should be put on trial.”

“At the rallies organized by the RKRK, the workers were once again reminded of the necessity to politicize their struggle and of the impossibility to achieve their ends by voting in elections, whose results are pre-determined by the wealth of contestants,” he wrote. “For all true communists, the key objective of the workers’ holiday remains the struggle, for there can be no peace or reconciliation between the poor and the rich.”

Communist rallies have been banned from Moscow’s Red Square since 1991. Members of the Communist Youth Vanguard, the youth organization of the Workers Russia movement, broke through police barricades and into Red Square.

ARGENTINA

General strike set vs. austerity

Argentina’s main unions have set Nov. 24 as the date for a massive general strike to paralyze the country. The unions are protesting President Fernando de la Rúa’s pro-International Monetary Fund economic policies, presented in an austerity plan signed on Nov. 16.

They are also protesting police repression against demonstrators. One demonstrating worker was killed in the northern province of Salta the week that the austerity plan was signed.

The Argentine Workers Federation (CTA), one faction of the larger but more moderate General Workers Federation (CGT), and the Combative Class War Movement originally called for a 36-hour strike to protest the killing. That strike is slated for noon on Nov. 23.

But on Nov. 16, with the austerity package approved, the “official” CGT threw its weight behind the protest movement. Its members will join the strike for 24 hours beginning Nov. 24.

“Next Friday we will bring the country to a standstill,” CGT leader Rodolfo Daer told Reuters on Nov. 16.

IMF officials have been in constant contact with the de la Rúa government. The banking group announced that it would expand the credit line to Argentina beyond the current \$7 billion in order to carry out the austerity program.

Argentina has \$20 billion in foreign debt that comes due in 2001, and there

is growing concern on the part of U.S. banks that the Argentine government will come up short. The Nov. 11 Washington Post reported that “a senior IMF official last night acknowledged that the fund had decided to signal its willingness to participate in the financing out of fear that the Argentine crisis would spread to the rest of South America, which is only beginning to recover from a two-year recession.”

SET FOR NOV. 30

U.S. tries to manipulate Haitian election

By G. Dunkel

The strings pulled by the “invisible” government of the CIA and the Pentagon became a little more visible in the violence, chaos and coup attempts before the Haiti’s presidential election scheduled for Nov. 26.

Of course, Washington’s campaign against Jean-Bertrand Aristide, the candidate expected to win the presidency, has many angles. The major big-business press have published a series of articles smearing Aristide. The U.S. State Department is still complaining about the parliamentary elections last May 21. Then the Haitian election board followed its own rules and Haitian law rather than the wishes of the U.S. government.

Until 1990 the Haitian army chose the president. If the people dared to go to the polls—as they did on Nov. 29, 1989—the army drowned the election in blood by machine-gunning those standing in line. The U.S. government, which financed and trained the Haitian army, uttered a few mild reproaches but did nothing to stop it.

The 1990 election marked a turning point. Aristide, a radical priest who made his mark in championing the poor against the Duvalier dictatorship and the Tonton Macoutes death squad, decided to run. The masses stood up and voted him into office, sweeping aside Marc Bazin, the candidate backed by millions of U.S. dollars.

The Haitian army overthrew Aristide less than a year after he became president.

U.S. trains police force

The coup years were murderous. Over 5,000 people resisting the army were killed. Washington allowed Aristide to return only when he promised to step down at the end of what should have been his five-year term. The last thing he did before leaving office was to disband the army.

The FBI and various other big-city U.S. police departments trained the new Haitian police force. Its officers were carefully selected from among former army officers. Having no standing army was more of a bother than a real hindrance to controlling Haiti, at least in the eyes of the people in charge of the police training.

In the 1995 elections René Préal, an

ally of Aristide, was elected president. A reactionary bourgeois grouping controlled parliament. The elections drew little popular interest.

This year, however, when Aristide’s Fanmi Lavalas party contested all the seats in parliament, the masses turned out and gave it a resounding victory. It won 19 of 20 seats in the Haitian Senate and a solid majority in the lower house.

The votes had to be counted by candlelight, without air-conditioning or even fans in most of the country. But the tallies were ready quickly, candidates were notified and most Haitians felt the process was fair.

But not the U.S. government. It criticized the way winners were calculated, the way voters who were illiterate were helped, the way that ballots were stored after they were tallied and so on.

As late as the end of October, Donald Steinberg, the State Department’s special Haiti coordinator, told the New York Times, “It’s essential that we reach a resolution on the May 21 elections and proceed as rapidly as possible to presidential elections so that we can have a smooth transition on inauguration day.”

Coup plot exposed

In early October a different transition was sketched out. Eleven senior police commanders tried to stage a coup. Their plot was uncovered and they fled to Ecuador and the Dominican Republic. A U.S. citizen gave some of them a ride out of the country. That person is now under arrest.

According to a report in the weekly newspaper Haiti Progress, U.S. Special Forces trained these police chiefs. Former Pétionville Police Chief Goodwork Noel was trained with them but decided not to participate in the plot. Noel went to Haiti Progress and told the story instead.

Haitian-born U.S. citizens who met obstacles trying to vote in the recent U.S. presidential election said they were reminded of past elections in Haiti.

Merleine Bastien, president of the group Haitian Women of Miami, told a Newsday reporter: “I think about Haiti and all the people who died with a ballot in their hands, all the people who voted while bullets were raining down on them. Here, on Election Day, intimidation and threats and fear rained down on the people.”

Did the Pentagon poison Iraq’s people and U.S. soldiers with radioactive weapons?

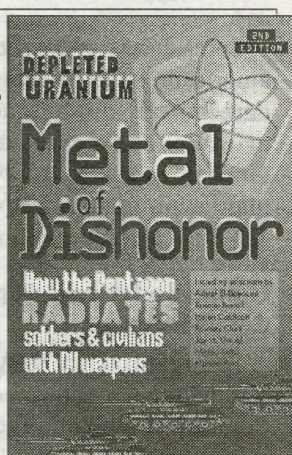
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Aunque Gore no lo diga

Elecciones en E.U. son racistas

Por Monica Moorehead

Los medios masivos de comunicación han hecho un gran esfuerzo para dar una buena interpretación sobre el estancamiento que ya ha durado una semana sobre los resultados de las elecciones presidenciales. Pero estos portavoces de la clase gobernante no han podido disfrazar la naturaleza intrínsecamente anti democrática de las elecciones capitalistas. De hecho, el estancamiento entre Bush y Gore ha contribuido a desenterrar y revelar la discriminación racista institucionalizado de la cual ha sufrido la comunidad negra, entre otras en la Florida. Estas comunidades incluyen a miles de trabajadores indocumentados inmigrantes que intentaron ejercer su derecho democrático de votar.

Reportes de africanos-americanos, haitianos y otros a quienes les fueron negados sus derechos de voto revelan otra forma patente de perfilar racialmente, resultando en un escándalo de proporciones monumentales.

Los medios de comunicación comerciales ni siquiera han comenzado a reportar a niveles necesarios esta injusticia que tendrá un impacto social sin importar cual de los dos políticos capitalistas ganen la presidencia.

El New York Times del 11 de noviembre reportó que líderes africanos-americanos y haitianos están demandando otra votación en la Florida. No es una demanda irrazonable —si por ninguna otra razón que exponer públicamente las prácticas racistas de las juntas electorales locales y del estado de la Florida. Consideremos las razones.

Mucha gente africana-americana dijo que sus nombres no aparecieron en la lista de votantes certificados. Lugares de votar tuvieron un escaso de personal tan grave que no pudieron bregar con todos los problemas y discrepancias.

El Representante Estatal Alcee L. Hastings, un oficial negro, comentó que el número de votantes en varias comunidades africana-americanas alcanzó hasta un 85 por ciento y que la cantidad de oficiales fue completamente inadecuada para la cantidad de votantes que se presentaron.

Según un periódico local, el Palm Beach Post, casi la mitad de los 28.000 votos fueron rechazados en el Condado de Palm

Beach de áreas pobladas principalmente por ancianos y gente negra. Esto representa un rechazo de un 16 por ciento de los votos de gente de color y un 10 por ciento de los votos de precintos donde la mayoría de los votantes tienen más de 65 años de edad.

Retenes fueron erigidos por la policía en los condados de Volusia y Hillsborough para intimidar y hostigar a los votantes negros.

En Miami cuatro urnas llenas de papeletas de votación fueron “encontradas” después de las elecciones. Estos fueron votos de vecindarios con gran concentración de habitantes de gente de color.

Estudiantes negros rehusados el voto, protestan

Bethune-Cookman y Florida A&M son dos universidades en la Florida de gran importancia que históricamente han tenido poblaciones estudiantiles en su mayoría africana-americanas. Las dos llevaron a cabo campañas grandes y exitosas para certificar nuevos votantes. Pero cuando los estudiantes se presentaron a votar, se les dijeron que sus nombres no se encontraban por ningún lado en las listas de los certificados. Los estudiantes más decididos tuvieron que presentar su licencia de manejar, o otra forma de identificación con una foto. Pero otros estudiantes frustrados abandonaron su intento de votar.

La estudiante Ursula Harvey dijo que ella fue rechazada de un lugar de votación donde había votado dos años antes. Le dijeron a Harvey que ella tenía que viajar 120 millas para poder votar en otro centro de votación. Pero ella no pudo.

Mientras Harvey defendía su punto de vista, ella levantaba una fotografía de una demostración por el derecho al voto durante la década de los sesenta. La foto mostraba a los racistas del sur atacando físicamente a los manifestantes negros.

Quinientos estudiantes, predominantemente africanos-americanos de la Universidad Florida A&M, Tallahassee Community College, y de la Universidad Florida State sostuvieron 22 horas de ocupación sentados en el Capitolio del Estado en Tallahassee el 9 de noviembre.



Estudiantes dentro del capitolio de Florida en Tallahassee protestan la exclusión de votantes negros

Su principal demanda era conversar con la Procuradora General Catherine Harris quien no tuvo la decencia de reunirse con los estudiantes para oír sus querellas. Harris hizo campaña activamente pro George W. Bush.

La comunidad haitiana se ha unido al coro de ultrajes sobre como ellos fueron tratados el día de la elecciones. Muchos haitianos dijeron que no hubieron traductores para su idioma, el francés criollo, para asistirles en algunos de los cantones electorales. En otros cantones a los observadores no se les permitía ayudarlos. Un gran número de haitianos recibieron amenazas de deportación cuando buscaban ayuda.

Votantes haitianos como los africanos-americanos fueron informalmente descartados si no tenían sus tarjetas de registro o si sus nombres no aparecían en las listas.

El Acta de los Derechos al Voto de 1965 fue aprobada bajo la presión de las masas populares de la raza negra que pusieron sobre el gobierno federal en la cumbre de la lucha por los derechos civiles. Esta legislación de derechos civiles fue parte de la lucha del pueblo africano-americano para dar fin a la revolución democrática que comenzó después de la Guerra Civil con la Reconstrucción.

Al pasar de los años, el estado y las cortes federales han corroido la efectividad del acta de 1965, especialmente en el área de representación proporcional. Los distritos votantes con una mayoría de gente de color siempre han tenido la más alta probabilidad de votar por representantes nacionalmente oprimidos. Este derecho ha sido severamente restringido por las cortes, las cuales han permitido que los oficiales retracen los distritos para garantizar una mayoría de votantes blancos.

Cerca de uno en tres hombres africano-americano en la Florida han perdido sus derechos al voto porque ellos han sido marcados con el título de “convicto.” De muchas formas la Florida es una plantación moderna con el Gobernador Jeb Bush a la cabeza como amo.

Gobierno federal es parte del problema

La organización NAACP, (Asociación Nacional para el Avance de la Gente de Color), está teniendo audiencias públicas

en Miami para tomar los testimonios de aquellos que les fueron negados el derecho al voto. Hasta ahora cientos han salido a expresarse. La NAACP y otros esperan que el gobierno federal lleve a cabo una investigación de este escándalo. Pero eso es poco probable que pase a menos que se forme una protesta organizada y que se pueda mantener por cierto período de tiempo.

Es muy importante el entender que el gobierno federal es parte del problema y no parte de la solución. El gobierno federal es el gran componente del estado capitalista. Este quiere apaciguar cualquier irregularidad dentro del proceso electoral, especialmente donde el racismo juega el papel principal.

El gobierno federal—como los campos de Al Gore y Bush—quiere ver el problema de las elecciones resuelto lo más pronto posible porque está más preocupado por la estabilidad política y económica del sistema capitalista. Una lucha masiva enfocada contra el racismo, separado de los programas arruinados de los Demócratas y Republicanos, sería una amenaza a su estabilidad.

Gore entiende que la mayoría de africanos-americanos en la Florida le apoyó más que a Bush. El hecho de que él no se ha expresado sobre el intenso nivel de privación de los derechos de ciudadanía indica su gran insensibilidad y dimisión de los derechos de los oprimidos.

La verdad de las cosas es que votar por Gore o Bush no ofrece ninguna solución real a las necesidades de los trabajadores y pobres. Igualmente importante es el deber de todo activista de defender el derecho a la autodeterminación de los más oprimidos—incluyendo el derecho de una persona, un voto. La lucha por este derecho es la clave para construir una solidaridad de clases.

Todavía queda por ver a donde esta lucha por el derecho democrático nos llevará. Cada activista anti racista debe estar atento a cualquier señal que esta lucha por los derechos democrático burgueses nos brinde y nos ayude a encender una lucha revolucionaria e independiente para la clase trabajadora multinacional por un verdadero derecho político y económico.

Moorehead fue candidata presidencial por Workers World Party en el 2000.

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