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Victories for lesbian, gay, bi, trans movement
Pride on the march

By Leslie Feinberg
New York

As marchers passed the site of the 1969 Stonewall Uprising in Greenwich Village here June 29, hundreds of thousands strong, the crowds and cheers swelled and so did the sense of pride. Hundreds of thousands more lined the sidewalks to applaud—from Central Park in the middle of Manhattan island to the Village.

Thirty-four years ago it was those who had the least to lose and the most to gain from fighting back who engaged the police in hand-to-hand combat, forcing the well-armed cops to retreat. They were Black, Latina and white, transgender and transsexual, gay and lesbian, and many homeless youths. The rebellion lasted for four hot June nights running.

This year marchers arrived at the site in far greater numbers and diversity, filled to the brim with pride in struggle, knowing that coast to coast and around the world millions more were marching together—a vast contingent of humanity demanding an end to bigotry, discrimination and repression based on sexuality, gender and sex.

From San Francisco to New York, Houston to Chicago—and in cities and towns in between—everyone had the sweet taste of victory on their lips as they chanted and sang and cheered. This year's Pride was a celebration of victories, here and around the world, that are high-water marks in the long struggle for equality and liberation of the gay and lesbian, trans and bisexual population.

"Decriminalized" read the T-shirts of some who marched in New York, referring to the June 26 Supreme Court decision that

effectively erases the last anti-"sodomy" decrees from state laws.

As word of the long-fought-for triumph had spread that day, victory rallies—planned and spontaneous—were held in cities, towns and campuses across the United States. This was the biggest political mobilization since the outpouring after the lynching of Matthew Shepard, a young gay man, in October 1998.

The ruling wrung from the Supreme Court is not the only news to roar about.

When General Electric—owner of NBC television network—announced June 19 that the company's new union contracts will

A LANDMARK GAIN—
Why the Supreme Court did it **CENTERFOLD**

include health-care coverage for employees' same-sex domestic partners, it became the 64th Fortune 100 company to do so. Shop-floor pressure and leadership by groups like Pride At Work, the LGBT constituency group of the AFL-CIO, have made winning these benefits a top priority.

Full marriage rights between two people of the same sex became a legal reality in Ontario, Canada, on June 10.

And on June 30, the British government announced a proposal for "civil partnerships" that would grant to same-sex couples who register in civil ceremonies many of the legal rights that heterosexual couples automatically receive from the state. If passed by Parliament, this would include pension and property rights and respect for next-of-kin rights in hospitals. It's still a parallel legal system that sidesteps the right to marry and allows

Continued on page 6

Bush persona non grata in California



It was to be a quick fund-raising trip to the Coast. But Bush got booed by thousands in Los Angeles (above) and San Francisco on June 27. See page 2 for details.

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Thousands in L.A. and S.F. tell Bush

'End the occupation— Bring the troops home!'

Special to Workers World

George W. Bush flew into California on June 27 to raise millions of dollars from wealthy Republicans. He got the money, but he also got booed by thousands of protesters in Los Angeles and in Burlingame, near San Francisco.

In L.A., some 10,000 angry demonstrators massed right in front of the Century Plaza Hotel where Bush was milking the crowd at a campaign fund-raising dinner. On a stage flanked with Palestinian flags and banners that read "Palestine will be free," "U.S. out Of Iraq" and "Jobs not war," the International ANSWER coalition held a militant, three-hour rally punctuated by thunderous chants of "Impeach Bush" and "Hey-hey, ho-ho, the occupation's got to go!"

It was anti-imperialist all the way. Speakers included John Parker of ANSWER, Tomeka Webb of the Filipino group BAYAN International-USA, and Mazen of the Free Palestine Alliance. Joe Delaplaine of Workers World Party declared: "I am proud to be a gay man. I am proud to be a union member. I am proud to be a communist. And I am proud to be in Workers World Party because we stand with the people of Palestine and Iraq. With the immigrant community. With the LGBT community and all who are struggling against the injustices of imperialism, racism, and bigotry."

This was a pro-worker rally that supported self-determination for oppressed peoples.

It was endorsed by a wide range of organizations.

For \$2,000 a plate, Bush's rich Republican buddies had the opportunity to thank their benefactor for huge tax cuts, the attempted racist colonization of Iraq, and his war on social spending and on unions.

It's not surprising that so many turned out in Los Angeles to shame Bush. Angelenos have many reasons to be sickened by the current expansionist phase of U.S. imperialism.

Bush can find the money for a ruthless occupation. He can find billions for a few mega-corporations to "rebuild" Iraq. He can give billions in military aid to vicious regimes in Israel, Colombia and elsewhere. But the wealthiest nation in the history of the world cannot provide for the most basic needs of its people.

Because of Bush's war on the public sector, Los Angeles can't find the money to keep hospitals open, pay its teachers decent wages or fund education. California's 2004 budget will result in hospital and clinic closures in the poorest neighborhoods. Public School teachers are taking pay cuts and giving back part of last year's pay in order to keep their jobs.

Unemployment is soaring for the general population. And in a city with an enormous immigrant population, immigrant poverty is at 23 percent.

But the people of Los Angeles are fighting back. The immigrant rights community is gearing up for a huge protest against immigrant bashing, deportations and the Patriot Act on July 19.

San Francisco: protest won't be moved

It took Bush an hour to land at San Francisco International Airport, be whisked to the closest hotel, and shake down corporate fat cats and Republican Party loyalists for \$2,000 apiece. Then he was back in the air like a thief in the night.

Bush made no mention of the mounting list of U.S. soldiers killed in Iraq, or of the national crisis in education, housing, and health and human services. This stopover was all about money.

Across the street from the hotel, the ANSWER coalition, armed with banners and a sound system, held its ground even as Secret Service agents said they would have to move down the street out of "security concerns."

As buses from San Jose, Oakland and San Francisco began to arrive, the protest grew to 2,000 people, even though police had closed down freeway exits and not allowed hundreds of people coming from the new Millbrae BART station to cross the overpass to the site of the protest.

Chants of "Bush lied, Iraqi people and GIs die" could be heard inside where Bush was speaking.

The protest, initiated by ANSWER, was endorsed by the San Francisco and San Mateo Central Labor Councils and the California Labor Federation, plus many other groups.

John Beacham in Los Angeles and Bill Hackwell in San Francisco contributed to this article.



Protest outside Bush fundraiser in Burlingame near San Francisco.

WW PHOTO: BILL HACKWELL

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WW CALENDAR

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Tue., July 15

IAC forum: Eyewitness Zimbabwe. Guest speaker: NYC Councilperson Charles Barron. Plus video footage from Zimbabwe. 7 p.m. At 39 W. 14th St., Room 206, Manhattan. For info (212) 633-6646 or on the Web at www.iacenter.org.

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Courts still ignore evidence of Mumia's innocence

By Betsey Piette
Philadelphia

Mumia Abu-Jamal is a Black journalist who was sentenced to death row on July 3, 1982, after a rigged trial in which he was convicted of shooting Philadelphia police officer Daniel Faulkner. Although another individual, Arnold Beverly, has confessed to killing Faulkner, Abu-Jamal is beginning his 22nd year on Pennsylvania's death row, denied the due process that would set him free.

From his isolated prison cell in rural western Pennsylvania, Abu-Jamal continues to report on world events. His reporting style represents a belief that open-minded, curious and dogged research curbs corruption and concentration of social and political power. Read an article or listen to a commentary by Mumia Abu-Jamal and it isn't hard to understand why he has come to be known as the "Voice of the Voiceless" or why the capitalist state would like to permanently silence him.

In the face of deepening political

repression brought on by post-Sept. 11 measures such as the USA Patriot Act and Homeland Security, it's also not so hard to imagine a state capable of using any means at its disposal to silence its critics, or anyone else deemed dangerous to the system. This year is the 50th anniversary of the execution of Ethel and Julius Rosenberg, which took place in a period of political backlash and repression not unlike today's.

Abu-Jamal's attorneys and supporters have presented the courts with clear evidence that he did not receive a fair trial or due process as defined by the U.S. Constitution. They have demonstrated the collusion of his court-appointed attorney after Abu-Jamal was denied his constitutional right to a lawyer of his choice. They have challenged the racism involved in jury selection that denied Abu-Jamal a jury of his peers, another right guaranteed by the Constitution.

The lack of credible ballistics evidence, the fact that prosecution witnesses changed their stories, eyewitness reports

of another man fleeing the scene that were never presented to the jury, a racially biased presiding judge, the lack of evidence that Abu-Jamal even fired a gun—all are the sort of gaping holes in the prosecution's case that in similar situations have resulted in convictions being overturned.

Yet in this case, every effort to make the court adhere to its own rules and regulations, every effort to demand due process as defined by the Constitution, is denied. Why?

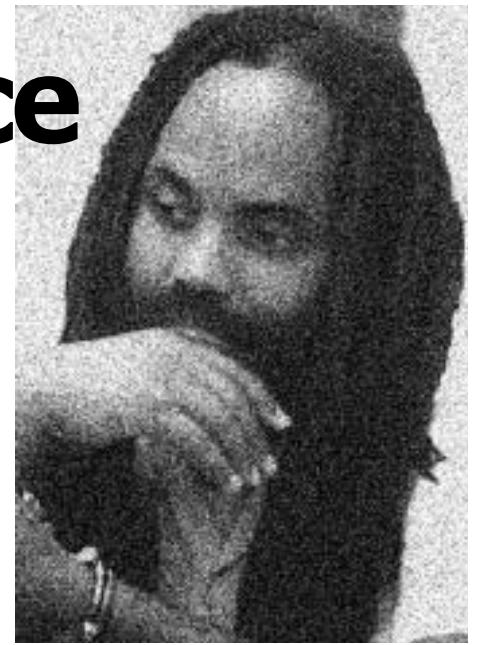
Silencing an activist

On May 4, 2001, Abu-Jamal's legal team filed an affidavit from Beverly, who confessed to shooting Faulkner and passed a lie detector test to back this up. Beverly said he was hired by organized crime and a division of corrupt cops to kill Faulkner because he was interfering with graft and payoffs made to allow prostitution, gambling and drug dealing in the center-city area of Philadelphia.

When Faulkner was killed in December 1981, the FBI was involved in at least three investigations of police corruption involving extortion and bribery in connection with prostitution, gambling and organized crime in the district where Faulkner worked. Three of the main people targeted in the FBI investigation were James Carlini, head of the homicide department that investigated Faulkner's death; John DeBenedetto, head of the central division where Faulkner worked; and Alphonzo Giordano, who was the senior cop at the scene of Faulkner's shooting.

These three constituted the chain of command for the investigation into Faulkner's murder—at the very time they were under FBI investigation.

In another affidavit, Donald Hersing, a FBI informant in the area Faulkner worked, testified that Alphonzo Giordano, senior officer on the scene at Faulkner's murder, was one of the main people involved in the corruption. He also stated that Cynthia White, a key prosecution witness at Abu-Jamal's trial, was one of the people police paid to give false testimony to convict innocent people. In February 1983, Hersing's testimony played a big



part in the conviction of John DeBenedetto, along with six other police officers, relating to bribery, extortion and involvement in prostitution.

Mumia Abu-Jamal always used his journalism to expose the injustice around him. As a result, he reported heavily on Philadelphia's rampant police brutality and the city's attacks on the MOVE organization, of which he was a supporter. He was the subject of an FBI Cointelpro investigation because of his membership in the Black Panther Party—a factor used by the prosecution to push for the death penalty in his case.

Supporters point out that framing Mumia Abu-Jamal for the murder of Officer Faulkner served to silence an activist long targeted by the police. At the same time, it provided police with a means to prevent a real investigation that could have exposed department corruption.

In December 2001, Federal Third Court of Appeals Judge William Yohn overturned the death sentence in Abu-Jamal's case, while letting the conviction stand. This effectively denied Abu-Jamal's appeal for a new trial where this evidence could be heard. Each successive attempt to force the courts on both state and federal levels to hear the evidence has been denied.

Meanwhile, Mumia Abu-Jamal remains on death row awaiting appeals of Yohn's ruling from his attorneys as well as the prosecutors. A ruling in favor of the prosecution could result in a new death warrant from pro-death penalty Gov. Edward Rendell, a former Philadelphia district attorney.

The worldwide movement to free Mumia Abu-Jamal must continue the struggle to demand justice and due process in his case. □

Court affirms what students knew:

State underfunds NYC schools

By G. Dunkel
New York

The highest court in New York state has finally spoken. The Court of Appeals ruled on June 26 that the state has not provided adequate funding to the educational system in New York City, so that the city cannot provide its 1.1 million students with a "sound basic education." Classes are too big—34 students per class in high schools. Its textbooks, library books and computers are too old and inadequate. Too many teachers are undertrained and not qualified.

The court gave the state 13 months to come up with a plan to fix these problems. This might sound like a lot of time, but times are tough, money is tight and the politicians in Albany, the state capital, have spent decades dividing urban school districts from rural, New York City from upstate cities like Buffalo, Rochester and Syracuse, rich suburban districts from poor, inner-city districts.

In New Jersey, Ohio, Kentucky and Alabama, similar lawsuits have led to similar decisions. But since New York is a major media center, the news of this victory for the city's schools will likely have a national impact. An organization suing California in a similar case intends to use the New York decision.

The New York City Board of Education gets short-changed on state aid, which per pupil is less than the state average. Compared to most of its suburban neighbors, it receives far less money to educate each student—even though costs in the city are higher.

Other big urban districts—Chicago, Los Angeles, Philadelphia—have similar student bodies and get even less money per pupil than New York. It is unclear how the education they provide stacks up against New York's. But they are already being brought up by opponents of the ruling, who claim that money isn't everything.

That's true, but money certainly does help.

For years the wealthy rulers have denied the daughters and sons of the working class, especially in majority Black, Latino and Native communities, the sound basic education they need to function in this society, to get a decent job and support themselves and their families. Their bought-and-paid-for politicians talk about the importance of education, but they certainly do not put the public money where their mouths are.

Now, with most of the states in a fiscal crisis caused by the sick economy and tax cuts for the rich, education is sure to suffer even more.

A key part of George Bush's "No Child Left Behind" program for education is an emphasis on high-stakes tests, like the Regents in New York or Florida's Comprehensive Assessment. A test like the New York State Math Regents is so tough that 63 percent of the students who take it fail. Because the pass rate for the math test is low in the affluent suburbs as well as in the inner city, the state has recently thrown out the test results and told the teachers to grade students on their work throughout the year.

Other standardized tests are more culturally and politically biased against African Americans and Latinos. Those tests have not been thrown out. Instead, politicians like New York City's racist, billionaire Mayor Michael Bloomberg defend the tests by blaming "cultures that do not respect education" and "violence in certain schools."

This court decision exposes the lack of resources devoted to education in New York City. Even if more resources can be found in a time of tight money and budget cuts, parents and their community organizations, teachers and their unions, along with other progressives, are going to have to fight to see that they are allocated fairly and wisely. □

Protest racism & police brutality in Benton Harbor, Mich.

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Baltimore police harass rally

Bus riders boycott over fare hike

By Workers World Baltimore bureau

A massive police presence greeted community and union activists as they gathered June 27 for a 4 p.m. rush-hour protest on the corner of Saratoga and Eutaw Streets in downtown Baltimore.

The All Peoples Congress and Transit Riders League had called the protest to oppose a Mass Transit Authority plan to increase bus fare from \$1.35 to \$1.60 and make cuts in bus service. The activists also planned the activity to publicize a call for a one-day bus boycott against the MTA on July 1.

City police lined the route the groups planned to walk to the MTA offices at Baltimore and Light streets. A special force of MTA police gathered at the corner where protesters set up a picket line. Immediately city police threatened to arrest members of the group if they used a hand-held bullhorn for chanting.

Despite police intimidation, bus riders continued to take flyers and shouted their approval of the protest. Demonstrators chanted as loudly as possible. Police continued to harass the group, yelling at them to keep walking despite the participation of several activists in wheelchairs and elderly people who used canes and needed to rest in the sweltering weather.

Some who tried to get to the action later reported they were not able to get past the heavy police presence.

At 5 p.m. demonstrators arrived at the state office building, which houses the MTA offices. In addition to city police, the group encountered dozens of state police.

State Sen. Verna Jones addressed the group, along with local ministers and community activists. Police then grabbed

Sharon Ceci, a volunteer coordinator for the bus boycott and organizer for the All Peoples Congress, telling her that they were writing a criminal citation for the use of a sound system.

Bill Henry, a well-known community activist and aide to former City Council President Mary Pat Clarke, complained that this was unconstitutional and illegal behavior on the part of the police. He used the bullhorn to say that if they were going to cite Ceci, then they should cite everyone.

All the protesters agreed. Police then began to write up citations for Ralph Moore, a long-time community activist, chairperson Eugene Peterson of the Transit Rider's League and several other participants. When the police realized that close to 50 people had lined up to be cited, they appeared frustrated and angry.

The police captain in charge approached activist Jeff Bigelow, who was holding the bullhorn. The captain shouted, "M—r f—r, none of you are going to get away with this. You are under arrest for assault."

Bigelow, a union organizer with AFSCME Council 92, was taken away in handcuffs. He was charged with assault and use of a sound system. The police confiscated the group's bullhorn.

Without a megaphone, Ceci gathered the crowd: "What the police have done here today is illegal and unconstitutional. We will not be silenced. It is not we who should be arrested or given citations. Instead it should be Maryland Secretary of Transportation Robert Flanagan and Gov. Robert Ehrlich for jeopardizing the welfare of thousands of bus riders and low-wage workers. Layoffs, cutbacks, war and racism are a crime. Community activists

A fare hike is the straw that broke the camel's back for low-paid Baltimore workers.

WW PHOTO: SHARON CECI

who are speaking out against bus fare hikes are not the criminals.

"It is important that we keep our movement together and that we remain strong. Ehrlich is about to lay off thousands of workers and cut social programs while President George Bush can spend billions to wage war and occupy Iraq. We will not be intimidated."

She motivated those gathered to attend the July 28 hearing of the six people given criminal citations.

Bus boycott

The activist group gathered the following morning to continue its efforts to organize for the July 1 bus boycott. Renee Washington, Betsy Oakes and Sharon Ceci met with volunteer drivers and bus riders to plan a boycott orientation.

Florence Gross came to the group's headquarters to talk about her hardships as a Baltimore bus rider. She is a private-duty nurse who must leave her apartment each day at 4:15 a.m. to be able to get to work by 6:30 a.m.

Gross explained that the buses are packed at that time in the morning. Most people have to stand and in many cases the air-conditioning doesn't work. "If the bus doesn't show up," she related, "I have to take a cab, which can cost me as much as \$15, more than I make in two hours' time at work."

She rides each morning with a score of people going to Curtis Bay to work in factories making dog food and clothing or to do private-duty work. All of her fellow riders have heard about the boycott, either on



the radio or through flyers and posters. They are in support.

Gross, who had come to the office to arrange transportation for those at her bus stop, also related these hardships to a number of young people who were active in the recent protests against the war. They had come into the office to pick up orange signs that read "Boycott vehicle" and "Justice for bus riders."

After hearing first-hand the conditions of bus riders, young anti-war activist Tara Cariso volunteered to come to the All Peoples Congress Hall for the 4 a.m. shift.

This campaign has brought together young people from the anti-war movement, bus riders who have never participated in community activities, union organizers and community activists.

Following driver orientation, volunteers went into the community to distribute boycott flyers in English and Spanish. On June 29, the group distributed flyers to churches denouncing the police attack.

The All Peoples Congress is calling on groups and individuals to telephone, fax or email Mayor Martin O'Malley to condemn the police action at the June 27th protest. Phone (410) 396-3835, fax (410) 576-9435, email mayor@baltimorecity.gov.

The group is requesting a meeting with the mayor to demand that constitutional rights for the civil rights, union and anti-war movements be guaranteed and police harassment and intervention be ended. □

How rich can they get?

By G. Dunkel

Under capitalism there is no limit to how much wealth the very richest can accumulate at the expense of the workers and poor.

That was proven yet again with the release of the Spring 2003 Statistics of Income Bulletin by the Internal Revenue Service on June 26. It shows that in 2000 the 400 individuals reporting the highest incomes in the United States accounted for more than 1 percent of all income received. This was more than double their share of the national income back in 1992.

In the nine years covered by this report, the income of the top 400 increased 15 times faster than that of the bottom 90 percent. The median income for the population as a whole in 2000 was \$27,000. This means that half of the families in the United States made more than \$27,000 and half made less—some a lot less.

To be in that select group, the top 400, however, you had to rake in at least \$86.8 million. Some had incomes of more than \$1 billion.

Part of the reason why the wealthiest 400 got so much richer was due to the stock market bubble of the 1990s. But the figures in the report indicate that the wealthiest 400 also took advantage of a big reduction in the capital gains tax in 1997, which was lowered from 28 percent to 20 percent. This tax applies to money made by selling stocks at a gain.

Since then, Bush has lowered the tax on capital gains even further, to 15 percent,

so the income of these richest people will rise even more.

At the same time, the Census Bureau reports that median income went down from 2000 to 2001, which means that poor people were making less at the same time the richest of the rich were doing even better.

Some 63.2 million tax returns report incomes of less than \$50,000, while 2.8 million report incomes of over \$200,000. These wealthier people reported a total income of \$1.7 trillion, of which \$483 billion was from the sale of capital assets, mostly stocks and bonds. Very few households with an income less than \$50,000 own stock. Bush's tax cuts are almost entirely for the richest of the rich.

The income gap between rich and poor in the United States is many times greater than in other developed capitalist countries.

There are other significant gaps in income distribution in the United States. Men make more than women for the same work; African Americans make less than whites, and even at the same income level have significantly less wealth—savings, investments in a house, pensions—which makes it harder for them to survive economically when they lose income. But the struggles against racism and sexism and for affirmative action have somewhat narrowed these gaps.

The only thing that will reverse the growing polarization of rich and poor, however, is a broad and militant working class struggle that threatens the very system of capitalism itself. □

Unions organize laundry workers

Special to Workers World

UNITE and the Teamsters union announced on June 25 in Chicago that they are joining in an international effort to organize workers at Cintas.

Cintas is the biggest company in the uniform and laundry industry, with some 28,000 employees working in 300 plants and facilities in the U.S. and Canada.

This is the biggest organizing drive taken on by UNITE since its 1999 victory in the South Carolina textile industry. Since then, anti-worker trade agreements such as NAFTA have wiped out union jobs in the textile and garment industry.

The Cintas organizing campaign is the most important part of UNITE's initiative to build its strength in numbers. A union victory for the low-paid, Black, Latina and immigrant workers at Cintas would give UNITE a more powerful voice at the bargaining table for all its members. It would open the gates for organizing the entire industry.

Oppressive and dangerous working conditions along with anti-union tactics have currently brought Cintas under investigation in the U.S. and Canada for over 100 violations of federal labor law. In March, Cintas drivers filed a national class

action lawsuit charging the company with refusing to pay drivers up to \$100 million in overtime pay.

UNITE says the company fired union supporters, threatened plant closures, and carried out surveillance and intimidation of workers who support unionization.

Laundry production workers and the drivers are struggling to organize a union that can change the current working conditions. They want to earn enough money to support their families and have time left after work to spend with their children. They need medical care and a retirement plan.

Cintas delivery drivers will organize with the Teamsters and the production workers in Cintas laundries will organize with UNITE. Cintas workers in the U.S. and Canada began the organizing campaign with UNITE in February 2003.

UNITE represents over 250,000 members in the U.S. and Canada, including over 40,000 members in the laundry industry. The Teamsters represents more than 1.4 million members throughout North America. UNITE and the Teamsters currently represent more than one-third of the workers in the uniform and laundry industry. □

Tour rallies support for Cuba

By Gloria La Riva
San Francisco

"Why does the U.S. have an obsession with Cuba? Is it because Cuba is a dictatorship as they have claimed? No, it is because Cuba is revolutionary, anti-imperialist, anti-capitalist, and anti-racist."

Andrés Gómez, a longtime leader in Miami's progressive Cuban community, was cheered by a crowd of almost 120 people in San Francisco's Mission district on June 21. He spoke while on a tour of Sacramento, San Francisco and San Jose to analyze the increased U.S. aggression against Cuba.

Gómez's own history qualifies him to speak against the U.S.-sponsored anti-Cuba terrorists in Miami, whose sole aim is to try to overthrow the Cuban socialist revolution.

Gómez was born in Havana in 1947 into a well-off family. In 1960, after the Cuban Revolution had overthrown the pro-U.S. dictator Fulgencio Batista, his family moved to Florida. Within a few years, influenced by the great struggles against the Vietnam War and the civil rights movement, Gómez and other Cuban-born youth rejected their parents' beliefs and formed the Antonio Maceo Brigade to defend the Cuban revolutionary process.

He has faced great danger over the years for his work in Miami.

A major point of confusion in the movement is over the trials that took place in Cuba in April of this year. Washington portrayed the 75 people who were arrested as "dissidents."

Gómez said that the trial of the 75 showed they were in the employ of U.S. intelligence services, but were falsely promoted by the capitalist world media as human rights activists and independent journalists in order to "discredit Cuba to international world public opinion, to isolate Cuba, to make it more vulnerable."

"Independent from what?" he asked. "Independent from human decency. Any

Cuban who would receive directions and be financed by the government of the U.S. against the evident interests of the Cuban people is a traitor."

The chair of the event, Sebastiana Pastor, reminded the audience that "Before every war launched by this government, a campaign of lies and demonization had to precede the bombing to create pretexts, justification and confusion. Tonight we want to shed light on Washington's lies and build support for Cuba's right to defend itself."

Alicia Jrapko of the Cuban Five Committee spoke on the five Cuban political prisoners serving lengthy sentences in U.S. prisons because of their heroic task in infiltrating anti-Cuba terrorist groups based in Miami. "The Cuban people for more than 40 years have suffered all kinds of terrorist attacks from groups based in the U.S. and from the government itself," she said, "including military invasion and more than 600 assassination attempts against the leader of the Cuban Revolution, Fidel Castro." She spoke of the Cuban Five committee's efforts to free the men for the last two years.

Gloria La Riva, speaking for ANSWER, talked of the multi-pronged campaign used by U.S. imperialism. "Cuba is not an easy country for the U.S. to hit head-on politically or militarily, because of the tremendous prestige of the revolution and its long history of solidarity with the world."

She denounced the European Union's new economic and political measures against Cuba. "It shows the subservience of many of the world's governments to U.S. imperialism. It is the people of the world who must stop U.S. aggression."

Rosa Peñate read a new poem by Ramón Labañino, one of the Cuban Five. "No Soy" (I Am Not) reviles those who would sell out their country of Cuba to the U.S. for a few dollars.

A stirring taped statement from Mumia



PHOTO: JIM PRIGOFF

Some of the crowd at Cuba meeting in Sacramento.

Abu-Jamal about the latest attacks on Cuba was played. Abu-Jamal affirmed Cuba's right to defend itself.

In Sacramento, a crowd at the Hart Senior Center heard Gómez speak on the Cuban Revolution and the sentiments of unity, solidarity and pride that the Cuban people feel for their accomplishments. Maggie Coulter of Sacramento Area Peace Action chaired.

In San Jose more than 100 people gathered in the Laborers' Hall to celebrate the upcoming 50th anniversary of the revolutionary spark lit on July 26, 1953, when

Fidel Castro led an assault on the Moncada army barracks. In addition to Gómez, Dolores Huerta, United Farm Workers co-founder, spoke eloquently about the social gains of the Cuban people since the triumph of the revolution in 1959, including the dignity enjoyed by farmworkers in the countryside.

The tour was coordinated and sponsored by the ANSWER coalition, the National Committee to Free the Cuban Five, Sacramento Area Peace Action, Grandmothers for Peace, and South Bay Mobilization Against the War. □



U.S./Cuba Friendship Caravan.

Sacramento becomes battleground over genetically engineered food

By Jamie Hurlbut
Sacramento, Calif.

A conference here sponsored by the U.S. Department of Agriculture brought together World Trade Organization agriculture ministers from over 120 countries. The five-day conference, which began on June 23, was designed to boost an ailing biotech industry hurt by over-speculation and negative publicity. It served as a trade show for the latest developments in genetically engineered crops.

Delegates were courted by giant companies like Cargill, which has been invited by the U.S. government to profit from developing cash-crop agriculture in Iraq. Bush administration figures like Secretary

of Agriculture Ann Veneman, a former Monsanto attorney, were also working the crowd.

The conference represented the latest attempt by the Bush administration to help pave the way for the domination of local agriculture markets by U.S. corporations. They hoped the countries represented in the conference would take their side in Washington's dispute with the European Union and some Third World countries over trade policy toward genetically engineered (GE) food.

At the conference Secretary Veneman repeated the Bush administration line that GE food is the key to eradicating world hunger. This argument is dispelled by the fact that corporate agriculture often throws away food in order to maintain market prices. It is ironic that California, the state with the largest agricultural economy, lets millions of people go undernourished.

The issue is not scarcity, it is that food is produced primarily for profit. Food will soon be California's most shipped product, and is exported as far as 12,000 miles away.

Environmental activists have accurately described the lack of control inherent in GE crops. They argue that corporate agribusiness's rush for profit makes it impossible to test for the long-term effects of eating GE food or for reactions caused by inaccuracies in gene-splicing technology.

The convention center and hotel where the delegates stayed in downtown Sacramento was surrounded by barricades and fencing. Thousands of cops in black armor ringed the perimeter, armed with assault rifles and tear gas and driving armored personnel carriers. Demonstrators from across the country converged outside.

Forty-six people were plucked from the bands of roving demonstrators and arrested by the police on Sunday, June 22, even before the conference had begun. Direct actions took place at both conference events and sites of local community struggles. On Monday morning several thousand protesters met on the Capitol steps to hear speakers before a short march through Sacramento. The speakers included United Farm Workers co-founder Dolores Huerta. A family farmer from Idaho and member of the worldwide Via Campesina movement spoke about how the fight against corporate agribusiness is a worldwide struggle across the global North and South. □

Friendshipment caravan gets underway

As Canadians carried a printing press, medical supplies and bicycles through U.S. Customs on June 29, they were breaking Washington's blockade of Cuba.

The activists, pictured above, are part of the 14th U.S./Cuba Friendship Caravan. Canadian and U.S. participants rallied at Peace Arch Park on the Pacific Northwest border between the two countries.

This challenge to the illegal U.S.-led economic strangulation of Cuba is organized by Pastors for Peace, a project of the Interreligious Foundation for Community Organization (IFCO).

The caravanists will drive a school bus and an ambulance, carrying aid and solidarity for Cuba, down the west coast of the United States. On June 17 they'll meet up with more than 100 participants in Texas to cross the U.S. border into Mexico.

When the caravan reaches Cuba, the Friendshipment materials will be distributed to 170 elder-care institutions across the island.

—L.F.



Victories buoy Pride on the march

Continue from page 1

the state to avoid locking horns with Christian church hierarchies. But it's a major step toward equality and will undoubtedly encourage the movement to press forward.

Legal recognition of same-sex partnerships has already been won in nine other European countries: the Netherlands, Denmark, Sweden, Finland, Belgium, Portugal, France, Germany and Spain.

These hard-won reforms further isolate the U.S. government in the world arena. It is already having trouble justifying the racist use of the death penalty; the incarceration of more than 2 million people, disproportionately people of color; mass roundups of Arabs, Muslims and South Asians; the trampling of civil liberties; the establishment of a military concentration camp in Pentagon-occupied Guantanamo; leaks about torture; rampant domestic police brutality; and flagrant disregard for the self-determination and sovereignty of oppressed nations within the United States and abroad.

No wonder they're having a hard time these days talking about their "leadership of the free world."

Que viva Puerto Rico libre!

Just days before the U.S. Supreme Court ruling was handed down, a very significant victory was won in the Americas. The Puerto Rican legislature beat the U.S. Supreme Court to the punch in removing the anti-gay laws from its books.

That statute had been established in 1898 when U.S. imperialism seized the island as a colonial "possession." It was a carbon copy of a California edict at that time.

Many of the anti-gay penal codes on the books today in parts of Africa, Asia and

Latin America are 19th-century colonial laws imposed by the United States and Britain.

The British mercilessly persecuted indigenous sexualities and genders in early colonial Zimbabwe, Uganda and other colonized countries. Kenya's penal code dates back to the era of iron-fisted British colonial rule. It's a copy of a law finally repealed in Britain in 1967.

There are many examples of persecution of indigenous peoples considered sex-variant or gender-variant by the Spanish and Portuguese in the Americas, and in what became the United States as it expanded westward. Nicaragua adopted an anti-gay law after the CIA-backed forces fighting the Sandinista government came to power in 1990.

This was all part of cultural genocide and colonial subjugation.

As part of its national liberation movement, the African National Congress publicly made clear its support for lesbian/gay rights as early as 1986. Support for lesbians and gays has been part of the South African Constitution since 1994, after it overthrew apartheid.

'Health care, not warfare!'

This is all especially important now because the war-makers in Washington and London try to put a "liberation" spin on their drive for empire. Before the war against Afghanistan, articles appeared in U.S. and British mainstream monopoly media and even in LGBT presses trying to justify the impending war by pointing out that the Taliban was anti-gay and oppressive toward women.

This argument emanated from Washington, which had armed and supported the same fundamentalist forces in the 1980s to overthrow a democratic secular

revolution in Afghanistan. Later, some of its allies turned against Washington when it left them high and dry after that war ended. The current Bush administration launched a new "endless" war, first against fundamentalists in Afghanistan and then against a secular regime in Iraq.

A left-wing current emerged in the LGBT movement that wasn't fooled by Washington's claims of "liberation." Rainbow flags snapped in the wind at the huge ANSWER anti-war protests across the United States and in massive demonstrations around the world.

This June, contingents marched under the banner "No pride in racism, war and occupation" in Pride events in cities large and small in the United States.

"We want education, not occupation," "Money for AIDS, not for war," activists chanted.

Regime change? Start with White House!

If having an anti-gay ruler as head of state is the basis for regime change, President-non-elect George W. Bush should be the first one booted out. But by an independent movement from below, not by pulling the lever for a Democrat.

The Republican Party claims about 25 percent of LGBT voters, which may or may not be true. Of course, many, many people throughout this country—including many in the LGBT movement—are disenfranchised with electoral politics and don't vote at all. But at this year's New York Pride march, when members of the Log Cabin Republican Club threw handfuls of their party's buttons to the crowds along the route of march, many onlookers threw them right back.

However, many elected officials from the Democratic Party took the microphone at the June 26 victory rallies to claim that the Supreme Court ruling was a gift from the Clinton administration and proved the need to organize the movement for a Democratic victory in 2004.

However, that's a distortion of the facts. Only two of the nine justices on the current bench are Clinton appointees. This ruling came from a court in which seven of the judges were appointed by Republicans—six of them by Ronald Reagan and Bush Sr.

This same court narrowly upheld affirmative action in a June 23 decision.

What all this proves is that the mass

struggle is decisive, not which capitalist party is in power.

The landmark 1954 *Brown v. Board of Education* desegregation ruling came from a Supreme Court led by Earl Warren—a Republican who as California attorney general had been responsible for the decision to intern Japanese people in concentration camps during World War II.

The court that ruled on *Roe v. Wade*, legalizing abortion in 1973, had six Republican appointees—four of them Nixon picks. Five of the Republicans voted to legalize abortion. Of the two justices who voted against, one was a Kennedy appointee.

In both periods, the court bowed to intense mass pressure from below.

As an election year looms, it's worth remembering that President Bill Clinton signed the anti-LGBT "Defense of Marriage Act" to block the right of same-sex marriage. Clinton caved in to the brass on "don't ask, don't tell." Vice President Al Gore acted as point person for the pharmaceutical giants' lawsuit against the South African government, trying to prevent it from producing generic medications to treat the AIDS pandemic.

During Clinton's eight years, more than 1 million Iraqi civilians died as a result of economic sanctions—an illegal act of war.

Today the Democrats and Republicans together have rubber stamped the endless war for empire, cut taxes for the already unimaginably wealthy, and sent vitally needed social services down the chute.

Underneath it all is a persistent and intensifying capitalist economic crisis that is making the ruling class more ruthless and the working class and oppressed peoples of the world more sorely burdened.

Current attempts in Congress to amend the Constitution to ban same-sex marriage are meant to deflect anger from the capitalist system that is the source of such poverty and repression.

But a grassroots struggle, invigorated and emboldened by its victories, can push back this and every other attempt to demonize and discriminate. Such a movement can not only defend gains, but widen them.

This movement finds its power not in a ballot but in voting with its many feet in an independent direction, marching toward liberation shoulder-to-shoulder with all who are fighting a common enemy.

That's the spirit of Stonewall. □



Pride in San Francisco

Buoyed by the recent Supreme Court decision to overturn all "sodomy" laws, hundreds of thousands of gay, lesbian, bisexual, trans people and their supporters celebrated in the streets of San Francisco on June 29.

Many signs and banners referred to this hard-fought victory in the struggle against discrimination and political repression.

On June 28, more than 25,000 women marched in the traditional "Dyke March" from Dolores Park in the Mission to the Castro in a strong demonstration entitled "Dykes for Peace, Peace for Dykes."

This year's LGBT Pride march featured a big contingent of anti-war activists, gay and straight. The ANSWER coalition—Act Now to Stop War and End Racism—joined other Bay Area anti-war contingents led by Out Against the War, an LGBT anti-war group. People lined up along Market Street responded to the contingent enthusiastically.

Similar contingents were part of Pride events across the country.

Massive turnouts for Pride events this year included some 400,000 in Chicago, half a million in New York and 200,000 in Houston.

—Story and photo by Bill Hackwell

Reactions to the

“This historic ruling comes from a struggle within the bowels of Bush's reactionary Texas, showing that even in the depths of reaction, resistance is alive and well. Just as the reactionary 1950s were followed by the revolutionary 1960s, the struggle of these two men—one Black and one white—to successfully challenge the state's right to burst into their bedroom and arrest them for sex means that full civil rights for LGBT people, including marriage, are on the horizon. When a Black man and a white man stand up together in Texas to homophobia and oppression, we know the days of reaction and war and all the rest are numbered.”

—Teresa Gutierrez, lesbian Latina activist from Texas

“You should have seen the turnout for Pride here in Houston. Some 200,000 people took to the streets for the 25th anniversary of the local Pride march. It was so incredibly diverse and so multinational. And so many straight people came out to support us. Whole families were out. Plaintiffs Tyron Garner and John Lawrence, whose case led to the Supreme Court ruling, were in the parade. It was a celebration. The mood was electric.”

—Gloria Rubac, bisexual & a leader in the Texas anti-death penalty struggle

“These favorable rulings—for affirmative action, against the so-called sodomy laws—demonstrate that the real power for change lives with the people, not the Supreme Court or the government as a whole. Could you imagine if these long-fought battles hadn't gone our way? Thousands have been confronting Bush

At last, a landmark gain for LGBT rights

By Shelley Ettinger
New York

The following talk was given at the June 27 Workers World Party forum in New York.

In the midst of a reactionary period such as the one we're currently mired in, it is still possible to win victories that propel the movements of the working class and oppressed forward.

Two days ago I could have said that and it would have been true, but you would have been forgiven if you found it a little hard to believe, given imperialist war run rampant, racist police killings, roundups of Arab, Muslim and South Asian immigrants, whittling away at affirmative action, attacks on women's right to choose, restrictions on free speech and so on.

Today when I say it there can be no doubters. Because with yesterday's Supreme Court decision overturning the so-called sodomy laws, the working-class and progressive movements have won an enormous victory. And it should spur us on to fight all the harder.

The ruling is hugely historic.

It is the biggest victory ever for the lesbian, gay, bi, trans liberation movement in the United States. It is the biggest, most important, most hard-won achievement since the June 1969 Stonewall Rebellion that began the modern, mass phase of the struggle for lesbian, gay, bi and trans liberation.

So if some people, especially middle-aged and older, were crying with joy yesterday at celebration rallies around the country, it's understandable. This has been a long time coming.

It was especially beautiful to see folks in Houston lining up to personally hug and thank Tyron Garner and John Lawrence, the two men, one Black, one white, who were making love in their bed in their home when police crashed in and arrested them in 1998. They later said it was like the Gestapo marching in. Garner and Lawrence were fined and held in jail overnight. And although they are shy, although they are not activists—neither even spoke at yesterday's Houston rally—they did not accept being branded criminals, and they fought it all the way to the Supreme Court, and they won, because there was a movement behind them.

Supreme Court ruling

at every stop on his campaign trail—10,000 in Los Angeles alone. Benton Harbor erupted in a two-day rebellion after the police murder of a Black man, and then millions were expected to participate in LGBT Pride in cities like Houston, San Francisco, New York and Chicago that weekend. It was the righteous outrage of the masses that the court truly feared the most.”

—Imani Henry, transman & co-founder of *Rainbow Flags for Mumia*

“I wouldn't have lost custody of my two children when I came out as a lesbian in North Carolina in 1975 if there had been no 'crime against nature' law on the state books. That statute was specifically used to take my children away from me. But the pain and anguish of that loss spurred me to join the larger movement for social change and that's what gave me hope. And so this victory



WW PHOTO: DEIRDRE GRISWOLD

And by the way, in a follow-up to yesterday's ruling, today the Supreme Court overthrew the prison term of a gay teenager in Kansas who has been serving a 17-year sentence for having sex with a fellow teenaged resident in a center for developmentally disabled youths.

Yesterday's Lawrence & Garner vs. Texas ruling is our community's Roe vs. Wade. In this sense: no longer can any law call us criminals. Finally, and long after many other countries got rid of these archaic laws, we who had been made sexual outlaws have the right to exist. This is also the LGBT movement's Brown vs. Board of Education. In this sense: the highest court, with a reluctant nod to the inevitable, has conceded to reality and found itself forced to acknowledge and legally ratify what a mass movement for civil rights has been accomplishing in the streets, the work places, the communities.

Let there be no doubt: this is a watershed moment.

And it follows on the heels of another huge movement win—the Canadian government's acquiescing to the growing demand for same-sex marriage—a victory that increased pressure on the United States to throw out its Draconian anti-gay laws.

today belongs to me and to my children, too.”

—Minnie Bruce Pratt, lesbian writer and activist

“This is an important victory, not just for the LGBT community but for the working class as a whole. It is a civil rights milestone that affirms separation of church and state. The 'sodomy' laws validated the state bursting into people's homes or hotel rooms, and asserted that the government had the right to monitor sexual behavior. This ruling is the result of many years of struggle by the LGBT movement in league with the civil rights, women's and labor union movements.”

—Preston Wood, gay man and co-coordinator of the International Action Center in Los Angeles

The court ruling in and of itself doesn't, of course, change the reality of daily life or the experience of oppression in all its many manifestations, especially for the most oppressed, people of color, transgender and transsexual, young, lesbians, etc. It is of course only a legal reform, not a revolutionary shift.

And it does not go anywhere near far enough: discrimination against LGBT people is still perfectly legal under federal law, and in most states and many cities. Anti-gay and anti-trans violence goes on. The military keeps carrying out witch-hunts. And so on.

Nevertheless, the ruling is enormously significant. It sweeps away the laws criminalizing sexual conduct—which in itself is a very big deal, something we've been fighting for since the beginning, an acknowledgement that the state has no right to apply its repressive force in this arena. In fact it means that we have forced the state, the repressive arm of the capitalist ruling class, to cede, to give up some of its coercive power. This is a rare and wondrous thing, and is by definition a contribution to the class struggle.

The other reason the ruling is enormously significant is because it acknowledges, reflects, and concedes to the vast progress in mass consciousness wrought by the LGBT struggle.

The vast majority of people in this country support LGBT rights. Are against discrimination. Against laws governing sex. And a near-majority are for legalizing same-sex marriage, a number that becomes a majority when you look only at people under age 50.

There has been a sea change in mass consciousness on this topic, and it has come about remarkably swiftly under the impetus of a movement that has taken to the streets time and time again since Stonewall.

It is this sea change and this movement that yesterday's ruling is a response to.

The masses overthrew the “sodomy” laws. The court had no choice but to sign on.

This ruling is a perfect example of how the laws and the courts are forced to ratify what has already been made reality in the streets, work places, communities.

The strength of the movement and the change in social attitudes are such that to rule otherwise would have made the court look ridiculous. Not to mention prompted a new wave of angry struggle.

'This ruling is a perfect example of how the laws and the courts are forced to ratify what has already been made reality in the streets, work places, communities.'

The fact that the ruling class understands this becomes very clear when you read the actual decision, both Anthony Kennedy's majority ruling and Antonin Scalia's raving reactionary dissent. Neither is a dry recitation of technicalities. Both are quite clearly political readings of the social landscape.

Kennedy for the majority acknowledges the reality and bows to the popular will; not only that, he all but apologizes for the 1986 Hardwick decision that upheld “sodomy” laws. Scalia foams at the mouth, rants about morality and history, and shrieks a warning that same-sex marriage will be next.

Guess what? Yes, he's right: Same-sex marriage is coming. This train cannot be stopped.

In June 1986 when the Supreme Court delivered its reactionary Hardwick decision, protests exploded around the country. And we can be sure the current court did not forget that in the course of coming to this decision.

It should also be noted that earlier this week, before the Supreme Court decision, the Puerto Rico legislature had itself overturned the “sodomy” law in that colonized country. Again, the oppressed taking the lead.

So this Sunday at the Pride march in New York we should celebrate the victory and congratulate the movement—of which Workers World Party has been very much a part for many years. We should point to this development as a lesson in how mass struggle can win progressive social change. And we should call on all in our communities to take heart, unite and move the battle forward on all fronts against oppression, racism and imperialist war.

We'll be doing that as part of the Queers for Peace and Justice contingent, carrying a banner calling for the United States to get the hell out of Iraq.

And as we march, and as you watch the other hundreds of thousands march, don't be put off by the bar floats extolling this or that beer brand, or the corporate logos advertising this or that transnational corporation, which unfortunately have proliferated at the Pride march in recent years.

Remember, the capitalists of course want to make it seem like a party and not a struggle. But have no doubt, it is a struggle, it is indeed—for what else but a struggle could have won this historic victory? □

Continued on page 10

As Iraqi resistance grows

Bremer asks for more troops

By Fred Goldstein

The U.S. occupation in Iraq is rapidly beginning to look like a combination of the British colonial mandate with the early stages of the Vietnam War.

The U.S. administrator of the Coalition Provisional Authority, L. Paul Bremer, is acting more and more like a dictatorial viceroy. The Pentagon's Central Command is mounting increasingly larger operations that resemble infamous Vietnam-style "search and destroy" missions in its efforts to suppress the growing movement of resistance.

Despite claims by the Pentagon that the resistance is confined to small and isolated groups, a report in the Miami Herald of July 1 said that, "The top American administrator in Iraq, confronting growing anti-U.S. anger and guerrilla-style attacks, is asking for more American troops and dozens of U.S. officials to help speed up the restoration of order."

Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld was "reviewing the request" from Bremer, according to U.S. officials, speaking on condition of anonymity. But Rumsfeld "doesn't want to send more than the 146,000 American soldiers already in Iraq. It is being fiercely debated."

"It is inconceivable that Rumsfeld and [Deputy Secretary of Defense Paul] Wolfowitz are fighting this, because it would mean admitting they were wrong," a senior administration official told the Herald.

Meanwhile, Washington is desperately trying to stem the growing number of attacks on the occupation forces.

"Since President Bush declared an end to major combat operations two months ago," wrote the New York Times of July 1, "at least 728 members of coalition forces in Iraq have been wounded ... At least 154 of them have died in hostile actions and 75 have died in non-hostile actions." That averages out to four U.S. and British troops killed and 12 wounded each day since the war "ended."

The number of casualties does reflect the intensity of the growing guerrilla resistance. The number of attacks that subject U.S. soldiers to the pressure and fear of combat is much larger. "In a five-day stretch last week," wrote the Chicago Tribune of June 29, "coalition forces experienced 62 'significant' attacks, 10 of which either killed coalition troops or wounded them seriously enough to require hospitalization."

Staff Sgt. Zachary Conklin of the Army's 82nd Airborne Division told the Tribune: "Now is the most dangerous time since we've been here. It's not like when we were first here—pushing forward, shooting at everyone who had a gun. You get attacked, but there's no definite enemy. You can't shoot all the civilians."

Spec. Joseph Brouillard, 20, told the Tribune that he was on patrol last month in Baghdad and a group of men he recog-

nized opened fire. "Many times, they've been there—waving, saying hello, watching us. Then they were shooting at us."

Thus, so much of the population is against the occupation that anyone is likely to be part of the resistance. Yet the U.S. military is engaged in a fruitless effort to wipe it out, on the premise that it is only a "few holdouts."

Rumsfeld in denial

This line of the high command and the Pentagon, headed by Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld, is rapidly wearing thin. At a Pentagon press briefing on June 30, Rumsfeld lashed out at the use of the words "guerrilla war" and "quagmire." He was put up against the wall by CNN's Jamie McIntyre, who pulled out a Pentagon dictionary and quoted the definition of guerrilla war: "military and paramilitary operations conducted in enemy-held or hostile territory by irregular ground indigenous forces."

"Seems to fit a lot of what's going on in Iraq," commented McIntyre. (Washington Post, June 30)

Rumsfeld simply dismissed the statement without putting up any defense: "It really doesn't."

The latest and largest offensive, Operation Sidewinder, sent thousands of troops, mainly from the 4th Infantry Division, into Diyala province north of Baghdad, which stretches from the Iranian border to the Tigris River. Dozens of raids have been carried out, with troops storming into people's home in towns throughout the region. This operation follows others carried out recently in central Iraq: Operation Desert Scorpion and Operation Peninsula Strike.

"Arab media images," wrote the Los Angeles Times of July 1, "of U.S. troops entering Iraqi homes, ordering terrified residents outside and rummaging through their possessions have touched deep emotional and cultural chords here. Such searches have emerged as a flash point for confrontations between Iraqis and occupying troops."

The strains between the occupiers and the Iraqi people are growing more intense with each new raid, each checkpoint shooting, each edict from the occupation authorities restricting the Iraqis' rights to determine their own future.

Typical is the account of the Saleh family in the village of Al Boajeel, just outside Tikrit. "According to the family, about 30 U.S. troops arrived in a dozen vehicles, bursting in and surrounding the compound, where many were sleeping. The troops handcuffed most of the men and separated them from the women. Some men were blindfolded.

"The military confiscated \$4,000 that was to be used for a medical procedure for the ailing sheik's wife. They arrested eight men and took them off. 'We don't know where they are,' said Sheik Saleh. 'We would like to bring them some food.' The family was told to go to Tikrit and talk to a liaison officer. 'We don't know where to go.' The sheik said, 'We are simple people, farmers, yet the Americans come into our home by force. Where is the democracy that the Americans promised?'"

The struggle for the "hearts and minds" of the Iraqi people was a fraud to begin with. But what is happening now is precisely the opposite. The social, political and economic strains between the occupiers and the Iraqi people are growing wider and more intense with each raid, with each checkpoint shooting, and with each new edict from the occupation authorities restricting the rights of the Iraqis to determine their own future.

As it becomes clearer that Washington is in Iraq to subjugate the country, the resistance widens.

Colonial viceroy of Baghdad

Bremer recently dismissed the resistance as "a small remnant of die-hard opponents," just as his boss, Rumsfeld, continues to talk about a handful of scattered "dead enders."

But it seems that Rumsfeld and Bremer are worried about more than a handful of scattered elements. The Washington Post of June 28 reported that "U.S. military commanders have ordered a halt to local elections and self-rule in provincial cities and towns across Iraq, choosing instead to install their own hand-picked mayors and administrators."

There is "no blanket prohibition" against self-rule, said Bremer. "I'm not opposed to it, but I want to do it in a way that takes care of our concerns."

"In a postwar situation like this," continued Bremer, "if you start holding elections, the people who are the rejectionists tend to win." Bremer openly admitted that the former Baathists and the Islamic forces, after being so vilified by the U.S. propaganda machine, would win the elections now, after three months of occupation.

In an interview with the BBC reported in the London Guardian of June 30, Bremer ranted: "We are going to fight them and impose our will on them and we will capture or, if necessary, kill them until we have imposed law and order upon this country."

The version of pro-U.S. imperialist law

and order that Bremer referred to was crudely outlined by a "senior military official in Washington," according to the Los Angeles Times of June 29.

The Times quoted the official as saying: "You have to go in and tell them: 'We're gonna do what we did in Germany and Japan. We're gonna write your constitution. We're gonna install your government. We're gonna write your laws. We're gonna watch your every move for a decade, and then maybe you'll get a chance to do it yourself.'"

A British viceroy, schooled in the art of empire, might have used more delicate language, but the underlying colonial mentality of the White House and the Pentagon is fully expressed in the unattributed remarks of this "senior official," a term usually reserved for someone of very high status and authority.

U.S. plans corporate takeover

Of course, the constitution and laws and puppet government that Washington will allow have already been spelled out by Rumsfeld, Bremer, Wolfowitz and company.

They would allow the transnational corporations to come in and dominate Iraq's economy, something that has been against the law since the nationalist revolution of 1958. They would privatize the state industries that have served to develop the country. They would throw millions of workers out of work who are employed by these industries.

They would end the food, health and education subsidies that put a basic floor under the living standards of the workers and peasants. They would allow landlords to gouge rents and capitalists to super-exploit the Iraqi workers and peasants, all in the name of the "free market." And, above all, they would open the vast oil wealth of Iraq to the giant oil companies and divert this wealth from national development for the Iraqis to super-profits for the oil billionaires.

The occupation forces intend to make these decisions for Iraq, independent of the will of the masses of people. To impose such monumentally disastrous national decisions on any people is nothing but the wholesale imposition of colonial rule and the outright destruction of all semblance of sovereignty.

Even if the U.S. military were temporarily able to push back the resistance long enough to put this reactionary colonial program of conquest into practice, the hatred of the Iraqi people for the colonizers would grow even stronger, especially as the foreign imperialist millionaires and billionaires tried to take over the economy with the aid of a puppet army and police force.

Given the level of resistance to the occupation so far, it is highly unlikely that the schemes of conquest hatched in the White House, the Pentagon, the State Department and Wall Street will succeed over the long run. Their entire quest for world empire is predicated upon victory in Iraq. The struggle to end the occupation of Iraq is a decisive element in the struggle against Washington's quest for world domination.

The Bush administration is willing to fight to the last drop of blood of the Iraqi people and of U.S. soldiers, too—who are being forced to kill and die every day. The task of the hour for the anti-war movement is to forge solidarity with the heroic Iraqi resistance and demand an end to the occupation and bring the troops home. □



Four Iraqis in two cars were killed at this checkpoint set up to provide security for a visiting U.S. congressional delegation.

Bush going to Africa

Why millions say 'Hands off Zimbabwe'

By Monica Moorehead

On June 25, President George W. Bush spoke at a U.S.-Africa Business Summit in Washington, D.C. Among other proposals, he called for the removal of Robert Mugabe and Charles Taylor, the presidents of Zimbabwe and Liberia respectively. Bush made these remarks before an audience that included African leaders as well as business executives and investors.

The day before, an opinion piece written by Secretary of State Colin Powell had appeared in the New York Times. It was a denunciation of President Robert Mugabe. Powell labeled Mugabe a "tyrant." He blamed him for Zimbabwe's 300-percent inflation rate, 70-percent unemployment, food shortages and much more.

Powell wrote in part: "South Africa and other African countries are increasingly concerned and active on Zimbabwe, but they can and should play a stronger and more sustained role that fully reflects the urgency of Zimbabwe's crisis. ...

"With [Mugabe] gone, with a transitional government in place and with a date fixed for new elections, Zimbabweans of all descriptions would ... come together to begin the process of rebuilding their country. If this happened, the United States would be quick to pledge generous assistance to the restoration of Zimbabwe's political and economic institutions even before the election."

This was but another effort by the Bush administration to bribe African leaders with millions of dollars in aid—but only if they defy international law by interfering in the internal affairs of Zimbabwe.

Bush's speech and Powell's op-ed piece were timed to appear just one week before Bush was to embark on a trip to several sub-Saharan African countries.

Bush will visit South Africa, the most industrialized country on the continent, which borders Zimbabwe. On June 16, the Washington Post wrote a vile opinion piece suggesting that President Thabo Mbeki turn off the electricity that South Africa provides to Zimbabwe, interfering in the two countries' relations.

Former political prisoner and the first Black South African president, Nelson Mandela, has announced that he will refuse to meet with Bush due to the U.S. war on Iraq. The African National Congress and other groups plan to hold protests against Bush during his visit there.

Why is the government of Zimbabwe front and center on the radar screens of U.S. imperialism, its British junior partner and the rest of the European Union?

History of bloody European dominance

In the mid-1880s, a very important conference took place in Berlin. Various European capitalists gathered to map out a strategy to carve up Africa among themselves so as to steal its vast mineral resources and enslave the indigenous peoples.

Their goal was clear: expand their colonial empires and markets in order to make more profits.

In 1888, British capitalist Cecil Rhodes and his business partner, Charles Rudd, got the blessings of the British monarchy

for a conspiracy to steal Matebeleland, Mashonaland and other surrounding territories that would come to be known as Rhodesia.

These territories were targeted because of their abundance of minerals, especially gold. In 1890, white mercenaries invaded these territories. This bloody invasion laid the basis for thousands of British white settlers to take over the land. In fact, each white settler was promised 6,000 acres and claims to the gold.

In 1898, an armed resistance emerged against the British South Africa Co., owned by Rhodes and Rudd. This was the first Chimurenga, or first stage of the liberation struggle. The rebellion was carried out by a number of African nations in a united front.

The indigenous populations were no match for the advanced weaponry of these invaders. They were systematically forced off the lands of their ancestors and herded like cattle onto the most isolated, barren lands, known as native reserves. Others languished in semi-slavery conditions on private white farms.

The 1898 Native Reserves Order in Council immediately legalized the theft of 15 million acres of the most arable lands by the European colonizers. The Land Apportionment Act of 1930 formalized the separation of land belonging to Africans and the settlers.

The population in 1930 was 1.1 million Black people and 50,000 whites—or more than 20 Black people for every white settler. But the land was divided up this way: native reserves, 29 million acres; European areas, 49 million acres.

In 1965, the white minority regime of Ian Smith unilaterally declared independence from Britain. In the same year, the second Chimurenga, or second stage of the national liberation struggle, was launched as the Zimbabwe African People's Union and the Zimbabwe African National Union joined to form the Patriotic Front. Robert Mugabe was the leader of ZANU and Joshua Nkomo the leader of ZAPU.

Fearing that the growing guerrilla struggle could eventually bring about a socialist revolution, the military wing of Smith's regime, known as the Rhodesian Front, initiated negotiations in London with the Patriotic Front and the British government. These negotiations produced the Lancaster House Agreement in 1979 and helped to lay the basis for the 1980 Constitution of the newly established government of Zimbabwe.

Held back by Lancaster agreement

The Lancaster agreement was supposed to address the redistribution of the land stolen by the colonialists. But it fell way short. The document stated that the land was to be acquired on a willing-seller, willing-buyer basis. This was to be applied during the first 10 years of independence. But it never really happened.

Britain had pledged to fund the resettlement plan as a maneuver to insure that provisions for compulsory acquisition without compensation would not become an official part of the 1980 Constitution. Therefore, the Zimbabwean government was not in a position to pressure the white settlers to give up the most arable lands for sale. The lands offered to the government

The Lancaster agreement was supposed to address the redistribution of the land stolen by the colonialists. But it fell way short.

were of the poorest quality.

Because of a "fair market price" clause, the new government did not have adequate funds to buy out the white farmers. So, after seven years of independence, only 40,000 out of 162,000 Black peasants who applied had been resettled.

Under the law, the Mugabe government had to wait 10 years before it could add any amendments on the compulsory acquisition of property, including land. In 1992, the Land Acquisition Bill was drafted; it mainly targeted for acquisition large-scale commercial farmland. This would be redistributed to the majority of landless Black war veterans living on the worst communal lands or reserves.

This bill passed by a two-thirds majority in parliament. The bill stated that it was the responsibility of the British government to pay compensation to the whites for the land repossession.

Britain had pledged 44 million pounds to the resettlement program. In 1997, when the Labor Party came into power in Britain with a new, more conservative leader, Tony Blair, the British government cut off the funding, claiming that the Zimbabwean government of Robert Mugabe was using it to resettle governmental officials on the land. London never refers to the fact that Ian Smith, former leader of the white government of Rhodesia, still owns 10,000 acres in Zimbabwe, as do other former white officials.

Finally, in 1997, Mugabe supported the direct confiscation of the lands initiated by the Zimbabwean peasants. The number of commercial farming families, most of them white, had dropped from 4,660 in 1998 to 2,900 by the summer of 2002, according to the Land Tenure Center at the University of Wisconsin at Madison. Many of them then bought land very cheap in Mozambique, where a white-led mercenary army had devastated the country.

As of December 2001, over 360,000 African families had been relocated on the land. The fact that the Zimbabwean farmers and peasants are carrying out their own land reform is at the heart of the imperialist attacks and racist demonization of Mugabe.

In 1980 the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund had imposed structural adjustment programs on Zimbabwe as a condition of its receiving any loans. They demanded that government social spending be kept at a bare minimum.

Instead of moving forward as an independent, self-sufficient country, Zimbabwe was being transformed into an exporting country. This meant mass starvation for the Zimbabwean people and



Landless farmers have taken the lead in Zimbabwe's land reform.

super-profits for the white commercial farmers who grew cash crops like tobacco.

By 1999, Zimbabwe had openly rebelled against the policies of the World Bank and IMF. In 1999 it was declared in default and its loans were terminated. Recently, the IMF and World Bank revoked Zimbabwe's membership.

The land crisis is not confined to Zimbabwe. It exists in South Africa, Namibia, Mozambique and other countries of Africa. It is rooted in the deep-seated legacy of colonial theft and plunder. The U.S. and British imperialists want to bring a halt to the agrarian revolution in Zimbabwe to prevent a people's takeover of land there and in other countries.

Land crisis and support for Congo

The imperialists are also targeting Zimbabwe for the role its armed forces played in the crisis that unfolded in the Democratic Republic of Congo in 1998. After the fall of CIA puppet Mobutu Sese Seko, the government of Congo was led by Laurent Kabila, who openly denounced imperialist intervention in his country and the region. Kabila asked the Southern African Development Community for military assistance to help repel an invasion by Uganda and Rwanda that had the backing of the United States and Britain.

The SADC sent troops from Zimbabwe, Angola and Namibia to assist the Congo. Kabila was eventually assassinated in January 2000, however.

Bush and Blair want to make an example of Zimbabwe for some of the same reasons they are hostile to Iraq, Iran, North Korea, Palestine, Venezuela, the Philippines and Cuba. No country is allowed to defy them. It is all about endless war for U.S. empire in order to recarve up the world for profits on behalf of big business.

Mugabe was once viewed as a "model" African leader—until the land confiscations took center stage.

Robert Mugabe is a nationalist who aspires to see the development of an indigenous property-owning class inside Zimbabwe. Revolutionary socialists do not necessarily support Mugabe's policies, but defend his open rebellion against imperialism. The anti-imperialist movement, especially in the United States, has a responsibility to demand reparations for the people of Zimbabwe who are fighting to complete their national liberation, which means freeing their economy from colonialist and imperialist penetration.

Sources for this article include South Africa Independent Media Center and the Southern African Development Community website. □

Finally

The evil that men do lives after them; The good is oft interred with their bones," says Mark Antony in the play "Julius Caesar."

How things have changed since Shakespeare's time!

You can't pick up a newspaper or turn on television without hearing about the great contributions Strom Thurmond and Lester Maddox made in their political lives. Both died in the last week of June. The evil they did has been reduced in the capitalist media to bad career choices, made necessary by the political realities of an earlier period. And this even after the adulation that Trent Lott expressed for Thurmond on the latter's 100th birthday led to Lott's downfall as Majority Leader in the Senate.

Who were Thurmond and Maddox? They were the most hateful white supremacists. They built their political careers on whipping up racism and bashing African Americans. But it would be wrong to see them as oddities, part of a political fringe. Strom Thurmond and Lester Maddox were mainstays of the capitalist political establishment in the segregationist South.

What more fitting place for Thurmond to make his home than the segregationist club for millionaire white men known as the U.S. Senate. This elite club has had only two African American members since the days of Reconstruction following the U.S. Civil War—and none since 1998.

Thurmond, dead at 100, was the longest-serving Senator in the history of this country. He also spans the spectrum of bourgeois political parties.

As a Democrat, he was elected governor of South Carolina in 1933 and served as president of the Southern Governors' Conference, where he was heralded as a foe of civil rights.

Thurmond ran for president in 1948 as the candidate of the States Rights Democratic Party—the Dixiecrats—who split from the Democratic Party because they couldn't tolerate even the mention of civil rights or equality for

Black people.

As a pro-Confederacy Dixiecrat, Thurmond ran on the platform of "Segregation Forever." And far from being on the fringe, he won Mississippi, Alabama, Louisiana and South Carolina—all states where Black people risked economic and physical retaliation if they dared to vote.

Lester Maddox of Georgia was cut from the same cloth—white sheets.

Maddox, like George Wallace of Alabama, was an openly racist gubernatorial candidate in the 1960s supported by and associated with the Ku Klux Klan. And, like Wallace, Maddox won, becoming governor of Georgia in 1967.

Maddox had made segregation the heart of his campaign. He was already infamous for defying the newly passed desegregation laws. He had stood in the door of a restaurant he owned holding an axe handle and vowing to beat up any African American who tried to enter, while the media cameras rolled. Rather than comply with the law, he eventually closed his restaurant, assuming the mantle of a martyr.

This stance won him support from the arch-segregationists in the state's ruling circles, who backed his successful run for governor in 1966.

In 1970 he ran for lieutenant governor on the same ticket as Jimmy Carter, who became the new governor. Later, when Carter ran for president as a liberal Southerner with the blessing of the kingmakers in the Rockefeller-dominated Council on Foreign Relations, the big business media played down his association with Maddox.

Neither Thurmond nor Maddox was able to halt the rising tide of the civil rights movement. But, now that they are dead, the corporate media coverup of the terrible things they did is but another indication that those on top haven't changed much. What has changed is the masses of workers, especially people of color and youth, who will never let the clock be turned back to the "good old days" of segregation, lynchings and cross burnings. □

Support for imprisoned Yugoslav leaders

Rally held outside walls of 'criminal court'

Special to Workers World
The Hague, Netherlands

An international crowd of about 200 people staged a protest here on June 28 against the International Criminal Tribunal on Yugoslavia, a court controlled by the U.S. and NATO.

Protesters from Germany, Holland, Bulgaria, Belgium, France, Italy, Serbia, Canada and the U.S. met in front of the tribunal to denounce the illegal kidnapping and imprisonment of former Yugoslav President Slobodan Milosevic. He has been defending himself, almost single-handedly, against war crimes charges, putting NATO in the dock for its 78-day bombing of Yugoslavia in 1999.

In three languages—English, German and Serbian—speakers denounced the imperialist war against Yugoslavia. Their signs called the tribunal a "kangaroo court." They then marched to the crenellated medieval-style prison where Milosevic has been held for two years. He has been denied adequate medical care and family visits, and is incarcerated in a

prison that was last used by the Nazi Gestapo as a detention center. Other leaders of the former Yugoslavia are held there, too.

Speakers asserted that Yugoslavia was the "first Iraq." During the war on Yugoslavia, many people around the world were taken in by media lies and government demonization campaigns against the Serbs and Milosevic.

They praised the International Action Center, which stood almost alone in the U.S. against the U.S./NATO "humanitarian bombing." Heather Cottin, representing the IAC and its founder, Ramsey Clark, brought their solidarity with the struggle for the freedom of President Milosevic. She characterized the colonization of Bosnia and Kosovo, and the subsequent privatization of the Balkans and the former Yugoslavia, as a first step toward the U.S. war on Iraq. The IAC speaker stressed that solidarity was the only way toward the liberation of those imprisoned by imperialism.

Demonstrators learned later that their chants, songs and speeches had been heard inside the prison walls. □



International delegation protests outside prison where Yugoslav leaders are held.

Solidarity meeting in NYC

The International Action Center, the People's Video Network and Yugoslavs against Occupation held a meeting in New York on June 28 in solidarity with a demonstration at the tribunal in The Hague, Holland, where former Yugoslav President Slobodan Milosevic is being tried. Other solidarity meetings were held in Moscow and Belgrade.

Milos Raickovich, a composer and teacher in New York, gave a brief description of the demonstration in The Hague before the Yugoslav film "Wounded Country" ("Ranjena Zemlja") was shown. The film depicts the bombardment of Yugoslavia by U.S. bombs and missiles in 1999.

After the film, Pat Chin of the IAC spoke on the political context of the 78 days of air warfare against Yugoslavia in 1999, asserting "it was a neocolonial attack to expand the U.S. empire." Nadja Tesich, a Yugoslav author and film maker, pointed out that the real reason the U.S. and NATO powers imprisoned Milosevic was that he "defended his country from enemy attacks." Barry Lituchy, a historian, explained the historical context of European and U.S. aggression in the Balkans.

Sara Flounders, who was in Yugoslavia while it was being bombed in 1999, drew parallels with the struggles in Palestine and Iraq.

— G. Dunkel

community very open in discussions. I believe this has come about because it was involved in the victorious struggle to end apartheid: the South African Constitution is now the only one on the globe to include anti-discrimination protections for our people. It is this kind of solidarity around issues of importance to the working class in any country that will help to further establish the LGBT communities as progressive participants in the class struggle, be it against racism, sexism, imperialist wars, globalization or capitalism."

—Andre Powell, active in the Baltimore, Md., LGBT movement for almost 30 years

"The U.S. Supreme Court decision and the British proposal for spousal equivalency reform are drawing praise for the West. Ironically, it was the U.S. and Britain that established anti-'sodomy' laws as they extended their colonial rule. The British criminalized all sexual behavior in their colonies that didn't conform to Victorian notions. In India in the 1830s, the English codified these laws under section 377 of the Indian penal code, a legacy that has survived British rule and that India's gay organizations have been fighting ever since."

—Anya Mukarji, queer activist

Reactions to Supreme Court ruling

Continued from page 7

"The essence of this Supreme Court decision is to protect privacy, and that's the essence of Roe v. Wade, the hard-won 1973 ruling legalizing abortion—to protect a woman's privacy so that she can make her own decisions about her own body. The two struggles are inextricably linked. We all need to unite and fight to defend women's right to choose at the same time that we strengthen our opposition to the oppression of LGBT people."

—Sue Davis, bisexual and a long-time women's reproductive rights activist

"Because of the power of the organized movement that emerged after Stonewall, in my union and many others, lesbian, gay and bi workers now have domestic partner benefits for healthcare coverage. Our movement has played a leading role in the struggle against the greedy pharmaceutical companies, whose insatiable search for higher profits threatens the very lives of people with AIDS and the elderly. Imagine what it would mean to the transgender and transsexual com-

munities if our healthcare unions reached out to work together to assure the provision of sensitive, respectful, quality care. And imagine what energy, organizational skills and other resources the LGBT communities can bring to the union struggle for universal healthcare."

—Beverly Hiestand, R.N., lesbian activist and steward, CWA Local 1168

"This ruling is part of a growing international trend toward recognition of the LGBT struggle. In Venezuela, for example, there is talk of including LGBT rights in the Bolivarian Constitution. From Brazil to Puerto Rico, we are making our mark."

—Rebeca Toledo, Latina lesbian activist and editor of "War in Colombia: Made in U.S.A."

"The lesson of this victory is that by standing firm and making linkages, our struggle for respect and recognition will be won. I traveled in South Africa a couple of years ago and I found the LGBT

Navy is gone but

Repression continues in Vieques

By Berta Joubert-Ceci

Almost two months after the May 1 departure of the last U.S. military personnel from Camp Garcia on the Puerto Rican island-municipality of Vieques, repression by the U.S. government continues.

Well before sunrise on June 25, in what activists there call a criminalization of the struggle, five FBI agents accompanied by Puerto Rican police arrested Nilda Medina. Medina is one of the leaders of the Committee for the Rescue and Development of Vieques (CPRDV). The charge against her is "damage to property," a violation of Title 18 of the Federal Code.

On May 1, as the U.S. personnel were leaving, a furious crowd had charged the base and tried to dismantle the few military installations and equipment remaining. These structures represented what for decades had been the source of terrorism against the peaceful residents of Vieques.

Four days before arresting Medina, FBI agents had gone to the headquarters of the CPRDV, known as the Peace and Justice Camp. They left a search warrant on the floor, together with a receipt for seized property: a large satellite map of Vieques. A communiqué from the committee states that the federal agent who signed the affidavit suggests that the Peace and Justice Camp had concealed "a Vieques map, documents such as photos, pictures, address and phone books and any other property that constitutes evidence of the commission of a criminal offense."

Medina's arrest was followed by the arrests of 11 other activists from both Vieques and the main island of Puerto Rico. Those arrested include the president of the Puerto Rico Teachers Federation as well as the nephew of David Sanes. Sanes was a civilian whose death in April 1999 during a U.S. Navy bombing exercise ignited the recent mass struggle to get the Navy out.

The arrests resulted from an investigation by a federal grand jury that based its findings on photos and videotapes taken by the Puerto Rican police. On June 19 the grand jury issued an indictment that included six counts of conspiracy to destroy or damage federal property located in the facility, which is now under the control of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

Where were the grand jury and the Puerto Rican police when David Sanes was killed by a 500-pound bomb dropped by the U.S. Navy in 1999? There was no murder indictment then, and no vigorous investigation.

The arrested activists are casualties of the USA Patriot Act, now imposed in Puerto Rico. Their bail ranges from \$5,000 to \$10,000. If convicted, they could be sentenced to from five to 20 years in prison and fined \$250,000. These penalties are more severe than those imposed on activists convicted of trespassing on the base before May 1 during acts of civil disobedience.

The Navy had already vacated the premises. Obviously it would not have left behind any sensitive or expensive equipment. Why such serious penalties?

Furthermore, the last activist imprisoned for entering the restricted bombing territory during acts of civil disobedience before May 1 has been sentenced to 140 days of incarceration. Ironically, this person is Ismael Guadalupe Torres, son of resistance leader Ismael Guadalupe Ortiz—the very first person ever jailed in

this long struggle. When Guadalupe Torres was 3 years old, during a wave of anti-Navy actions in Vieques in the 1970s, his father spent five months in a federal prison in the United States. Now the son is still in jail when the land he crossed is no longer occupied by the Navy.

Guadalupe's treatment in prison became even harsher after May 1. He was denied visits, his calls were restricted and he was sent to the "hole," apparently for talking on a cell phone.

As the Pentagon deploys the highest technologies to wage war and destruction, many traditional military practices have become obsolete. The U.S. military may not need the Vieques range much anymore. Yet it has taken years of relentless struggle, international solidarity, more than 1,600 imprisoned activists and much sacrifice to yank the island out of the Pentagon's claws.

Land not returned to the people

When the Navy left Camp Garcia, it did not return it to its rightful owners, the people of Vieques. It did not even turn it over to the Puerto Rican government. In insult after imperialist insult, the Navy transferred the land to another U.S. government department, the Fish and Wildlife Service, part of the Department of the Interior. It will be used solely as a wildlife refuge, closed to the public.

Furthermore, the Navy is keeping land in the western part for its military communications post in Monte Pirata, the highest point on Vieques, and for its ROTH radar, used particularly against the insurgency in Colombia.

The CPRDV has made it clear that the struggle in Vieques is not over. It charges the U.S. and Puerto Rican governments with ignoring the small island's residents and their requests for the cleanup and future development of the land.

It points out that a part of the Memorandum of Agreement between the Navy and the U.S. Department of the Interior on the Navy's withdrawal implies that the Pentagon could have access to the land in the future. These materials have not been widely accessible or translated into Spanish.

The CPRDV has been creating a Commission on Development to forge strategies for community education and skills building related to the island's development, using guidelines produced by the Technical and Professional Group in Support of the Sustainable Development of Vieques (GATP). Comic strips prepared by GATP will be used in schools, neighborhoods and community organizations. They cover topics like "Health and Peace for Vieques," "Citizen Participation," "Alternatives for Vieques," "Urban Development and Housing" and "Democratic Organization and Leadership."

They can be seen on the website unescopaz.rpp.upr.edu/documentos/tirillasind.html.

On June 26, the CPRDV held its 11th annual People's Assembly to discuss the new, post-bombing phase of the struggle. It is devising new strategies to attain the three goals that the CPRDV set when it formed in 1993: decontamination, return of the land to the people and sustainable development.

WAR IN COLOMBIA—MADE IN U.S.A.

A new book from the International Action Center covers the struggle in Colombia from the perspective of trade unionists, human rights activists, and the FARC and ELN insurgencies. Authors include: Fidel Castro, Ramsey Clark, Javier Correa, Rep.



PHOTO: EL NUEVO DÍA

Nilda Medina leaving prison.

Peru—the struggle is back

National strike actions grow

By Silvia Tello

As Washington was preparing to invade Iraq, the Peruvian people decided not to remain silent in the face of such an injustice. Having experienced years of oppression and uprising, student, religious and environmental movements and socialist parties spoke out with protests in Lima and other Peruvian cities.

Starting on March 28, widespread calls were made on television and radio for big marches to make the people's voices heard.

The chants at these protests were reminiscent of the days when Peru, as a suffering Latin American country, rose up frequently. They reflected a culture still carrying in its blood the desire for socialism, freedom, a better society and, above all, struggle.

Demonstrators marched on the U.S. Embassy, which had tried to prevent their presence. A few minutes of silence were held for the innocent blood spilled and the lives lost. That was the only moment of silence; the protest continued until dawn with dances and chants such as: "We don't want to be or feel like a U.S. colony," "The people of Iraq, our innocent friends, Peru is with you," and "Alert, alert! Anti-imperialism is loose in Latin America."

The choice in the 2001 presidential elections was between a liar and a thief: Alejandro Toledo or Alan Garcia. Garcia, a former president, ran again despite six years of looting the treasury and human-rights violations. Toledo was elected and became president on April 8, 2001. He promised salary increases for teachers, part of what he called his "government of education," but two years later teachers' wages stand at a miserable \$120 a month.

So on May 12 a teachers' struggle began, with a massive protest and a very strong, never before seen, national strike demanding their rights. Teachers took to the streets and the plazas. And many other public-sector workers joined the fight to demand dignity, recognition and the salary increases they deserve.

The president has assigned himself a monthly salary of \$18,000; members of Congress get \$15,000 and regional presidents \$10,000, while the teachers survive on less than \$200. That is why the people are saying: Yes, there is money. You give handfuls of it to the International Monetary Fund for the payment of a fraudulent foreign debt.

The IMF imposes policies on Peru that regard education as a burden on the national budget—which is why the politicians say there is no money—and at the same time see it as a business opportunity for some people. So while they try to cut the budget, they also encourage privatization. In Peru, while for-profit schools increase, public education has been virtually abandoned by the government.

Two weeks of powerful strikes by some 280,000 teachers demanding a doubling of their salaries cornered the government and showed its weaknesses. The strength of this movement attracted other sectors. It ended in a strong national strike that brought the Toledo government to the edge of collapse.

Toledo called on military troops and tanks to take care of the situation. He declared a state of emergency—in the name of democracy. Despite this, some groups of teachers still came out and continued protesting, refusing to return to work. The government threatened that those continuing with the protests would be fired.

With the conclusion of this strike—though not the teachers' or the Peruvian people's struggle—the government launched the paquetazo. This is a package of neo-liberal economic measures against the population that is supposed to achieve fiscal equilibrium while resolving the problem of social demands.

The regional fronts are now organizing a July 17 national strike against the paquetazo. The people are saying no; they will try to prevent the IMF's "adjustment" policies and the deterioration of the lives of working people. □

Cynthia McKinney, Mumia Abu-Jamal, Gloria Gaitan, Raul Reyes, Manuel Marulanda, Stan Goff, Teresa Gutierrez, James Petras, Sen. Paul Wellstone, Roy Bourgeois, Garry Leech and others.

200 pages, indexed and referenced. \$19.95 plus \$5.00 shipping. Online orders available at leftbooks.com.

¿Porqué Benton Harbor explotó?

Por Jerry Goldberg
Benton Harbor, Mich.

La ciudad de Benton Harbor en el estado de Michigan fue estremecida por una rebelión a mediados del mes de junio, después de que la policía diera muerte a un hombre de raza negra. La rebelión puso bajo la luz nacional la brutalidad policial, la devastación racista y económica que caracteriza a esta ciudad sur occidental del estado estadounidense de Michigan cuya población de 12.000 habitantes tiene un componente de un 95% de africano-americanos—y muchas otras comunidades similares en todo el país.

El Reverendo Edward Pinkney se pasa todo los días observando el trato racista contra la juventud de Benton Harbor por las cortes judiciales del condado de Berrien. Pinkney encabezó varias reuniones de protesta en la comunidad contra la brutalidad policial en esa ciudad en los últimos meses.

El describió el asesinato policial del 16 de junio, y el cual produjo la rebelión, de esta manera. Terrance Shurn manejaba su motocicleta por la ciudad cuando una patrulla policial comenzó a golpearle por detrás. Shurn aceleró para escapar el hostigamiento de la policía. Otra patrulla le cortó el paso, lanzando su motocicleta contra un edificio.

El oficial quien forzó a la motocicleta contra el edificio era el policía de piel blanca, Mark Lundin. Lundin pertenece a la fuerza policial de Benton Harbor que toma parte de algunos suburbios que rodean a esta ciudad africano-americana.

Mientras el cuerpo de Shurn yacía muerto en la calle, Lundin y los otros oficiales presentes ante testigos se saludaron celebrantes.

Hay más de 40 testigos de este evento.

El tal “crimen” que le costó la muerte a Shurn fue el no haberse detenido ante una señal de alto.

Muchos en Benton Harbor dicen que la policía está trabajando arduamente para cubrir la evidencia—reparando los daños a las patrullas, etc.

Después de la muerte de Shurn, unas 200 personas se presentaron a la reunión de fideicomisarios de Benton Harbor para quejarse sobre la brutalidad policial. Muchos dicen que ya no pueden más. Ellos esperan que reportes sobre las condiciones de acá lleguen muy lejos en todas direcciones, porque las experiencias de la comunidad africano-americana no han sido reportadas debidamente.

Yvonne Diggs, prima de Shurn, describió cómo se le quería en la comunidad. Columbus Franklin, quien creció con Shurn, dijo que su amigo, como muchos jóvenes adultos, se estaba



FOTO: JERRY GOLDBERG

preparando para dejar a Benton Harbor por la falta de empleos en esa ciudad. El setenta por ciento de la población está desempleada. Shurn planeaba trasladarse a la Florida el 1 de julio para continuar su educación.

Muchos, muchos residentes enfurecidos

La muerte de Shurn, la cual ocurrió en la esquina donde muchos jóvenes se reúnen, encendió la rebelión del 16 y 17 de junio por cientos de jóvenes. Ellos encendieron fuegos, destruyeron patrullas policiales y se enfrentaron a la policía por dos noches consecutivas.

Los comentarios de muchos residentes hicieron claro de que esta rebelión no fue solo por el asesinato de Shurn. Sino sobre un patrón de abusos policiales y devastación económica a la cual la comunidad africano-americana se ha visto sujeta por muchos años.

El Reverendo describió cómo el niño de 11 años de edad, Trenton Patterson, fue golpeado ocasionándole la muerte mientras se encontraba en la acera en el centro de la ciudad de Benton Harbor en septiembre del año 2000, en otro caso de persecución policial.

Yvette Taylor, una residente de muchos años de allá, dijo que ella ha visto años tras años de brutalidad policial y que “se debe al racismo”.

Ella describió como la policía mató a Arthur Porter el 12 de abril. Su madre había llamado a la policía por una pelea entre familia. La policía llegó y de inmediato le pusieron una llave de asfixiación matándole.

Ella contó como su primo hermano, Antoine Osby, fue recientemente en un club fuera de horas cuando la policía del municipio de Benton llegó y ordenaron que todo el mundo saliera. Cuando salió Osby, los policías le golpearon cruelmente.

La gobernadora de Michigan, Jennifer

Granholm, elegida recientemente como Demócrata, ni una sola vez visitó a Benton Harbor durante su campaña electoral.

En la reunión en el palacio municipal, orador tras orador testificaron que la raíz de la rebelión fue la devastación económica que caracteriza a esta ciudad—junto al sistema de injusticia criminal racista que devora a la juventud.

Emma Hall del Concejo de Artes y Cultura Africana Americana testificó que la rebelión reflejó el dolor del desempleo, la falta de cuidado de salud, y para muchos, la falta de acceso a los servicios públicos. Ella dijo, “Porque los líderes no hicieron nada, el pueblo tuvo que hacer algo de su propia cuenta”.

Belinda Brown habló de cómo rezó por un Estado de Emergencia por Benton Harbor para bregar con la pobreza. Ella ofreció los ejemplos siguientes: una mujer que vive en una casa que fue condenada hace cuatro años pero, sin embargo, sigue obligada a pagar \$400 de alquiler mensual. Otro caso es de un hombre que no ha podido encontrar un empleo por siete años, a pesar de tener un título de la escuela secundaria y algunos estudios al nivel universitario. Y otro caso aún de una mujer que perdió el suministro de agua en su casa. Ella lo perdió por no poder pagar la cuenta de \$200.

Las únicas construcciones en proceso actualmente, enfatizó Brown, son un nuevo juzgado y una nueva cárcel “para llenar con nuestros jóvenes”.

Mientras que Granholm prometió

establecer una “fuerza de tarea” para averiguar que es lo que puede hacer para Benton Harbor, el hecho es que Michigan, como estados a través del país, está recortando fondos por los programas sociales y la educación.

El 19 de junio, jóvenes de Benton Harbor celebraron su propia reunión municipal. Muchos portaron sus letreros hechos a mano protestando el racismo y la brutalidad policial y demandando empleos. Llevaron camisetas conmemorando la vida de Terrance Shurn. Muchos de los jóvenes habían participado en la rebelión. Ellos dijeron que se sintieron orgullosos de haberse defendidos y haber forzado a las autoridades y al país conocer la devastación a lo que han sido sometidos hace años.

En esta reunión, Kevin Hunter, un líder local en el movimiento que está demandando indemnizaciones por los crímenes de la época de la esclavitud, explicó elocuentemente como los problemas de Benton Harbor son resultado de la mentalidad de St. Joe. El estuvo haciendo una referencia a la ciudad de San José—el suburbio adinerado y poblado exclusivamente por blancos al otro lado del puente de Benton Harbor.

La situación recuerda, dice Hunter, de Sudáfrica de la época de apartheid, con obreros negros trabajando por sus patrones blancos por salarios de miseria y volviendo a los bantustanes por la noche.

Mientras que la situación se ha tranquilizada por el momento, la lucha en Benton Harbor es lejos de terminar. A pesar de las discusiones de reconciliación por Granholm, Jesse Jackson y otros, el jefe de la policía de Benton Harbor anunció que la policía está revisando a los videos grabados durante la rebelión y va a preparar acciones judiciales contra multitudes de personas.

Esto lleva la potencial de prender fuego de nuevo a la lucha. El Rev. Pinkney anunció planes para más manifestaciones masivas y mítines comunitarios en los próximos días.

Hay muchos lugares iguales a Benton Harbor a través de los Estados Unidos esperando estallar en el periodo que está acercando. □



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