

Bush to privatize 850,000 jobs

'All-out war on federal workers'

By Milt Neidenberg

The federal workforce is the latest target of the Bush administration's anti-union blitz. In what one union leader has called an "all-out war against federal employees," the Office of Management and Budget has announced it will seek to eliminate 850,000 federal jobs over the next few years, sending a shock wave through the workers and their unions.

This sweeping change would affect workers in virtually all functions of government and in every federal agency—from those monitoring the food we eat and caring for the country's war veterans to those administering Social Security benefits and other vital services.

Top-level bureaucrats in the administration are being ordered to contract out to private companies work now done in-house by government workers. President George W. Bush wants 15 percent of the targeted 850,000 jobs gone by October 2003, growing to 50 percent within two

years. Federal agencies are under strict orders to outsource jobs to the private sector. The plan is to rig the bidding process to make sure this happens.

Was this huge assault on the workers voted on anywhere? No. The administration is doing it through a revision of federal regulations. An inter-agency group unearthed a 1955 regulation known as Circular A-76, which defines the rules governing competition between public and private sector organizations. Basically, the regulation, passed 47 years ago, showed a "preference" for public sector workers to provide governmental services. A 64-page proposal will allow federal agencies to wipe out those preferences, following a 30-day period. And the sweeping changes don't require congressional approval.

The document recommends details (Circular A-97) on how federal agencies can assist state and municipal agencies in privatizing their services, too. At a time when state and local governments have huge budget

deficits, they will be only too glad to work closely with federal agencies in contracting out jobs to non-union, low-wage companies.

The human cost will be enormous as this vengeful privatizing, with its downsizing and layoffs, victimizes millions of workers and their loved ones.

The American Federation of Government Employees (AFGE), the largest federal employee union, representing 700,000 workers nationally and overseas, has correctly described this anti-union, anti-worker ploy as political payback. According to a number of union officials, the administration would have the authority to award contracts to whomever it wants. It would have total political discretion to award friends and contract out government services to its profit-driven clients, which will wind up costing the taxpayers more.

AFGE President Bobby L. Harnage Sr. points out that federal workers have more expertise and experi-

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Anti-war leaders answer red-baiting of ANSWER

Following is a reply signed by a group of progressive leaders in southern California to an article by David Corn that appeared in the newspaper L.A. Weekly. Corn is also Washington editor for the Nation magazine and a paid consultant with the Fox News Channel, an extremely pro-war cable station owned by media billionaire Rupert Murdoch. In his article, Corn attacked the organizers of the Oct. 26 anti-war demonstrations as "commies" or dupes of Workers World Party. He repeated this red-baiting of the anti-war movement on Nov. 18 in an appearance on the Fox program called the "O'Reilly Factor."

To the Editor of the L.A. Weekly:

David Corn's scurrilous piece on the massive demonstrations against a new war with Iraq, held on Oct. 26 in Washington, D.C., and San Francisco ("Behind the Placards: The Odd and Troubling Origins of Today's Anti-War Movement," L.A. Weekly, Nov. 1-7, 2002), is unworthy of any newspaper, let alone one that considers itself "progressive."

Were it not for the sad fact that many thousands of people may read Mr. Corn's diatribe, the article would not be worthy of the time it's taken us to respond to it. After all, those of us who've signed this letter are members of L.A.-based anti-war and social justice groups and, unlike Mr. Corn, we've got a movement to build. Besides, what can one really say in response to an article that resorts to referring to the organizers of the Oct. 26 protests as "commies"! Mr. Corn claims this is "not red-baiting"! Well, if attacking a movement because of the political affiliations of some of its leadership isn't an old fashioned example of Joseph McCarthy style red-baiting at its worst, I'd hate to see what Mr. Corn thinks is red-baiting.

Those of us who have signed this letter greatly admire the work that International ANSWER (Act Now to Stop War and End Racism) did in organizing the Oct. 26 anti-war protests. Its national steering committee is comprised of IFCO/Pastors for Peace; International Action Center; Nicaragua Network; Mexico Solidarity Network; Partnership for Civil Justice; Kensington Welfare Rights Union; Free Palestine Alliance/US; Mideast Children's Alliance; Bayan International/USA; Korea Truth Commission; and the Muslim Student Association. Are there any communists amongst the members of ANSWER, the principal organizer of the Oct. 26 protests?

Specifically, are some of the leaders in ANSWER members of the Workers World Party? Sure. The question is, "So what?" As any student of the powerful—and successful—movement against the U.S. war in Vietnam knows, members of the Socialist Workers Party and the Communist Party, U.S.A., were among the leadership of the two major anti-war coalitions during that war. But the thousands of volunteers and the hundreds of thousands of protesters who showed up at the demonstrations were of every political stripe. The same is true today. The speakers and demonstrators on Oct. 26 came from every segment of the population; from public officials like John Burton, head of the California Senate, to thousands of college and high school students; from actors like Mike Farrell to Vietnam vets like Ron Kovic; from labor leaders like Walter Johnson, head of the San Francisco Joint Labor Council of the AFL-CIO to business executives against the war; from older peace activists like Daniel Ellsberg to younger ones like 12-year-old Sarah Enteen; from hotel workers to Dolores Huerta; from religious leaders like Bishop Gumbleton to socialists like Richard Becker. And the list goes on and on.

Mr. Corn complained that speakers at the rallies talked about political issues not directly related to Iraq, but failed to note that the demonstrations themselves were nevertheless "single-focused." And that single focus was the looming war with Iraq. And the same could be said of the rallies held by the massive movement to end the U.S. war in Vietnam. The largest demonstration against that war took place on April 24, 1971, when nearly one million people gathered in Washington, D.C. and over 300,000 marched and rallied in San Francisco. Among the speakers that day? Democrats and Republicans and ex-military officers and elected officials and labor leaders and Black nationalists and feminists and member of the clergy and gays and students and entertainers, etc., etc., ... and, yes, some communists, too. And, as was the case again on Oct. 26, while all of these speakers were united in their opposition to the war, they also spoke on a wide range of other issues of concern to their constituencies. In doing so, they demonstrated the breadth and power of the anti-Vietnam War movement. They also demonstrated that they understood (as Mr. Corn apparently does not) the connections between the is-

ues they were addressing and the war itself. This approach proved successful during the movement against the war in Vietnam and it can bring us to peace again today. That's why speakers from across the political spectrum were invited to speak on a wide array of war-related social justice issues on Oct. 26.

Lastly, Mr. Corn owes an apology to the quarter of a million people who demonstrated in two cities on Oct. 26. His article clearly suggests that he considers them "dupes" of the "commies" who organized the protests. To suggest that these tens of thousands of protesters, including the many prominent individuals who addressed them at the rallies, were too stupid to make up their own minds about Bush's war on the world and war on civil liberties at home is truly insulting. That's what Congress's old House Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC) used to say about the protesters demonstrating against the Vietnam War. Happily, it didn't frighten people away from the anti-war coalitions then and it won't frighten them away now. People saw through the discredited red-baiting tactics of HUAC, and they will see through the red-baiting tactics of commentators like Mr. Corn.

We who sign this letter invite everyone who reads it to reject Mr. Corn's ugly and divisive message of fear and defeatism, and to join one of the national, or local, anti-war coalitions in their area. Together we can once again build a broad-based, non-partisan, non-witch-hunting anti-war movement that can—and will—win the peace!

Sincerely,
 American Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee, L.A./O.C. Chapter
 Arab American Cultural Center
 Danielle Babineau
 Blase Bonpane,
 Office of the Americas
 Theresa Bonpane,
 Office of the Americas
 James Lafferty,
 National Lawyers Guild
 Rev. James Lawson, Jr.
 Joe Navidad, BAYAN International/USA
 Palestine American Women's Association of Southern California
 Jonathan Parfrey
 Save the Iraqi Children Committee
 Michel Shehadeh
 Carol Sobel,
 National Lawyers Guild
 Don White
 Yong-bin Yuk, Mindallae

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WW CALENDAR

AMHERST, MASS.

Wed., Dec. 4
 "U.S. war on Iraq, repression at home and how the people's movement can stop it." Featured speaker: Larry Holmes, co-director International Action Center. 7 p.m. At University of Massachusetts at Amherst Campus Center, Room 163 CC.

Sat., Dec. 7

Bedford-Stuyvesant War is Not the Answer Walk for Peace. Speakers include Larry Holmes of the ANSWER coalition, and others. Noon to 4 p.m. At Restoration Plaza, Fulton Street (between Brooklyn and New York Aves., Brooklyn. For info (718) 907-0578.

SAN FRANCISCO

Fri. & Sat., Nov. 15-16

National Conference on Civil Liberties, Democratic Rights, and the Case of Mumia Abu-Jamal. Sponsored by the Mobilization to Free Mumia Abu-Jamal. At University of California at Berkeley, Dwinelle Hall. Fri. 6 p.m. registration, 7:30 p.m. opening session. Sat. 9 a.m. registration, plenary, workshops. Mass rally at 7:30 p.m. For info www.freemumia.org.

NEW YORK

Thu., Nov. 21
 Rally: Wage war on poverty & racism, not on Iraq. Program includes: Rev. Herbert Daughtry, Ramsey Clark, Councilmember Charles Barron, Jasmin Cruz, Rev. Paul Mayer, Larry Holmes. Co-sponsored by MLK Jr. Peace Now Committee of the House of the Lord Church and ANSWER. 7 p.m. At House of the Lord Church, 415 Atlantic Ave., Brooklyn. For info (718) 596-1991 or (212) 633-6646.

Workers World

55 West 17 Street
 New York, N.Y. 10011
 Phone: (212) 627-2994 • Fax: (212) 675-7869
 E-mail: editor@workers.org
 Web: http://www.workers.org/
 Vol. 44, No. 47 • Nov. 28, 2002
 Closing date: Nov. 20, 2002

Editor: Deirdre Griswold;
 Technical Editor: Lal Roohk; Managing Editors: Greg Butterfield, John Catalinotto, Leslie Feinberg, Monica Moorehead, Gary Wilson; West Coast Editors: Richard Becker, Gloria La Riva; Contributing Editors: Joyce Chediak, Pat Chin, Naomi Cohen, Shelley Ettinger, Teresa Gutierrez; Technical Staff: Rebecca Finkel, Elena J. Peckham, Hank Sambach; Mundo Obrero: Carl Glenn, Carlos Vargas; Internet: Janet Mayes

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

Selected articles are available via e-mail subscription. Send an e-mail message to info@workers.org for details.

Periodicals postage paid at New York, N.Y. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to Workers World-WW, 55 W. 17 St., 5th Floor, New York, N.Y. 10011.

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

Atlanta P.O. Box 424, Atlanta, Ga. 30301 (404) 235-5704
Baltimore 426 E. 31 St., Baltimore, Md. 21218 (410) 235-7040 baltimore@workers.org
Boston 31 Germania St., Boston, Mass. 02130 (Enter at 284 Amory St.) (617) 983-3835; Fax (617) 983-3836 boston@workers.org
Buffalo, N.Y. P.O. Box 1204 Buffalo NY 14213 (716) 857-2112 buffalo@workers.org

Chicago P.O. Box 06178, Wacker Drive Station, Chicago, Ill. 60606 (773) 381-5839; Fax (773) 761-9330; chicago@workers.org
Cleveland P.O. Box 5963 Cleveland, OH 44101 phone (216) 531-4004 cleveland@workers.org
Detroit 5920 Second Ave., Detroit, Mich. 48202 (313) 831-0750; detroit@workers.org
Houston P.O. Box 130322, Houston, Texas 77219 (713) 861-5965 houston@workers.org

Los Angeles 422 S. Western Ave., Room 114, Los Angeles, Calif. 90020 (213) 487-2368 fax (213) 387-9355 la@workers.org
Philadelphia P.O. Box 9202, Philadelphia, Pa. 19139 (610) 352-3625; phila@workers.org
Richmond, Va. P.O. Box 14602, Richmond, Va. 23221 richmond@workers.org
Rochester, N.Y. 2117 Buffalo Rd., PMB. 303, Rochester, N.Y. 14624 (716) 436-6458;
San Diego, Calif. 3930 Oregon St., Suite 230 San Diego, Calif. 92104 (619) 692-4496

San Francisco 2489 Mission St. Rm. 28, San Francisco, Calif. 94110 (415) 826-4828; fax (415) 821-5782; sf@workers.org
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State College, Pa. 100 Grandview Rd., State College, Pa. 16801 (814) 237-8695
Washington, D.C. P.O. Box 57300, Washington, DC 20037, (202) 347-9300 dc@workers.org

Citing bias in Miami area

New trial sought for imprisoned Cubans

By Gloria La Riva

In a major development for all five Cuban political prisoners held in the U.S., attorney Leonard Weinglass filed a motion on Nov. 12 in a Miami federal district court seeking a new trial for his client, Antonio Guerrero. The other four prisoners will soon join the legal action.

Weinglass's motion cites newly discovered evidence of deliberate misrepresentation in the trial of the five Cubans by the U.S. Attorney, whose office fought to keep the trial in Miami. Although the defense attorneys had argued strongly to the court that widespread prejudice in Miami precluded a fair trial in that city, Federal Judge Joan Lenard denied a venue change.

The Miami trial ended in June 2001 with convictions on all 26 federal charges.

In a Nov. 12 press conference to announce the motion, Weinglass showed that the same U.S. Attorney's office which had claimed that a fair, unbiased trial in Miami was possible for the five then argued the opposite position one year later, when U.S. Attorney General John Ashcroft was the defendant in a June 2002 civil suit—Ramírez v. Ashcroft.

Weinglass said: "The government took the position that when the defendants were agents of the Cuban government charged with murder and espionage, they could receive a fair trial in Miami. But when the defendant in a civil case is the Attorney General of the United States, he could not receive a fair trial in the Miami district because of the very same prejudice and bias coming out of the Cuban American community. These contradictory positions make a mockery of justice."

"Mr. Weinglass's motion is extremely well thought out and compelling," said

Richard Klugh of the federal public defender's office in Miami, who also participated in the press conference and whose office defended Fernando González, now in a federal prison in Oxford, Wisc.

Paul McKenna, trial and appeals lawyer for Gerardo Hernández, who is in Lompoc prison in California serving two life sentences on false charges of conspiracy to commit murder and espionage, says, "Remember that now we depend on Judge Lenard, who's being asked to undo four years of work. That's a tremendous request. I don't know if she will have the courage to do it, but I know it would be the correct thing to do."

Lenard's conduct during the seven-month trial may be a gauge of how she could rule on the new-trial motion.

During the trial, Lenard dismissed the significant findings of a survey prepared for the defense by a Florida professor, Gary Moran, in the struggle for venue change. The poll showed strong anti-Cuba prejudice in the Miami/Dade County area, and considerably less hostility in nearby Broward County, 25 miles away.

The survey showed that 74.5 percent of Miami-area respondents called for U.S. policy to "intensify U.S. opposition to Cuba." In Broward County, only 26.5 percent of respondents supported that position. The defense was willing to have the trial moved to Broward.

Judge Lenard rejected Moran's survey findings, claiming, among other things, that a 300-person survey was too small, although she had earlier approved the defense's plan for a 300-person survey. A supporting affidavit to the Weinglass motion, by Dr. Kendra Brennan, a legal psychologist and survey expert, supports the validity of the Moran survey.

The five men—Gerardo Hernández, Antonio Guerrero, Fernando González, Rene González and Ramón Labañino—are serving from 15 years to two life terms in federal prison. They were railroaded by the U.S. government on false charges of espionage against the U.S. and other related crimes. In actuality their sole mission was to monitor and report on the activities of anti-Cuba, right-wing organizations in Miami, in order to prevent terrorist attacks on Cuba.

Instead of prosecuting the terrorists, the FBI arrested the anti-terrorists in pre-dawn raids on Sept. 12, 1998. The five Cubans were portrayed by the government and right-wing Miami media as agents threatening the "national security" of the United States. They spent 17 months in solitary confinement in a Miami prison.

Denied their fundamental rights

In Miami every legal, political and social issue is influenced by the strong counter-revolutionary atmosphere. The courts, police, city and county governments, media, educational systems, and other institutions zealously promote hostility toward Cuba. For the counter-revolutionary, terrorist groups and their supporters, it is a billion-dollar industry.

While racism abounds against the African-American, Haitian and other communities, the Cuban community has been afforded privileges by the U.S. ruling class for providing shock troops against the Cuban Revolution.

Certainly, the ultra-right do not speak for the majority of all Cubans in Miami, who for the most part are working-class poor who have arrived in recent years for economic reasons.



WW PHOTO: DEIRDRE GRISWOLD

The Cuban 5, Gerardo Hernández, Antonio Guerrero, Fernando González, Rene González and Ramón Labañino. Ricardo Alarcón, head of Cuba's National Assembly, speaks to a New York gathering on the Cuban 5 case.

But for more than 40 years, those in Miami who speak openly in favor of normalizing relations with Cuba and ending the blockade have lived under intimidation and often terror.

Orlando Bosch, the notorious terrorist found responsible by a Venezuelan court for the murder of 73 individuals in the 1976 bombing of a Cubana passenger plane, was officially declared a "hero" by the city of Miami. Ileana Ros-Lehtinen, a Florida congressperson, used her office's influence to help procure planes for the terrorist group "Brothers to the Rescue."

Even in Miami's cultural scene, the terrorists have held sway. Last September, when Miami was the scheduled host city for the Latin Grammy awards, local politicians and the police catered to right-wing demands for access to the artists, forcing the Grammy organizers to move their event to Los Angeles at the last minute. □

Former D.A. elected governor

Rendell threatens execution of Mumia

By Betsey Piette
Philadelphia

Now that former Philadelphia Mayor Ed Rendell is governor-elect of Pennsylvania, concern is mounting that he will try to carry out his campaign promise to reinstate the death penalty against political activist and journalist Mumia Abu-Jamal. Rendell, also a former District Attorney in Philadelphia, publicly called for Abu-Jamal's execution.

Nearly a year ago, on Dec. 18, 2001, Third Circuit Judge William Yohn overturned the death penalty in the case of Mumia Abu-Jamal, but upheld Abu-Jamal's conviction for the 1981 shooting of a Philadelphia police officer—a murder that self-described hit-man Arnold Beverly has now confessed to. Yet despite Yohn's ruling and Beverly's confession, Abu-Jamal has remained on death row, and each step of his appeal process has encountered stiff resistance from a state seemingly bent on executing an innocent person.

Two appeals have been filed: one from the prosecution, appealing Yohn's overturning of the death penalty, the other from Abu-Jamal's attorneys appealing the upholding of the conviction. Both appeals are on hold in the United States Court of Appeals for the Third Circuit, pending a rul-



WW PHOTO: DEIRDRE GRISWOLD

Video of Arnold Beverly's confession shown at a Mumia rally in Philadelphia.

ing by the Pennsylvania Supreme Court on an earlier appeal.

Opening briefs in the appeal process were filed over the past few months by Abu-Jamal's attorneys and by the prosecution. Defense attorneys Eliot Grossman and Marlene Kamish have also asked the state court to reconsider a hearing date for oral arguments. The court had initially denied this request before all the written briefs were even received for review.

Also awaiting a ruling is a motion by Abu-Jamal's attorneys to disqualify Penn-

sylvania State Supreme Court Justice Ronald Castille from hearing Mumia's appeal. Castille, when he was Philadelphia County District Attorney, had supervisory responsibility for the "McMahon videotape"—a training tape for prosecutors on how to exclude African Americans from juries. In their motion, Abu-Jamal's attorneys point out that during his trial, African-American jurors were peremptorily challenged by the prosecutor during jury selection because of their race.

Because the courts have so far refused

to admit into evidence a videotape of Arnold Beverly's confession that he killed Officer Daniel Faulkner, Grossman and Kamish have also requested that the Pennsylvania Supreme Court permit Beverly to appear before them to testify. Beverly's written and videotaped confession, in which he exonerates Abu-Jamal of any participation in the shooting, was previously filed with the Pennsylvania Supreme Court. No ruling has been made on this request.

Time and again his attorneys have presented the courts with evidence that Abu-Jamal is innocent. Supporters are demanding that the courts hear this evidence, in particular the Beverly confession. An amicus brief on behalf of several labor unions filed by attorney Michael Yamamoto provides an excellent, concise and to-the-point presentation of the evidence.

A campaign is underway to get the names of individuals and organizations on Notices of Joinder forms to be filed in the Pennsylvania Supreme Court, joining the Yamamoto amicus brief. Information on the joinder campaign is available through International Concerned Family and Friends of Mumia Abu-Jamal at (215) 476-8812, e-mail ICFMAJ@aol.com. □



Massachusetts 'English Only' referendum

Slick right-wing campaign defeats bilingual education

By Bryan G. Pfeifer
Amherst, Mass.

"English Only" is now the law in Massachusetts.

After a slick, well-publicized, xenophobic campaign, Silicon Valley multi-millionaire Ron Unz and his organization, English for the Children, managed to get 68 percent of the vote to abolish bilingual education.

Flush with victories in California in 1998 and Arizona in 2000, Unz managed to get Question 2, known as the "Unz Initiative," on the Massachusetts ballot and Amendment 31 on the ballot in Colorado for the Nov. 5 election. In Colorado, however, "English only" was voted down.

A virtual replica of California's Proposition 227, the provisions in Question 2 will replace the state's existing bilingual education law in September 2003 with a one-year English "immersion" program, thereby wiping out successful bilingual education in Massachusetts' public schools.

Furthermore, the measure contains a provision that those educators who continue teaching students in their native language can be held liable. Anyone sued under the provision must pay damages out of their own funds that cannot be covered by insurance or a union. Teachers could be fired and banned from teaching for five years for "defying" the measure.

A counter campaign, led by scores of Massachusetts unions, civil rights organizations, students, parents and anti-racist community organizations, among others, fought to the end for Question 2's defeat. Their arguments are many, but all agree that English "immersion" initiatives have been a complete failure in California and

elsewhere and that the majority of "English only" supporters like Unz have never been in an educator's seat. Because of this, many bilingual supporters suspect Unz is just a Trojan horse for more conservative forces.

They are correct. Unz—like Ward Connerly, Linda Chavez and David Horowitz—is an anointed spokesperson of the far right-wing neo-conservative movement disseminating its policies worldwide.

Unz and the right-wing

Who is Ronald Unz?

According to a May 8, 1994, Los Angeles Times profile published a month before Unz opposed incumbent Pete Wilson in the 1994 Republican primary for governor of California, Unz was a top student who received a Ph.D. from Harvard and moved on to a Wall Street firm. He left there to start his own business writing computer code for major corporations. He eventually made enough money to start giving donations to conservative foundations like the Manhattan Institute.

By the late 1980s Unz had made enough connections and money to be courted by the neo-conservative movement, eventually being named to the Board of Directors at the misnamed Center for Equal Opportunity (CEO).

The CEO is directed by Linda Chavez, a former Reagan/Bush Sr. appointee for various posts, an author, a syndicated columnist and political analyst for Fox News. Chavez's most recent book is "An unlikely conservative, the transformation of an ex liberal: Or how I became the most hated Hispanic in America."

According to its website, the CEO's mission is to "counter the divisive impact of race-conscious public policies," focusing on "three areas in particular: racial prefer-

ences, immigration and assimilation and multicultural education."

Mediatransparency.org, a watchdog website that tracks right-wing funding, documents that the CEO received 39 grants totaling over \$2.4 million in the period 1988 to 2000 from right-wing foundations including those of Lynde and Harry Bradley, Earhart, John M. Olin and Sarah Scaife. In 1997 the CEO received \$15,000 from the Earhart Foundation for its publication, "The New Paternalism: How Uncle Sam Replaces Mr. Right in Women's Lives." The CEO has also published a Parents Guide to Bilingual Education that educates parents to "learn how to remove their children from harmful [bilingual education] programs."

Unz's own organization, One Nation/One California Research and Education fund, which runs the "English for Children" program that conducted the California Prop 227 campaign, received six grants from 1998 to 2000 totaling \$330,000 from the Carthage, Sarah Scaife and Bradley foundations. English for the Children is also conducting the Massachusetts Question 2 campaign—it has contributed \$123,000 towards this effort.

By far the majority of contributions for CEO and One Nation have come from the Milwaukee-based Lynde and Harry Bradley Foundation in Wisconsin, which has over \$800 million in assets. This premier, most influential right-wing foundation in the U.S. gives away over \$30 million annually to conservative individuals and organizations as well as cultural, educational and faith-based entities.

Bradley is perhaps best known for giving over \$1 million to Charles Murray and Richard Herrnstein to write the racist book, "The Bell Curve," which tried to show

that African Americans and other people of color are genetically inferior to whites.

Bradley has also given millions to David Horowitz' Center for the Study of Popular Culture, Ward Connerly's American Civil Rights Institute, the Institute for Justice—a legal firm responsible for helping abolish affirmative action in various states and universities, the National Association of Scholars and the Hudson Institute, which created the initial plans to abolish the federal entitlement program Aid to Families with Dependent Children.

Journalist Phil Wilayto, who has written extensively on Bradley and the neo-conservative movement, says that to further its objectives, "Bradley supports the organizations and individuals that promote the abolishment of affirmative action, deregulation of business, the rollback of virtually all social welfare programs, school vouchers, and the privatization of government services."

"The overall objective of the Bradley Foundation, however," adds Wilayto, "is to return the U.S.—and the world—to the days before governments began to regulate big business, before corporations were forced to make concessions to an organized labor force. In other words, laissez-faire capitalism: capitalism with the gloves off."

School under-funding gets forgotten

In using willing shock troopers like Unz, the neo-conservative movement hopes to follow previously "successful" conservative blueprints like school vouchers and workfare to pit white workers against workers of oppressed nationalities. By focusing on Latino people in the "English Only" cam-

National Day of Action Nov. 21

Labor launches Wal-Mart organizing drive

By Mary Owen

The union drive to organize Wal-Mart workers got a big boost on Nov. 21 at stores in all 50 states. Labor, community, civil rights, environmental and consumer activists held events to demand justice and a union for Wal-Mart workers and to expose the retail giant's anti-union practices.

Wal-Mart, the country's largest retailer, just reported billions of dollars in third-quarter profits from its 3,300 stores in the U.S. and around the world. Those profits came from the unpaid labor of over 1 million Wal-Mart employees and millions of other workers who toil for slave wages in the sweatshop factories of Wal-Mart suppliers.

Most Wal-Mart workers in the U.S. are paid less than \$9 an hour, or \$18,000 per year. Out of that, they have to pay thousands of dollars for insurance coverage. Not one of those workers is in a union. The Food and Commercial Workers Union (UFCW), with labor and community support, is organizing to change that.

"It's essential that the biggest company in the world treat its employees decently, with decent wages and benefits," Bill Meyer, director of the union drive in



Nevada, told the New York Times (Nov. 8). "It's going to be a struggle. It's not going to be overnight."

Many Wal-Mart and affiliated Sam's Club discount stores are in rural areas with no union traditions and few other job opportunities. This corporate outlaw has a history of anti-union actions—such as illegal firings of pro-union workers—aimed at intimidating workers and hampering organizing.

The one time that Wal-Mart workers

successfully organized—in 2000 in the meat department of a Jacksonville, Tex., store—the company phased out the butchers two weeks later and announced it would use prepackaged meat at that store and 179 others.

But with the union's help, Wal-Mart workers have fought back in the courts and on the ground. The National Labor Relations Board has issued 40 complaints against Wal-

Mart in 25 states for labor law violations. The union says most cases occurred at the 90 stores where organizing has been most active.

In June, the Kentucky Human Rights Commission ordered Wal-Mart to pay \$40,000 in back pay to an interracial couple the company fired for dating. And just last week, Alaska Wal-Mart worker Ken Stanhope was reinstated in his job with full back pay after an NLRB judge ruled that Wal-Mart "eviscerated" his rights.

Wal-Mart fired him from its Wasilla store over a conversation with a coworker about joining the union. A similar case is pending in Boone, N.C.

Nearly 24 additional cases are awaiting adjudication. They include two sexual discrimination lawsuits against Wal-Mart. One is a federal class action involving discrimination against women—Wal-Mart denies women health insurance coverage for birth control. The National Organization for Women says Wal-Mart saves about \$5 million by denying contraceptive coverage to its female workers. The other is a California case charging Wal-Mart with gender bias in promotion, compensation and job assignment.

On the National Day of Action at Wal-Mart, Wal-Mart workers and the UFCW took an important step by reaching out to community residents and shoppers for support. The actions, supported by the national AFL-CIO, were part of a broader campaign to bring popular pressure on Wal-Mart, to expose the dirty deeds of the giant discount conglomerate and to urge justice for Wal-Mart workers.

For more information on this campaign, go to the community action site at www.walmartwatch.org or to the Wal-Mart workers' site, www.walmartys.org. □

New assault on civil liberties in U.S.

Big Brother spies on Iraqis and 'sympathizers'



paigns, the neo-conservatives even hope to divide the African American community and other nationally oppressed peoples from their allies. Furthermore, by abolishing bilingual education, the neo-conservative movement hopes to erase the culture that leads to national identity, because this in turn leads to political struggle and unity against a common oppressor.

The racist and privatization schemes manufactured and propagated by the neo-conservative movement divert the debate from where it needs to be: the under-funding of public education from the federal level on down, which has resulted in a growing chasm in educational opportunities. In light of severe budget cuts in this state and across the nation that are gutting social service spending, and an impending U.S. war on Iraq that will cost from \$50 billion to \$200 billion, the neo-conservatives' motives become clear.

Although Question 2 won in Massachusetts, Colorado voters weren't, for the most part, diverted into Unz's and the neo-conservative movement's racist, fear-mongering campaign.

Taking this lead, the working class and oppressed can defeat other "Unz Initiatives" being cooked up for other states by focusing on the real issues and struggling for solutions to the economic, social and political crisis bearing down on millions. □

By Deirdre Griswold

As part of the preparation for their planned crime of an unprovoked blitzkrieg attack on Iraq, Bush administration officials have made it public that they are monitoring Iraqi citizens living in the United States and people with dual U.S.-Iraqi citizenship, and may arrest them when a war starts.

The unnamed officials fed this information to the New York Times, which reported it on Nov. 17. The story was quickly reprinted in newspapers across the country.

In response, Hussein Ibish, spokesperson for the American Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee, compared the plan to the policy that resulted in the imprisonment of thousands of Japanese Americans during World War II.

"There has been a return of systematic suspicion by ethnicity, which is the first step on the road," Ibish told Reuters. "The community is exposed and people are aware of their vulnerability. The feeling is one of tremendous unease."

The officials told the Times that a large number of government agencies are part of the surveillance operation. They include the Pentagon, the FBI, the CIA, the immigration service, the State Department and the National Security Agency, which eavesdrops on communications around the world.

Along with monitoring any activity by Iraqis, the same unnamed officials said they plan to try to recruit Iraqis and other Arab Americans as informants to spy on their neighbors. According to the Times, the FBI will "meet with Arab-American civic leaders to explain the non-classified aspects of the operation."

The Times also reports that there is discussion within the government about creating a domestic intelligence agency as part of the Homeland Security Department.

While the Bush administration has initiated this new program, its officials say they released the information partly in answer to Florida Democrat Bob Graham, who, instead of coming out against the administration's war plans, has instead criticized it for allegedly failing to take aggressive steps to stop terrorism. However, the Times article admits that no Iraqis have been accused of terrorism in the United States—not during the present war drive or even when the U.S. was waging the Gulf War and bombing Iraq every day in 1991.

Thus leading figures in both capitalist parties are making a concerted assault on human and political rights within the United States. Meanwhile the Bush administration rides roughshod over normal rules of international behavior in its plans to invade Iraq.

This totally illegal and unconstitutional

spying on individuals just because of their nationality is another example of the police-state practices introduced through the USA Patriot Act.

The timing of this release makes it only too clear that this move is intended to silence opposition to the criminal war now being readied against Iraq. It is part of the media myth here that all Iraqis are praying for the U.S. to invade their country. Washington doesn't want Iraqis here to be seen publicly opposing the war.

San Diego's Iraqi community is the second largest in the U.S. Many of those who have been given U.S. visas are political opponents of the Baghdad government. Nevertheless, the Union-Tribune reported on Nov. 18 that "sympathizers" with Iraq—it didn't say if they were Iraqis or North Americans—"tore down announcements of an anti-Hussein, pro-war protest last month" and were then reported to the FBI by pro-war elements in the community.

The New York Times article reported that the government's dragnet will be extended to "Iraq sympathizers if they are believed to be planning domestic terrorist operations."

Politically, this is an attempt to demonize and silence anyone who might sympathize with the Iraqi people for the suffering that the criminal administration in Washington plans to inflict on them. □

AFGE head on privatization plan:

Bush plans all-out war on federal employees

Continued from page 1

ence than any outside contractors. He charged that the Bush administration has "declared all-out war on federal employees. ... This administration is selling the federal government at bargain basement prices to their corporate friends who then make campaign contributions back. This is not about saving money. It's about moving money to the private sector." (New York Times, Nov. 15)

This move to privatize close to a million jobs comes on the heels of the infamous Homeland Security legislation, which is set to merge 22 federal agencies under one giant super-agency, stripping the federal unions of their collective bargaining rights. In the name of national security, it allows the employers to screen out thousands of government workers and terrorize them all.

The Bush administration has decided to turn back the clock and phase out the current workforce and its unions, which have been dedicated to serving the public for over half a century.

Lessons from the past

Nevertheless, all these nefarious plans could backfire if the labor movement applies the lessons of the past. History has confirmed over and over again that growth and gains made by the trade unions are inextricably woven and integrated into the broader political struggles of the multinational mass movement.

The AFGE leadership and its rank and file should know this all too well. The union is now in its 70th year of existence. It received its charter from the

American Federation of Labor on Aug. 18, 1932, in the midst of the worst capitalist crisis in history. The birth of this union was part of the historic struggles, led by class-conscious workers, progressives and communists, that built the organized labor movement. The union started in 1932 with 500 chartered members and has since grown to over 600,000 members.

The history of the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME), one of the largest unions in the country with over 1.4 million members, also confirms that a period of activism for social and political change is favorable for unions. The civil rights and women's struggles, the anti-war movement of the 1960s and 1970s, and the resulting "war on poverty" were instrumental in opening the doors to the growth of the federal, state and municipal work force. This brought waves of African Americans, Latinos, women and other low-paid service workers who were politically more conscious into the public sector unions.

When New York District Council 37 of AFSCME, the largest public sector city union in the country, celebrated 50 years of growth in 1994, it put out a statement saying that the union's advances "paralleled gains by the civil rights movement, as poor and working class people fought not only for civil rights, but for a fair share of income and security in a wealthy land."

The truth is that Dr. Martin Luther King did much to build the public sector union movement. In fact, he was assassinated while supporting the sanitation workers of Memphis. It was the sacri-

fices of King and millions of others who took to the streets that brought about pro-labor legislation—not the goodwill of the Democratic Party, which claimed the credit.

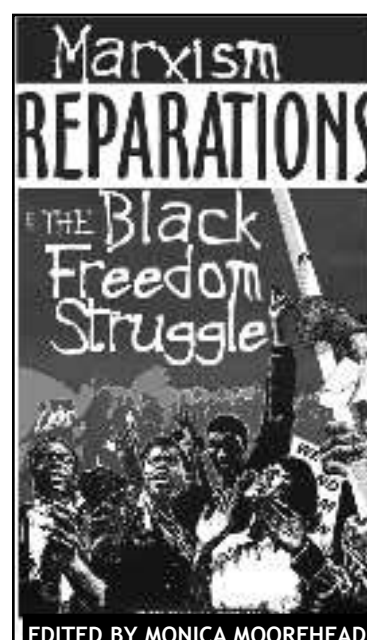
The organized labor movement, including the public sector unions, cannot continue to look to the Democrats, as they did in this election. When these so-called friends of labor capitulated to the Bush administration on the war, that only whetted the appetites of the capitalist politicians to hack away at unions.

It is crucial that the public sector unions and the labor movement in general not become isolated from their historic allies: people of color, women, youth who need jobs and a decent education, seniors without health care and pensions, the increasingly desperate unemployed, and the lesbian, gay, bi and

transgender workers.

Currently, these multinational forces are growing frustrated and angry. Along with an anti-war movement that is getting stronger, they constitute a powerful force for change. The hundreds of thousands of people who marched and rallied against the war on Oct. 26 are now reaching out to even larger forces for national actions on the Martin Luther King weekend in January. The message to the Bush administration: that the war against the Iraqi people and the war against labor are unacceptable.

This fightback demands closer ties between the organized labor movement and the diverse, class-conscious and militant movement in the streets, in the tradition of the historic struggles that led to the explosion of trade-union growth in the 1930s. □



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With media spotlight on inspections

Pentagon prepares for big war

By Fred Goldstein

Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld has succinctly summed up the Bush administration's real attitude toward the inspections process that is about to begin in Iraq. Rumsfeld was giving an interview and taking calls for Infinity Broadcasting on Nov. 15.

According to a CNN dispatch of that day, a caller asked Rumsfeld, "What if no weapons of mass destruction were found by U.N. weapons inspectors inside Iraq?"

"What it would prove would be that the inspections process had been successfully defeated by the Iraqis," said Rumsfeld.

Thus, after laboring mightily to force the UN Security Council to pass a belligerent, threatening resolution demanding inspections, everything Washington is doing and saying indicates that the Bush administration regards the entire process as nothing but a stepping stone in the preparation for war.

"With the United Nations chief weapons inspector in Baghdad readying his team to start work next week," wrote the Wall Street Journal on Nov. 19, "the Bush administration is quietly pressing him to make key changes in his organization, including doubling the number of inspectors and accepting what he says are generous offers of U.S. equipment and transportation...."

"U.S. officials also are combing through intelligence reports to come up with a list of priority sites for immediate inspection and crucial scientists to interview," continued the Journal. "U.S. officials say they want the earliest and most intrusive test" of the Iraqi government. "The U.S. has already held three to four hours of discussion with Unmovic [the UN agency involved] about possible inspection sites."

The U.S. was pushing to add its own intelligence officials to the inspection team, but Hans Blix, the head of the team, declined. Both sides settled for a Canadian official.

Washington is trying to completely take over the inspections process in order to be in a better position to declare the Iraqi government "in breach" of the UN resolution and also to gain valuable military information to assist in an invasion.

World opinion decisively against the war

But Blix has multiple problems with Washington. First of all, he has to maintain the credibility of the UN force. "The credibility of the last UN weapons-inspection team was badly damaged," continued the Journal dispatch, "by disclosures that it had worked closely with the Central Intelligence Agency, Britain's MI6 and Israel's Mossad—passing on information that was potentially useful for military strikes."

Second, he has to cope with world public opinion, including both the masses and governments, who are overwhelmingly opposed to a U.S. invasion.

With the exception of the British, most of the other imperialist governments are being dragged into the war reluctantly. This is not because they are pacifists. On the contrary, these ruling classes have a history of engaging in the most bloody colonial enterprises in Asia, Africa, the Middle East and Latin America.

Their reluctance stems from the fact that Wall Street is holding all the cards by virtue of its gigantic, high-tech military machine. For the other imperialists there



is little to gain and much to lose by a U.S. war to conquer Iraq.

The European and Japanese imperialists would much prefer to confine their competition with the U.S. ruling class to the economic and political sphere, where the playing field is more level. They all have giant industrial, financial and commercial monopolies capable of doing battle with Wall Street. But none of them can hold a candle to the Pentagon.

As for the billions of workers and peasants, and the general worldwide population, the vast majority opposes not only a U.S. invasion of Iraq but Washington's intervention anywhere.

These are the pressures on Blix and the UN inspection team.

Resolution contains trigger for war

In the last analysis, however, Blix must satisfy the overlords in the White House and the Pentagon who are demanding a pretext for war. During the preparations in Washington for submitting the U.S. resolution to the UN Security Council, Blix and the head of the International Atomic Energy Agency, Mohamed el Baradei, were brought to Washington for an interview.

"A crucial moment in the Washington end game," wrote the Washington Post of Nov. 10, "came 10 days ago when Powell invited chief UN weapons inspector Hans Blix and Mohamed Baradei—both deeply disdained at the Pentagon as weaklings incapable of standing up to Hussein—to meet with Bush, Cheney, Rice and Wolfowitz."

"The meetings helped convince Bush that Blix wanted the same tough inspections that he did, and that a pared-down version of the original resolution guidelines would still guarantee intrusive, unyielding inspections. 'They acquitted themselves really well,' a senior official in Powell's camp said of Blix and el Baradei. Carping at the Pentagon stopped."

Indeed, the Wall Street Journal article said that most Washington officials "believe that [Blix] will do the right thing," that is, give the U.S. the excuse to go to war.

The resolution, which was roundly denounced by the government of Iraq even as it was forced to accept the inspections, has an inherent trigger for war that was set by Washington. A Dec. 8 deadline was set up as a moment for the Iraqis to basically confess to the offense of which they have been accused by the Bush administration.

The very idea that a formerly colonial country should have to submit to weapons inspections and have its entire infrastructure examined by hostile imperialist powers bent on recolonizing the country is an outrage. For the U.S. government, which has invented, stockpiled and used nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction, to have the right to go into Iraq and destroy any part of its arsenal is a complete violation of sovereignty, the right of self-deter-

mination and the right to self-defense. Except for Britain, the other imperialists don't want the war. They have little to gain and much to lose from the U.S. conquering Iraq. The world's people oppose U.S. intervention anywhere. But Hans Blix must satisfy the overlords in the White House and Pentagon who are demanding a pretext for war



mination and the right to self-defense.

Nevertheless, the Iraqis have declared that they have no weapons of mass destruction. The inspections are presumably to determine whether or not they exist, yet Washington has told the government of Iraq that it must disclose its biological, chemical and nuclear program by Dec. 8. Washington—and the UN Security Council, for that matter—have demanded a confession in advance of any proof of the offense. This is a setup to create a provocation and to justify an invasion.

Britain and U.S. organize 'Iraqi' conference

The London Guardian reported on Nov. 20 that "A conference is to be held in Britain of Iraqi opposition leaders after they were told by U.S. officials that they must meet by December 10—two days after the UN deadline for Baghdad to give a full declaration" of its weapons. The British Foreign Office, under the direction of Washington, is organizing the conference.

Whether the U.S. is planning to make Dec. 8 the critical moment is yet to be seen. But the Wall Street Journal reported on Nov. 19 that "U.S. officials say they don't expect the teams to go after the most sensitive or potentially most fruitful sites until after Dec. 8, when Iraq is required to declare its full holdings of proscribed weapons. 'We're not going to pick a fight until after they declare what they have,' says one top official."

The anti-war movement should not become fixated on or pin its hopes on the inspections process. Instead it should keep its eyes firmly fixed on what the Pentagon is doing.

According to a New York Times dispatch of Nov. 19, "Next month Gen. Tommy Franks will direct exercises at Al Ureid [a military base in Qatar] with 600 officers from the military's Central Command in Florida in what analysts say is a dry run for using the base as a command post for an invasion of Iraq." This is the Pentagon's answer to the Saudi refusal to allow the Pentagon to command the invasion from there.

A day earlier the Times had run a major piece about war preparations. Washington is rushing to set up the invasion before hot weather arrives. "American diplomats and senior military officials—including Gen. Tommy Franks—have fanned out across Europe and Southwest Asia in recent weeks discussing basing agreements for American troops and aircraft, and to determine which nations may contribute forces or equipment to an offensive."

"We're making preparations every day," declared Paul Wolfowitz, deputy secretary of defense and a hawkish architect of the war. "The administration has already begun laying the groundwork with dozens of countries for a possible attack," wrote the Times.

Heavy military equipment for 30,000 troops is already in the region. More M1 Abrams tanks, Bradley fighting vehicles and armored personnel carriers are to be shipped from the U.S. soon. B-2 bombers are being positioned in Britain and in Diego Garcia, a former British base in the Indian Ocean taken over by the U.S.

The Central Command is setting up a headquarters in Djibouti, on the Horn of Africa. The Marines and Special Forces have taken over what used to be the largest French foreign military base, Camp Lemonnier. They are conducting amphibious invasion exercises, including "capturing" towns in Djibouti.

In Kuwait the U.S. military is conducting menacing operations. "The United States Army has quietly doubled the number of its troops in Kuwait," wrote the Times on Nov. 20, "and is practicing offensive operations against Iraq close to the border. ... Army combat engineers trained to blow paths through mine fields. They rehearsed erecting bridges under fire so armored forces can continue their thrusts into enemy territory." Troops are using howitzers and Apache helicopters in terrain identical to Iraq's.

Using NATO for the dirty work

Bush is on his way to a NATO summit in Prague to strong-arm the European imperialists into formally endorsing the U.S. war drive, as embodied in the UN resolution. He will also bring a proposal for NATO to become formally integrated into the U.S. war machine. According to the Times, "one country could provide a unit trained for mountain warfare, another could contribute decontamination teams for troops facing chemical or biological weapons, another military police."

Rumsfeld has also proposed that NATO work on a high-tech, rapid deployment force of 20,000 troops to supplement U.S. imperialist invasion forces.

Another integral part of the war preparations is the campaign by the Justice Department to place hundreds of thousands of Iraqis in the U.S. under surveillance. It is a terror tactic to whip up the population into a state of racist paranoia against Iraqis as well as a way of laying the groundwork for a concocted domestic provocation by framing up Iraqis in the U.S.

The attempt to assign NATO to a menial role as a lowly assistant to the Pentagon and to openly make the United Nations a pure appendage of the State Department is a measure of the expansionist mentality that prevails in the White House and at the summits of the U.S. ruling class.

Given this militaristic, expansionist and repressive orientation of the capitalist class, its political machine and its media, the only antidote to this war drive is a truly mass mobilization to stop it.

Thousands rally at 'School of Assassins'

By Dianne Mathiowetz
Columbus, Ga.

A colorful, noisy and diverse crowd of 15,000 opponents of the School of the Americas gathered at the gates of Fort Benning in Columbus, Ga., over the week-end of Nov. 16-17. For 13 years, this annual protest has called for the closing of a military training school for Central and South American troops.

Known widely as the "School of the Assassins," its graduates have been involved in countless massacres, as well as the torture, "disappearance" and murder of student and peasant leaders, trade unionists and religious figures. Under the pressure of public opinion, the school has changed its name to Western Hemisphere Institute for Security Cooperation.

In past years, thousands participated in civil disobedience by crossing onto the base property with their political protest. This year, like the last, the police erected a high, metal fence blocking the road onto Fort Benning.

In a solemn procession, as the names of those killed by SOA graduates was intoned from the stage, the demonstrators came up to the barrier and affixed their signs, pictures of the dead, religious symbols and

flowers until it was totally covered. They passed by a representation of a massacre, with people lying crumpled on the ground, covered in blood, evidence of the ongoing work of the school's graduates.

Despite all the police efforts, 95 managed to carry the protest onto the grounds of the military facility and were arrested. One person was also arrested for protesting the checkpoint set up to search everyone participating in the demonstration.

Although the focus of the annual action is U.S. policy toward Latin America, "No War on Iraq" signs were everywhere. Volunteers with the International ANSWER coalition gathered several thousand signatures on the People's Anti-War Referendum. Many of the activists, young and old, had been at the Oct. 26 demonstration in Washington and responded eagerly when Sarah Sloan, a speaker representing International ANSWER, announced plans for an upcoming Jan 18-19 massive demonstration and People's Peace Congress. □



At Fort Benning, 95 got past fence and were arrested. PHOTO: GREG ROBERTS, ATLANTA INDYMEDIA

Endorsers for January anti-war events

By Deirdre Griswold

In the war against "endless war," each battle leads to a bigger one.

Since Oct. 26, when hundreds of thousands of people marched and rallied in Washington and San Francisco against the Bush administration's growing war on Iraq, the government has pretended that nothing happened. It declared the lackluster and ambiguous electoral results on Nov. 5 a "mandate" for war, even though congress members had been flooded with anti-war messages. It didn't even comment on the million people who rallied in Florence, Italy, against the U.S. war drive.

It then pushed through the UN Security Council a resolution that Washington has already declared gives it the green light to attack Iraq, even though that's not what the other countries are saying.

People who may have feared they were alone before the demonstrations but went home knowing they are part of a strong movement are now reaching out to their communities, jobs, schools, churches and shopping areas with a fresh and ever more urgent sense of purpose: build this movement and make its anti-war message as visible as possible.

The International ANSWER coalition, which called the Oct. 26 demonstrations, is now building new national actions on the Martin Luther King holiday weekend in January. It is also gathering hundreds of thousands of registrations in a referendum against the war, both online and on paper. The results of its grassroots efforts are encouraging.

The group's web site now has a long list of endorsers for the Jan. 18-19 actions that shows the broad social character of this movement. It encompasses groups and individuals from almost every area of activism for justice, equality, peace and a better life for all the people.

Key endorsers of the Oct. 26 demonstrations like former Attorney General Ramsey Clark, Rev. Graylan Hagler, Dr. Hans Christof von Sponeck—former director of the UN Oil for Food Program, Bishop Thomas Gumbleton, Mahdi Bray of the Muslim American Society Freedom Foundation, people's historian Howard Zinn and Congressperson Cynthia McKinney have again come forward. But they have now been joined by Dr. James Tate, Executive Director, National Alliance Against Racism and Political Repression; John Dear, former executive director of the Fellowship for Reconciliation; Attorney Michael Tariff Warren, singer Patti Smith, the Rev.

Herbert Daughtry, author Ron Kovic and hundreds more.

The organizations that have endorsed the national march and a People's Peace Congress span a wide geographical area. Some are organized specifically around the issues of war and peace; others were formed around other social causes but recognize that war has a deleterious effect on all of society and feel it imperative to take a stand at this time.

Here's just a sampling of some of the anti-war groups that have endorsed: West Virginia Antiwar Coalition, Northeast Wisconsin Peace Network, Campaign Against War at the University of Iowa, Cleveland Peace Action, New York City Labor Against the War, IFCO/Pastors for Peace, Coalition for Peace and Justice—Charlotte, N.C., Student Voices for Peace—New Mexico State University, Vietnam Veterans Against the War Anti-Imperialist, Women Against War and Nukewatch.

Many students and faculty members from campuses and high schools all over the country have sent in their endorsements and are organizing transportation to the protests. Union members from the Teamsters to the United Federation of Teachers to the United Auto Workers have signed up, and some have gotten their locals' endorsements.

As the crowd flies, endorsing groups range from the Alaska Action Center to Women in of Gulfcoast, Fla., from the Coastal Convergence Society of Huntington Beach, Calif., to A Job is a Right Campaign of Montreal, Canada.

The Green Party, Anarchist Action of Rochester, Freedom Road Socialist Organization, Metro DC Committee of Correspondence and Young Liberals of North California are listed, and of course Workers World Party is an endorser.

Queers For Racial & Economic Justice are there, along with New Jersey Cop Watch, Kensington Welfare Rights Union, National Black Police Association and Earthhope Action Network.

There are intriguing names, too, like the White Rabbit Cult, Flyby News and Global Pastry Uprising. The complete list can be found at the www.internationalanswer.org web site, where new endorsements can also be registered.

This is a diverse movement that is bringing together people from cities and villages, schools and factories, of varying ideologies, generations and sexual expressions. They have found common ground in trying to stop the slaughter of innocents in a land far way organized by a cynical group of power-hungry politicians and oil tycoons. □

ANSWER speaker tells crowd: 'See you in D.C. on Jan. 18-19'

At the School of the Americas Watch demonstration, volunteers from Washington, Atlanta, Miami Beach, and Charlotte, N.C. helped get the word out about the ANSWER Coalition's People's Anti-War Referendum and Jan. 18-19 mass actions in DC against the war in Iraq. Almost half the people in attendance at the rallies voted no to war, and many took referendum sheets and information back to their cities, promising to organize buses of people to be in the streets of Washington. Following is a speech delivered by Sarah Sloan.

I'm here representing the ANSWER Coalition—Act Now to Stop War & End Racism—as we stand in solidarity with the people of Latin America against U.S.-sponsored terrorism. We have been working day and night to build a movement in solidarity with the people of Iraq, who have for the past 12 years been the victims of the terror of U.S.-led bombings, sanctions and covert actions. On October 26, 200,000 people took to the streets of Washington DC in a demonstration that was historic in that it was a massive outpouring of opposition to the war before it started by people who believed it could be stopped. How many people were on the streets of DC on October 26? [Huge cheers and applause]

We represent the billions of people around the world who oppose this criminal war of aggression. As others have stated, George Bush does not speak for us. Congress does not represent us. But we have spoken with an undeniable voice to say that the people of Iraq are not our enemies, that they have a right

to determine their own destinies free of outside interference, and that we, the people of the United States, need a war against poverty, a war against racism, a war against unemployment and cuts in education and social programs.

To help keep the momentum going, the ANSWER Coalition has initiated a unique effort to combat any myth of consensus that Bush tries to use the congressional and United Nations resolutions to create. The People's Anti-War Referendum is a campaign to get every person who opposes this criminal war to cast a vote—a vote that, for once, will really count. You can vote on the paper ballots that are being circulated here today or online at www.VoteNoWar.org. Our goal is to gather 10 million signatures by January, when thousands will again converge in Washington, DC.

On January 18-19—the Martin Luther King anniversary weekend and the 12th anniversary of the Gulf War—there will be a massive march in Washington and the convening of a People's Peace Congress that will stand as a counter to the U.S. War Congress that does not represent the people. Buses will travel from all over the South, East Coast and Midwest.

Both the Bush administration's threats of war against Iraq and the School of the Americas are testaments to the fact that Dr. King's statement, that "the greatest purveyor of violence on the planet is the U.S. government," is as true today as it was in the 1960s. What better way is there to honor his legacy than to be in DC on that weekend in a massive show of opposition to a new war in Iraq? And before you leave today make your opposition to the war count by joining the People's Anti-War Referendum. □

At broad conference in Madrid

Anti-war forces take clear stand against U.S. war

By John Catalinotto
Madrid

A major international conference held here in Madrid on Nov. 16-17 has condemned the planned U.S. aggression against Iraq. It was the first international gathering to convene after the U.S. elections, the UN Security Council resolution that forced inspectors on Iraq, and the massive anti-war protest in Florence, Italy.

This International Meeting Against the War and in Solidarity with the Iraqi People was organized by the Spanish Campaign for Lifting the Sanctions on Iraq. It adopted a declaration sharply condemning U.S. plans to wage war on Iraq and denounced UN Resolution 1441, calling it "a green light" for U.S. aggression.

The conference reflected several trends regarding the war: widespread mass anti-war sentiment, especially in Europe and the Middle East; a new and growing anti-war movement in the United States; and opposition within the European ruling class to U.S. hegemony on the world scene, enforced by the Pentagon.

A million protest in Europe

The demonstration of 750,000 to 1 million people in Florence on Nov. 9 was a point of reference for the speakers and the audience at the conference. Over 600 people took part over the course of one-and-a-half days of discussions.

Before Nov. 9, the European anti-globalization movement had taken no clear position on the U.S. war against Iraq. Social democratic parties—which in Europe often lead imperialist governments—have been influential within "social forums" like the one that day in Florence, and had prevented such a clear anti-imperialist position from winning the day.

But on Nov. 9, the mass mood was so anti-war that the only demands made were on the U.S. government to desist from launching the war on Iraq. No one was telling the Iraqis to disarm first. This meeting of the European Social Forum also announced Europe-wide plans for another day of anti-war actions in all European capitals on Feb. 15.

Speakers from Morocco like Mohammad Basri of the Union of Popular Socialist Forces (USFP)—some of whom had helped organize a march of solidarity with Palestine of 3 million people last spring in Rabat—took apart the U.S. role in the Middle East.

British Labor Party Member of Parliament George Galloway, a leader in the movement defending the Iraqi people, hit the Tony Blair government in London for being a toady for Washington. The British anti-war movement rallied 400,000 people last Sept. 28 in London to protest the war and in solidarity with Palestine.

Some of the strongest protests in Europe have been in those countries whose gov-



Juan Carretero, president of the Organization in Solidarity with the Peoples of Asia, Africa and Latin America (OSPAAAL) of Cuba, with Teresa Gutierrez of ANSWER.

ernments have prostrated themselves before the U.S. plans: in Britain under Blair, in Italy under media magnate Silvio Berlusconi and more recently in the Spanish state under Juan Maria Aznar.

From Belgium, Michel Collon of the newspaper *Solidaire* made a specific attack on what he called the "Ni-ni" problem (neither-nor in French) of the European peace movement. When the slogan is "Neither [Yugoslavia's Slobodan] Milosevic nor NATO, neither Washington nor the Taliban, neither Saddam Hussein nor George W. Bush," then the movement becomes paralyzed by the equal sign put between oppressor and oppressed.

Collon's argument for a clear position opposing any imperialist intervention got a strong positive response from the audience.

Many speakers from different parts of the Spanish state, representing unionists, political activists—mostly from the United Left—intellectuals and others focused their criticism on the U.S. and on the Aznar government.

Growing U.S. anti-war movement

Conference organizers showed they believed it was important to invite representatives of the resistance inside the U.S. Former U.S. Attorney General Ramsey Clark, unable to attend, sent a message of solidarity. Clark condemned UN Resolution

1441, described the U.S. as a plutocracy, and pointed to the popular struggle as the only means left now to stop the Bush administration from opening the world to chaos that would impact on future generations.

For the International Action Center, John Catalinotto discussed the Bush administration's "National Security Strategy" document as proof that the U.S. war had nothing to do with Saddam Hussein or terrorism, but was aimed at establishing U.S. imperialism's hegemony worldwide, including over its rivals in Europe and Japan.

Teresa Gutierrez of International ANSWER discussed racial profiling and other repressive measures since Sept. 11, 2001, and the passage of the USA Patriot Act. She showed how despite this repression, the movement against the war and in solidarity with Palestine has been steadily growing, right in the center of the empire.

The anti-war activists from the U.S. were overwhelmed with requests for interviews, both from the progressive media inside Spain and from newspapers from Chile, Peru and Morocco. This reflected the interest all over the world about what is happening inside the United States and how much it has been distorted by the U.S. corporate media.

Phyllis Bennis of the Institute for Policy Studies, Washington, spoke of the dangers to the Palestinian people following the unleashing of a war against Iraq.

Naim Abu Tair, president of the Union of Health Work Committees in Palestine, also raised these dangers, but added that the Palestinian people would have no choice but to continue their struggle, by whatever means they need to use to end the Israeli occupation.

Juan Carretero, president of OSPAAAL Cuba, spoke of Cuba's solidarity with the Palestinian struggle and of its insistence that the sanctions against Iraq be ended and that no war be launched against it. OSPAAAL is the Organization in Solidarity with the Peoples of Asia, Africa and Latin America.

Solidarity with the Iraqi people

Dennis Halliday of Ireland and Hans-Christof von Sponeck of Germany, both coordinators of UN programs in Iraq, have been for the past few years regular spokespeople at conferences like this one in Madrid. They are not lifetime anti-war activists, but individuals in diplomatic service whose outrage at the horrors imposed on the Iraqi population has turned them into important spokespeople.

Usually they expose the lies and contradictions of U.S. policy or explain just how the sanctions harm the people of Iraq.

This time, asked to speak on "a commitment of solidarity with the Iraqi people," they took a different approach to their talks, showing how their own feelings of solidarity developed with the population and led them to question what they were doing.

Von Sponeck, for example, told how years ago delegations from the Spanish movement had come to Iraq with aid for the Iraqis suffering under sanctions, and had also demonstrated before the UN offices. "Little did either the demonstrators or I know at that time," said von Sponeck, "that we would wind up on the same side. It was important that you were there. You won me over."

Opposition from Europe to U.S. plans

Another defecting diplomat was present. Fernando Valderrama, former head of the Spanish Legation in Iraq, had resigned from that post after Aznar backed Bush fully in the demand for "regime change" in Iraq. For Valderrama, this demand for "regime change" is a violation of the Spanish constitution, which forbids aggression. It is a legal reason for withdrawing from his assignment there.

What is interesting is that the Aznar government has yet to challenge Valderrama in his interpretation of the constitution. The diplomat is confident he is legally correct, and says he has received comments of support not just from the anti-war forces or from his own Socialist Party, but also from members of the right-wing Aznar government.

Behind this experience is the attitude of the bulk of the European imperialist ruling class. They see the war on Iraq as something that, even if it goes quickly, benefits only U.S. imperialism. In Germany they are left out completely from the spoils of the war, in France they are better off exploiting the Middle East by doing business as usual. They see Blair, Berlusconi and Aznar as servants of Washington and Wall Street in a dangerous enterprise.

This does not mean they will confront U.S. imperialism, nor that they plan to assist the liberation movements. It just means there is a sharp point of contradiction between the U.S. and European rulers.

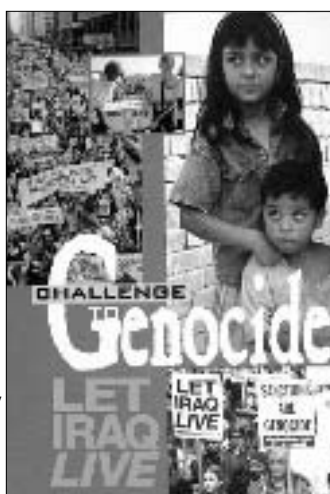
While everyone at the conference acknowledged how important events are within the United States, only those from the U.S. publicly looked to the movement there to stop the war. The others directed their calls to the populations of the Middle East and Europe.

Words are insufficient to convince those abroad that a broad, strong and combative anti-war movement is possible inside the U.S. For that they will have to see deeds. □

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Weapons of mass destruction

U.S. goes forward with bunker-buster nukes

By Heather Cottin

Nuclear bunker-busters are nuclear weapons that penetrate the earth. George Bush wants some.

Buried in the monster \$393-billion "defense" authorization bill that Congress approved in the middle of November is \$15.5 million for "modifying nuclear weapons so they can be used to destroy underground factories or laboratories." (New York Times, Nov. 17)

That is why the government says it needs these weapons. However, they can be used to obliterate civilians who may have taken refuge in an underground air raid shelter or the subway system of a large city. The U.S. government has already committed such an underground atrocity during the 1991 war on Iraq. Two U.S. missiles made direct hits on the underground Amariyah air raid shelter in Baghdad, incinerating over 1,500 civilians. (Columbia Journalism Review, May/June 1991) The U.S. at first denied this war crime, claiming it had hit a "command post." Only after

the international media showed the crowds of grieving relatives and the burned corpses being removed did the Pentagon acknowledge the true nature of its target.

The U.S. military already has nuclear bunker-busters, but the current nuclear earth penetrator, known as the B61-11, can achieve a depth of only 20 feet in dry earth.

Nuclear bunker-busters are a threat to the security of the world.

Plans for this new nuclear policy were made clear in January of 2002, when the U.S. Nuclear Posture Review called for a "New Triad," comprised of nuclear and non-nuclear offensive strike systems, and a revitalized defense infrastructure. (Observer, July 28, 2002). As part of this plan, the Pentagon wants to develop a bigger nuclear bunker-buster, the Robust Nuclear Earth Penetrator, which will go deeper into the earth. They claim it will be clean.

There is no such thing as a "clean" nuclear weapon, according to Princeton University physicist Robert Nelson. Even a very small nuclear bunker-buster with a yield of about 0.1 kiloton—1/200th the en-

ergy of the atomic bomb dropped on Hiroshima—must penetrate approximately 230 feet underground for the explosion to be fully contained. But a 0.1-kiloton nuclear weapon would blow out a huge crater and eject a massive cloud of radioactive dust and debris into the atmosphere. Larger nuclear yields necessary to destroy targets buried deep underground would create considerably more fallout. (Council for a Livable World)

A Nov. 17 New York Times article on specifically mentioned that the Bush administration is considering the use of these weapons in Iraq and North Korea. The Times noted that these weapons would require "a resumption of nuclear testing," which the U.S. suspended in 1992.

According to the Council for a Livable World, "Nuclear bunker-busters pose unacceptable operational risks, involve tremendous political costs, and will undermine global security. ... They will disperse deadly radioactive fallout into the atmosphere."

The nuclear blast would create a massive crater and shower highly radioactive dirt and debris; radiation levels would be lethal over several square miles. If used in a Third World city, such as Baghdad, tens of thousands of civilians would die, according to Princeton University's Robert Nelson and Frank von Hippel. If used on North Korea, these weapons could incinerate those who might take refuge in subways and

underground shelters in the event of a U.S. attack.

U.S. is real rogue nation

These weapons of mass destruction are in direct violation of any remaining treaties against nuclear proliferation. As the London Observer noted, "Of all the international regimes to be affected by the NPR, the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) may suffer the greatest blow. While the Bush administration professes to uphold the broad structure of the NPT, its plans contradict some of the 13 steps to advance the treaty agreed by all states' parties in May 2000."

The Energy Department is simultaneously proposing a new \$4-billion installation for making "plutonium pits that are at the heart of nuclear bombs."

But nuclear bombs have no hearts and neither does this reckless administration, which destroys treaties as readily as it bombs innocents. The Bush White House and Democrats in Congress cynically denounce so-called "rogue nations" that they say threaten the earth with weapons of mass destruction. But the real rogue nation is right here. The U.S. government is terrorizing the world, transgressing and breaking every arms treaty, while the population is kept in the dark by the mass media.

Only the anti-war movement can awaken the people to these great dangers. □



PHOTO: MIKE SHONLE, BOSTON INDYMEDIA

After vigorous support campaign

Palestinian activist wins hearing

By Steve Gillis
Boston

As the Israeli war against the Palestinian people, supplied and inspired by Washington, increases its brutality with deadly attacks on Hebron, Gaza, Jenin and throughout occupied Palestine, so too have U.S. "homeland security" attacks against those speaking for the cause of Palestinian self-determination.

On Nov. 15, dozens of supporters comprising the Amer Jubran Defense Committee rallied at the Boston INS headquarters during the early morning rush hour to demand the immediate release of this Palestinian activist from custody. Eleven days earlier, INS and FBI agents had raided Jubran's home in Rhode Island. They have been holding him without charges at the maximum security prison ACI Cranston.

Jubran has been a vocal leader at numerous pro-Palestinian and anti-war rallies and marches sponsored by the International ANSWER coalition throughout the eastern U.S., and is the

founder of the New England Committee to Defend Palestine.

At a press conference, Jubran's attorney, Nelson Brill, announced that the defense committee's efforts to flood the district INS office with hundreds of phone calls and faxes had won Jubran a bond hearing for Nov. 21 at 9:00 a.m. at the JFK federal building in Boston. Other speakers at the press conference included Boston City Councilor Chuck Turner, Nancy Murray of the American Civil Liberties Union, Urszula Masny-Latos of the National Lawyers Guild, Palestinian activist Rawan Barakat, and representatives of Amnesty International, Falmouth Anti-War, the Steelworkers Union and International ANSWER.

People are urged to call, fax and write: INS District Director Steven J. Farquharson; Room 1700, JFK Federal Building; Boston, MA 02203; telephone (617) 565-4214; fax (617) 565-4765. Please send a copy to: Amer Jubran Defense Committee, P.O. Box 755, Jamaica Plain, MA 02130. An online petition to Free Amer Jubran is at www.iacoboston.org/amerjubran. □



CLEVELAND

Largest anti-war protest since Vietnam

In Cleveland's largest anti-war protest since the first Gulf War, over 1,000 people on Nov. 16 marched over the bridge that connects the city's east and west sides. Called by the newly formed Northeast Ohio Antiwar Coalition, and organized in just a few weeks' time, the demonstration was built around the demands of "No war against Iraq" and "No blood for oil." Veteran activists marched alongside those who had never marched before and came after getting a leaflet or hearing about the protest in the news media.

Many joined the march spontaneously, including a group of African-American children who saw marchers go by the project where they live. They helped lead the march in chanting "1,2,3,4, money for kids, not for war."

Speakers at a rally represented a diverse coalition of forces, including American Friends Service Committee, Not in Our Name, Antiracist Action, Kent State Antiwar Committee, U.S. Rep. Dennis Kucinich, the Islamic Center of Cleveland, and the Act Now to Stop War & End Racism coalition (ANSWER).

—Martha Grevatt

Profit & blame

Who's to blame for oil spill disasters? The year was 1989. Who could ever forget the Valdez oil spill off the coast of Alaska, resulting in an unprecedented ecological catastrophe? Millions of gallons of precious oil were dumped into the Pacific Ocean, causing the deaths of untold wildlife and sea life. The livelihood of workers in the fishing industry was then and still is deeply affected by the Valdez disaster.

Who was to blame for this avoidable tragedy? Many pointed the finger at the captain of the Valdez ship, but in reality the real culprit was one of the most powerful of all the Big Oil conglomerates, Exxon. And because it was Exxon, the penalty for this disaster was tantamount to a slap on the wrist in terms of dollars and cents.

Thirteen years later, another oil spill catastrophe has occurred, this time in the Atlantic Ocean off the coast of Spain. On Nov. 19, the 44,000-ton tanker *Prestige*, carrying 70,000 tons of fuel oil, broke in two. The stern section of the ship soon sank. It had already spilled 5,000 tons of oil the previous week during a ferocious storm of the northwest coast of Spain. As this is being written, the entire ship is expected to sink. Fortunately, the crew members on the *Prestige*, low-paid workers mainly from the Philippines and Romania, have reportedly been rescued.

Once again, various capitalist countries are pointing the finger at each other for this disaster—a disaster that would not have happened were it not for capitalist profits being the driving impetus and capitalist laws that legally uphold the right to put profits ahead of everything else. None of them want the blame but they'll all line up for the profits.

The *Prestige* should not have been in these waters in the first place. While the average age of an active oil tanker is 14 years, this vessel was built 26 years ago in Japan. The European Union passed legislation in 2001 that will prohibit any oil tanker over 25 years old from trading, but this law is not to take effect until 2005.

The original destination of the *Prestige* was Singapore, where oil prices are currently higher than in Europe. The *Prestige* stood to make a \$300,000 profit upon its arrival.

Even before the ship finally sinks to the depths of the ocean, the question of who is at fault is being raised. As of now, no party or parties are taking responsibility for this disaster. The ship's complex ownership reflects the way transnational capital from the imperialist countries moves around the world, concealing its origins. The *Prestige* is owned by Mare Shipping Inc., a Greek company based in Liberia, Africa. It is chartered by Crown Resources, a Swiss-based subsidiary of a Russian industrial corporation, the Alfa Group, that has links to Dick Cheney's Halliburton Corp. The *Prestige* was registered in the Bahamas, a former British colony, and officially deemed seaworthy in the U.S.

Once the *Prestige* was disabled, both Spain and Portugal refused to have the ship towed to their respective ports, close to where the disaster happened. A decision was then made by "salvage experts" to tow the ship to the shores of Africa. This is another example of the racist attitude that still exists against the African continent and its 600 million inhabitants, whose interests are totally disregarded by the imperialist world. These former colonial masters were trying to shift the deadly consequences of their greed onto the most underdeveloped continent, which has a limited say in whether its shores should be used as a dumping ground for hazardous waste, including leaking fuel oil.

We are all too well aware of how this episode will play out. Lawsuits will clog the bourgeois courts for a number of years until this disaster no longer looms large in the public eye. Time, however, will not diminish the long-term ecological and economical damage. Disasters like the *Prestige* and the Valdez will continue to threaten the wellbeing of the planet as long as the profit-hungry system of capitalism is the dominating force. □

South African official defends Zimbabwe's land reform

By Monica Moorehead

A top official of the South African government at a Nov. 16 press conference in Pretoria called upon the Western imperialist countries to cease their penalties against Zimbabwe. The remarks by Minister of Foreign Affairs Nkosazana Zuma come at an important juncture as both the Bush administration and British Prime Minister Tony Blair have stepped up their racist attacks on the Zimbabwean government, led by Robert Mugabe.

This statement also comes at a critical time when the U.S. is increasing its military presence throughout the strategic Horn of Africa, sending thousands of Marines and other personnel there under the pretext of fighting "terrorism."

U.S. Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs Mark Bellamy threatened Zimbabwe with military intervention during a panel discussion on hunger in southern Africa, sponsored by the Center for Strategic and International Studies in Washington, DC, in early November.

Zuma's statement is a major diplomatic victory for Zimbabwe. South Africa, notwithstanding its own deepening capitalist economic crisis, is the most industrialized country in Africa.

Zimbabwean Minister of Foreign Affairs Stan Mudenge stood next to Zuma as she also called on Britain, the former colonial ruler of Zimbabwe, to honor the agreement it made at the time of independence and financially compensate the white farmers who have commercially controlled 70 percent of the most arable lands in Zimbabwe. Zimbabwe has been carrying out radical land reform, expropriating their land with the goal of restoring it to its rightful owners, the dispossessed Black peasant farmers.

Many of these farmers took part in the national liberation struggle during the 1960s and 1970s against the apartheid-like Rhodesian regime led by the notorious racist Ian Smith. To this day, Smith remains a big landowner in what is now Zimbabwe.

Zimbabwe, along with many parts of Southern Africa, is in the throes of a horrific drought that has brought about widespread hunger. Half of Zimbabwe's 12 million or more population is being directly threatened by the famine. But at this critical moment for the people, the U.S. and its junior imperialist partners, Britain and other members of the European Union, have imposed economic sanctions on Zimbabwe as punishment for carrying out the land reform. These sanctions include im-

posing severe restrictions on where President Robert Mugabe and other government officials can travel outside the country.

Continuing the horrendous tradition of demonizing Africans in a racist, dehumanizing manner, these imperialists and their big business media are blaming the Mugabe government for the hunger crisis by falsely portraying the white farmers as the only saviors of the starving Zimbabwean masses and also as innocent victims of a lawless Black-run government. The truth is that these wealthy white farmers grow cash crops like tobacco for the international market and not to feed the population. The truth is that millions of acres of land were stolen from the Zimbabwean people beginning in the 19th century when Zimbabwe, then Rhodesia, was brutally enslaved by the British colonialists, led by Cecil Rhodes.

The imperialists had openly given millions of dollars to opposition parties in Zimbabwe in the hopes they would defeat the incumbent government during presidential elections this past March, but Mugabe prevailed as president. The imperialists were so furious with the outcome that they deemed the elections "fraudulent." The South African government, as well as other observers, countered this attack and defended the outcome of the Zimbabwean elections.

Besides using hunger as a pretext for bellicose threats against Zimbabwe, the U.S. government has accused Zimbabwe of human rights violations in two recent incidents involving U.S. citizens. On Nov. 18, the U.S. Embassy in Harare accused Zimbabwean officials of interrogating a four-member group of two U.S. citizens and two Zimbabweans who supposedly were conducting a survey to assess the needs of Black workers who once worked on commercial white farms that had been expropriated. The U.S. Embassy stated that the interrogation was "hostile" and that the two Zimbabweans were beaten. It has demanded that the "party militants" be arrested.

Around the same time, a U.S. citizen from Connecticut was shot and killed at a police roadblock in eastern Zimbabwe. The circumstances of his death remain unclear, but one thing is for certain: the U.S. government has a long, bloody history of using incidents, planned or unplanned, big or small, as an excuse to undermine legitimate governments and trample upon the sovereignty of whole countries. The Bush administration wants to add Zimbabwe to a long wish list of oppressed countries, including Iraq, under the heel of the U.S. empire. □

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WW PHOTO: GREG DUNKEL

Argentina can't pay imperialist banks

Children starve as gov't defaults on debt

By G. Dunkel

During the first week of November, four children died of starvation in the northern Argentinean province of Tucuman. This preventable tragedy in what was once a prosperous country sheds light on why rage against capitalism is spreading throughout Latin America.

Tucuman was not an isolated case. UNICEF, the UN's fund for children, estimates that 260,000 Argentinean children suffer from malnutrition.

During the second week of November, Argentina defaulted on a payment of \$805 million due to the World Bank.

A survey of the major capitalist newspapers in the English-speaking world—the Washington Post, New York Times, Financial Times of London, the Toronto Globe & Mail—shows that they covered the financial part of the economic catastrophe currently strangling Argentina, but ignored its impact on working and poor people, other than to note that consumption was down because unemployment was up.

Some countries in the world have trouble feeding their people because they can't produce enough food. That's not Argentina's problem. It can produce enough to feed eight times its population of 37 million people.

Even in the area including the capital of Buenos Aires, where a third of all Argentines live, conditions are desperate. Silvia Almazan, a representative of a Buenos Aires teachers' union, told the London Observer, "Children are getting weak and hungry. Some are fainting in class and others vomit because they eat too fast on an empty stomach."

Staff members at School No. 12 say many children rely on the school for a good meal and appear famished on Mondays after being at home for the weekend. They increasingly are missing school to beg or help their parents hunt for food.

Maria del Carmen Morasso, a nutrition adviser for UNICEF Argentina, pointed out that even if children get enough food to survive, they face other problems from food shortages. "We are concerned that children will not recover from this shock," she said, which can produce permanently stunted growth and reduced mental capacity.

Argentina's main problem, the root cause of the default and the starvation facing its people, is that it is a developing country within a world capitalist system in which a few imperialist countries with super-banks and giant corporations, including agribusinesses, dominate the world market. Under these circumstances, and at a time when productivity has increased rapidly all over the globe, the Argentines suddenly find that they can no longer sell their products at a profit.

How U.S. and EU monopolize agriculture

The two main tools governments use to protect their agricultural sector are subsidies and tariffs, which are allowed under the rules of the World Trade Organization (WTO). The WTO, like all the presumably international organizations today, is actually dominated by the major imperialist countries. Because of this, tariffs protect the internal markets of developed areas like the European Union and the U.S. Subsidies allow their producers to sell at prices that countries like Argentina can't match.

The sums involved are immense. The

U.S., for instance, has said it is pledged to eliminate subsidies, but is actually increasing them, especially to huge corporations like Archer Daniels Midland and Cargill. These "farmers" will receive a \$190 billion handout, an 80 percent increase, in subsidies over the next decade.

While a comparable estimate for the EU is not available because it has just been expanded and its Common Agricultural Policy is under review, one study showed that each cow in the EU gets a subsidy of \$3 a day. Hundreds of millions of people in poor countries live on less than \$1 a day.

Bhagirath Lal, India's former ambassador to the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT), the predecessor to the WTO, told the New Straits Times of Malaysia on Nov. 15: "The developed countries have retained prohibitively high tariffs, high domestic support (sometimes even enhancing them) and high export subsidy in various forms."

Developing countries like Argentina cannot overcome the burden of high tariffs and the high level of support to domestic producers in developed countries. Even if they are allowed under WTO rules to provide subsidies to their producers, they don't have the financial resources needed to overcome the huge sums the U.S. and EU lay out each year. In fact, domestic farmers in developing countries face severe competition from the highly subsidized products of the imperialist countries.

Role of IMF and World Bank

Explaining why Argentina defaulted, Cabinet chief Alfredo Atanasof told reporters, "Argentina was not going to accept the policy of savage budget adjustments as a strategy for getting over its problems."

Actually, the politicians currently running the country would have accepted the dictates of the IMF if they thought that the people would let them get away with that. They are in office only because a popular eruption last December drove the previous government out of office. They are well aware that a very popular solution to the crisis afflicting Argentina starts with getting rid of all politicians.

After it defaulted on somewhere between \$90 billion and \$141 billion owed to commercial banks, bondholders and other private creditors early this year, Argentina had to rely on the World Bank, which insists that countries follow the strictures of the IMF.

The IMF's prescription for Argentina, as with so many other developing countries, was austerity: cut social services, medical care, education and government jobs, along with wholesale privatization, and totally open up the economy to foreign investors; put the peso on a dollar standard and raise interest rates. The government, in going along with this, even confiscated a large chunk of bank deposits last December.



Sign reads: "I don't have enough money to buy clothing and food for my children"

And what was all this pain supposed to accomplish? It was supposed to get capitalist exploitation going again.

But instead the economy contracted by 12 percent over the past year. Wages dropped by 44 percent, showing which social class is expected to pay for the capitalist crisis. Some 5 million people are now classified as "extremely poor," meaning they regularly do not get enough to eat. Some 14 million are just "poor," meaning they do not make enough to pay their bills—rent, electricity, phone, car loans—regularly. Close to 200,000 people were dropped from the telephone system in the first three months of 2002.

Probably Argentina could have paid the World Bank its \$805 million, especially since imports have fallen drastically—nobody has money to buy anything but the essentials, if that—but it was politically impossible.

In the fiscal year ended June 30, Argentina paid out to the World Bank \$786 million more than it received in loans, including \$613 million in interest and charges, according to the bank's own figures. With yet another payment due now, and facing its worst economic collapse since the Great Depression, the government decided it couldn't risk the mass anger that would follow another blood-letting.

Argentina is the second-largest economy in Latin America, after Brazil. Its people are increasingly taking to the streets out of hunger and anger. The growing turmoil there and elsewhere in Latin America illustrates why U.S. imperialism, despite its determined efforts to use military power to dominate the world, cannot establish a stable Pax Americana on any continent. □

World tells self-appointed 'good guys'

'End criminal embargo of Cuba'

By Deirdre Griswold

The self-proclaimed "good guys" of the world, with all their military and economic powers of persuasion, once again lost the vote in the UN General Assembly on the embargo of Cuba. Lost big time. Bigger than ever.

This year 173 nations voted that the U.S. should end its punishing economic sanctions against Cuba. Washington could round up only two votes besides its own—Israel and the Marshall Islands. There were only four abstentions. The vote on Nov. 12 was the biggest repudiation of Washington's policy yet and the 11th straight year in which a majority of the General Assembly has voted against the embargo.

With the passage of the Helms-Burton law in 1995, U.S. sanctions on Cuba were extended to third countries that did business with the socialist island. This has been widely denounced in the world as an arrogant attempt to extend U.S. law beyond its borders—a harkening back to the days of colonial "extraterritoriality."

The embargo was imposed shortly after the 1959 Cuban Revolution, which not only toppled the U.S.-supported dictatorship of Fulgencio Batista but also took back control of the country's resources from U.S. companies that had milked great profits from its sugar, tobacco and nickel indus-

tries and from tourism based on its lovely climate, dazzling beaches and rich culture.

For over 40 years, Democratic and Republican administrations alike have followed the dictates of big business and continued a hostile policy toward Cuba, trying in vain to destroy its socialist system. Despite the blockade, acts of terrorism and military threats, including the 1961 Bay of Pigs invasion, the revolution has not only survived but has provided Cubans with the best medical care in all Latin America and guaranteed jobs and education.

In recent years, many U.S. businesses, looking for new markets and unconvinced that the socialist government of Fidel Castro will "fall any day now," have been exploring trade possibilities despite Helms-Burton and other sanctions laws. Pharmaceuticals and agribusinesses have been among the exhibitors at trade fairs in Havana. Two years ago, Congress reflected the pressure of the agriculture lobby when it allowed the sale of food to Cuba. Cuba started buying U.S. food this year. Ricardo Alarcon, president of Cuba's National Assembly, said in a speech before the UN vote that Cuba's purchases of foodstuffs from the U.S. could reach \$200 million this year.

Despite every effort by the U.S. to kill it, Cuban socialism is not a "failed system." It is the U.S., not Cuba, that is out of step with the sentiments of the world's people, as the UN vote showed. □

Hay una gran distancia entre Lompoc California y Habana

En California, un encuentro con un anti terrorista aprisionado

Por Alicia Jrapko y Bill Hackwell

Al igual que muchas prisiones en California, la Penitenciaría Federal de Lompoc se encuentra en una zona aislada, lejos de cualquier centro urbano. Está ubicada sobre tierras donde hasta no hace mucho tiempo se cultivaban comida y flores y donde se alimentaba toda clase de ganado. Hoy, el centro de Lompoc se caracteriza como un lugar saturado de restaurantes de comida rápida y hoteles baratos.

La mayoría de los familiares que visitan prisioneros en Lompoc viajan desde largas distancias y se quedan allí a pasar la noche, lo cual les significa un gran sacrificio económico, ya que la mayoría de ellos son pobres.

Lompoc también es conocida por otra cosa; la Base de La Fuerza Área de Vandenburg, una base militar de larga extensión donde los Estados Unidos lanzan secretamente misiles balísticos intercontinentales para practicar el derribo de blancos sobre el Océano Pacífico.

La prisión de Lompoc no es solo una instalación, sino que es una serie de instalaciones federales que incluye desde una prisión de mínima seguridad hasta una de máxima seguridad. En esta última, es donde se encuentra encarcelado Gerardo Hernández, uno de los cinco prisioneros políticos Cubanos. Esta prisión es difícil de encontrar y está ubicada al final de un camino que no conduce a ninguna parte.

En camino hacia la prisión, nos preguntábamos, como podía ser posible que cinco hombres que han estado luchando para prevenir ataques terroristas en contra de su país, Cuba, se encuentren languideciendo detrás de esas paredes?

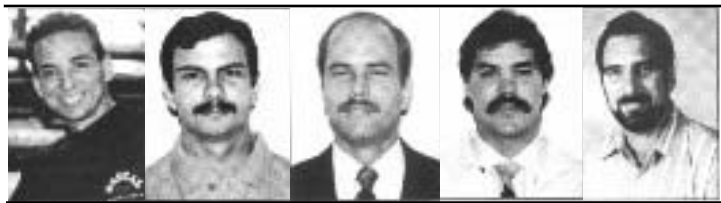
Mientras nos acercábamos a la entrada principal, tuvimos que detenernos para contestar preguntas por parte de

un guardia anónimo, a través de un micrófono desde una torre de control. Grandes carteles con avisos de advertencia describían todas las cosas que no se podían entrar a esta propiedad federal. El guardia nos preguntó entre otras cosas, porque estábamos allí y que traíamos en nuestro vehículo. Después que se nos permitió estacionar, fuimos a una sala de espera donde las autoridades confirmaron que nuestra visita había sido aprobada con antelación. Después tuvimos que llenar formas individuales y pasar por un proceso de control y medidas de seguridad, incluyendo un sello con tinta invisible, en nuestras manos.

Antes de entrar, tuvimos que dejar absolutamente todo en un armario, incluyendo papel y lápiz. Lo único que las personas que visitan a los prisioneros pueden tener en su posesión, además del deseo de ver a sus seres queridos, es rollos de monedas para comprar comida (sin ningún valor nutritivo) y compartirla con los prisioneros.

Mientras esperábamos en grupos pequeños para continuar el camino hacia la sala de visitas, las puertas metálicas rodeadas de alambres de púas, nos recordaban permanentemente donde nos encontrábamos. Pero nada podía empañar la alegría anticipada del encuentro, ni siquiera el sonido estruendoso y vacío de la puerta corrediza de metal que se cerraba detrás de nosotros.

Finalmente, entramos a un cuarto amplio lleno de mesas pequeñas que se encontraban en hileras. En cada una de ellas se encontraban los familiares de otros prisioneros de un lado de la mesa y el prisionero del otro lado. No quedaba duda de quienes eran los prisioneros y quienes no lo eran, ya que todos los presos vestían sus uniformes color caqui. La gran mayoría de las personas en esa habitación eran Negros y Latinos. Un panel largo en la mesa



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

separaba a los familiares de los prisioneros para evitar cualquier tipo de contacto físico. El contacto personal es una zona gris, prohibida por las reglas de la prisión pero dictadas por los guardias que se encuentran en la sala de visitas.

Fuimos asignados a una mesa y allí esperamos a que Gerardo viniera a nuestro encuentro. No pasó mucho tiempo hasta que se abrió la puerta y Gerardo casi rebotó en frente de nosotros. A pesar del medio ambiente opresivo nos dio la bienvenida con un fuerte abrazo como si estuviésemos entrando a su casa. Fue en ese preciso instante cuando entendimos porque Gerardo es considerado un Héroe por el Pueblo Cubano.

Durante las cinco horas siguientes de conversación informal con Gerardo, no podíamos evitar pensar que frente a nosotros se encontraba un hijo de la Revolución Cubana, un Hombre Nuevo, un ejemplo del Che, un ser humano humilde, sincero, generoso y digno, quien cree que un mundo mejor y menos peligroso es posible. Este hombre que confronta dos cadenas perpetuas más ochenta meses, conserva su buen sentido del humor, y continúa siendo un orgulloso hijo de su patria, a pesar de las condiciones adversas.

El tiempo se nos escapó de las manos. Hablamos de nuestras respectivas infancias, compartimos anécdotas familiares, conversamos sobre eventos políticos de actualidad y la posibilidad de una guerra. También conversamos sobre el trabajo de nuestro Comité Nacional Libertad para los Cinco. Una vez más Gerardo expresó su agradecimiento a todos los comités que

alrededor del mundo están ayudando en la lucha para liberar a los cinco y también a todos aquellos que a diario le envían a el y a los otros compañeros numerosas cartas.

A las 3 de la tarde todos los visitantes tuvimos que abandonar la sala y los prisioneros regresar a su celda. Llego el momento del abrazo de despedida mientras nos decíamos adiós. Parecía como que el tiempo se hubiese detenido por un minuto mientras cada uno de los allí presentes hacía un esfuerzo por guardar en la memoria la imagen de sus seres queridos y llevársela con ellos hasta la próxima visita. A Gerardo se le ha negado injustamente el derecho de este contacto humano con su esposa Adriana. Ella recibió una visa en Agosto para visitar a Gerardo, pero en una maniobra sádica y cruel, el gobierno de los Estados Unidos la detuvo en Houston y después de interrogarla por largas horas la expulsó del país y tuvo que regresar a Cuba sin poder ver a su esposo.

Unos minutos antes de que se cerrara la puerta, Gerardo nos contagiaba su fuerza y determinación mientras sonreía y cerraba sus dos puños. Nos fuimos con el sentimiento profundo de que Gerardo así también como René, Ramón, Fernando y Antonio son prisioneros políticos injustamente encarcelados en los Estados Unidos y de que es más imperativo que nunca dejemos de continuar con nuestro trabajo para que los cinco puedan ser libres y puedan regresar a su patria.

(Alicia Jrapko y Bill Hackwell son miembros del Comité Nacional Libertad para los Cinco de San Francisco, California) □

Veteranos marchan contra la guerra

Este año, por primera vez de la Guerra de Vietnam, contingentes anti guerra marcharon en por lo menos dos desfiles del Día de los Veteranos el 11 de Noviembre.

En Nueva York un grupo de 50 hombres y mujeres de la organización Veteranos de Vietnam Contra la Guerra y Veteranos por la Paz marcharon a lo largo de la 5ta. Avenida con banderas y carteles contra la guerra planeada de Bush contra Irak. En San Francisco un contingente con el lema de "No guerra para las Corporaciones Petroleras" marchó en el desfile.

La prensa capitalista hizo comentario de comparación entre el desfile de los veteranos y la gran marcha anti guerra del 26 de octubre que reunió a más de 100.000 personas.

A diferencia de los desfiles de la década de los setenta que se tornaron en vio-

lentas confrontaciones entre los partidarios y los oponentes de la guerra ningún incidente fue reportado esta vez.

El Día de los Veteranos en los Estados Unidos ha por mucho tiempo sido usado por los políticos y los militares no solo para conmemorar a los fallecidos sino para incitar la guerra, y este año no fue excepción. El Presidente George W. Bush utilizó la ocasión para batir el apoyo para sus diseños de expansión.

Pero en otras partes, el movimiento anti guerra marcó el día con reuniones y protestas.

El Reverendo James Bevel, director de la histórica marcha del Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., Marcha en Washington, en el año 1963, dijo durante una protesta en la Universidad de Illinois en Urbana: "Tenemos que ser honestos cuando alguien intenta asesinar a alguien para robar petróleo a diferencia de cuando existe una gran ame-



FOTO: DEIRDRE GRISWOLD

naza contra nuestra seguridad de nuestra soberanía nacional. Es obvio de que Bush está llevando a cabo la política de odio de

su padre contra el pueblo iraquí, basado en un trato de petróleo que se tornó agrio."

—Deirdre Griswold