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BIG BUSINESS COUP

Banks seize Buffalo

By Beverly Hiestand
Buffalo, N.Y.

In a sweeping takeover, big business has seized the economic and political reins of the economy of this Great Lakes city.

In July, Gov. George Pataki and the New York State legislature approved a Buffalo Fiscal Stability Authority, which will have the most sweeping financial oversight powers in state history. The institution of this board followed an announcement on June 18 that the city of Buffalo's credit rating sank to just one level above junk bond status.

The city has been in dire straits, bordering on bankruptcy and unable to guarantee from week to week that it can pay its employees and meet other financial obligations.

The 270,000 city dwellers are economically devastated. The city has lost half its population over the past 50 years. Most large industries, including the huge Bethlehem Steel mills, closed long ago. The local job market, in its third year of decline, is still weakening. The unemployment rate in Buffalo is 9.6 percent. Teenagers face the worst summer job market in nearly 40 years.

About 38 percent of Buffalo is officially poor; 39 percent of children here are living in poverty—the sixth-highest rate among U.S. cities with a population above 100,000. (Children's Defense Fund) Nearly 57 percent of Latino children here are growing up poor—double the overall U.S. rate and the highest among the country's 244 largest cities. (Buffalo News, June 28)

The Buffalo financial crisis is not an isolated phenomenon. It's part of the widening capitalist crisis. State and municipal budget crises are deepening in the wake of huge tax giveaways to the wealthy, passed by both the Republican and Democratic parties. The states are pushing the cuts and costs down to the cities and towns

Buffalo is a microcosm of this larger economic problem and of the capitalist "solution" to this crisis.

The economic hard times are not the fault of workers and oppressed communities. But that is who will be burdened with

the heavy consequences of what the financial board will bring: service cuts, layoffs and wage freezes.

Slated to hold its first meeting in mid-July, the financial control board will begin making recommendations to balance the budget on the backs of those who can least afford it, in order to close what authorities have projected could be a \$10-15 million deficit this year.

The board will have the authority to borrow money and order spending cuts, and the power to override or approve union contracts, freeze payrolls and intervene in binding arbitration proceedings.

At least for now, this capitalist clique may rely on what are known as "salami tactics," slicing away at hard-won wage and benefit packages rather than chopping up entire contracts. But it could awaken militant resistance from the labor movement.

Health care benefits won by municipal workers in their union contract are in jeopardy. Pensions for retirees are also endangered.

This financial board brings an intensification of racism, capitalist exploitation and the class dictatorship of bankers and business kingpins over the working and oppressed of Buffalo.

And the word dictatorship is no exaggeration.

'Ominous and threatening'

Normally, the wealthy owning class rules through the two-party system. But this millionaire cabal has taken a hands-on approach, superceding the powers of elected officials.

And Democrats and Republicans alike—from the State Capitol to City Hall—allowed this "coup" in order to get out of the firing line for the economic crisis.

The people of Buffalo have been disenfranchised. Elections will be a charade as long as the control board has such powers. Those who manage the economy will have the power to manage politics.

The board will be able to impose its own financial plan if it rejects the city's proposal and city officials fail to make accept-

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LA 8: One step closer to victory

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Michel Shehadeh

WW PHOTO: JULIA LA RIVA

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SAT., OCT. 25

International march on Washington, D.C

The following is excerpted from a call initiated by the International ANSWER coalition. For more information, go to www.internationalANSWER.org.

Mass march on Washington to say:

- **Bring the troops home now**
- **End the occupation of Iraq**
- **Money for jobs, education & healthcare—not war**

The people in Iraq want the U.S. occupation to end. The U.S. soldiers in Iraq want to come home. On Oct. 25, tens of thousands of people in the U.S., joined by delegations from countries around the world, will go back into the streets to demand "End the Occupation, Bring the Troops Home Now!"

Under the banner, "The World Unites Against U.S. Militarism," the demonstration—marching from the Justice Department to the White House to the Pentagon—will also demand an end to the looting and destruction of social programs by the Bush administration.

Every day, people are dying as a consequence of this illegal occupation. Every day human misery expands in the drive for world empire and corporate globalization. Every day, vital social programs that serve and protect working people in the U.S. are being destroyed as the Bush administration cynically manipulates the slogan of the "war on terrorism" to carry out the social transfer of wealth from the bottom to the top.

Stopping Bush's war abroad and his war at home is a matter of life and death. None of us has the luxury of waiting. The time to act is now.

Tens of thousands of Iraqis and hundreds of GIs have been killed and maimed. As the anger of the Iraqi people will inevitably grow, the body count on both sides will sharply increase.

As the anti-war movement predicted, the Iraqi people view U.S. forces as colonial occupiers, not liberators. U.S. troops, frightened by the hostile environment and encouraged by the racist climate created by the military brass, are killing and being killed in a war that serves only the interests of U.S. oil monopolies and corporate elites—George W. Bush's real constituents. U.S. soldiers and their families are now realizing that high government officials, mostly millionaires who shuttle between corporate boardrooms and government posts, are using U.S. troops as a private security detachment for Corporate America's plunder of Iraq's oil riches.

Delegations from around the world

The Oct. 25 International March on Washington will include delegations invited from countries around the world whose banners will represent resistance to the threat posed by the Bush administration's hyper-

aggressive "preemptive war" strategy.

As we continue the movement in opposition to the occupation of Iraq, we must also oppose the daily threats against the people of Palestine, Afghanistan, Iran, Korea, Cuba, the Philippines, Colombia, Liberia, Zimbabwe and all others that are targets of the Bush administration.

The demonstration will be followed on Oct. 26 by an assembly with international delegates from the global anti-war movement to assess and strategize challenging the Bush administration's war drive and the component assault on civil rights and civil liberties taking place in many countries under the cloak of "national security" laws, including the Patriot Act in the U.S.

The war at home

The Bush administration will spend \$2.7 trillion in a vast expansion of the U.S. military-industrial apparatus, while eliminating or severely cutting taxes for Corporate America and the one percent of the richest part of the United States population to the tune of \$1 trillion. The administration is pursuing a calculated strategy to create a fiscal crisis inside the United States so that lawmakers will be compelled to cut or eliminate social programs for which there will no longer be funds.

Pentagon officials now admit that they intend for the U.S. to maintain at least 150,000 troops in Iraq for the "foreseeable future," while the cost of the U.S. war in and occupation of Iraq is nearly \$4 billion a month.

The government of the richest country in human history is spending more for war than any government in human history and has its troops stationed in more than 750 military installations and bases located in more than 130 countries all over the world.

Bush, Cheney, Rumsfeld, Wolfowitz have a plan to destroy every social reform that has been achieved since the 1930s. What are they seeking to destroy or privatize? Social security, Medicare, Medicaid, public education, affirmative action, civil rights, women's rights, reproductive health, lesbian/gay/bi/trans rights, environmental protections, and any other programs or social rights that are perceived as either a restriction on corporate power and profits or are a focus of attack by the ultra-right's political program. Under the Bush administration, the war at home has also meant a rise in attacks against communities of color. Police brutality against the African American and Latino communities in particular has escalated across the country.

The Oct. 25-26 weekend is also the second anniversary of the signing of the so-called Patriot Act authorizing political arrests, indefinite detentions and domestic spying. The demonstration will be a political challenge to the attack on civil rights and civil liberties.

It was only the people's movement that ended the invasion and occupation of Vietnam and it will be the global people's anti-war movement that will help end the U.S. occupation of Iraq. □

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NEW YORK

Tue., Aug. 19
 Brooklyn rally to bring the troops home. Sponsored by ANSWER and MLK Peace Now Committee. At the House of the Lord church 415 Atlantic Ave., downtown Brooklyn For info (212) 633-6646

Every Friday
 Workers World Party weekly meetings at 7 p.m. Phone (212) 627-2994 for topics and location.

SAN FRANCISCO

Wed., July 23
 Protest Tom Ridge: Homeland Security Secretary. Ridge will be speaking to the San Francisco Commonwealth Club at the Mark Hopkins Hotel. Demonstration 11:30 a.m. at 999 California St. For info call the International ANSWER coalition (415) 821-6545.

Every Sunday
 Workers World Party weekly meetings. These educational meetings cover current events as well as struggles of peoples from all over the world. 5 p.m. At 2489 Mission St, room 28. For info (415) 826-4828.

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Baltimore bus fare struggle

City Council, AFSCME weigh in

By WW Baltimore bureau

At a July 14 Baltimore City Council meeting, Council President Sheila Dixon and a majority of the members introduced a resolution requiring hearings and an inquiry into why police arrested one activist and wrote citations against eight others during a recent protest of the bus fare increase.

Jeff Bigelow, a union organizer for AFSCME Council 92, is facing 10 years on assault charges. The other eight community activists were given criminal citations for the use of a bullhorn and are facing a total of \$4,000 in fines.

Sharon Ceci, a volunteer organizer with the All Peoples Congress, called tonight's resolution a clear victory for community activists seeking justice.

The next step will be for the council to set up public hearings to gather testimony. The resolution also calls for Baltimore City State's Attorney Patricia Coates Jessamy and newly appointed Police Commissioner Kevin Clark to appear before the council's Judiciary and Legislative Investigations Committee.

Ceci stated, "We intend to wage a

campaign to have all charges dropped and to defend our right to protest. The overwhelming presence of scores of police, including city, state and MTA police, along with special SWAT teams and a helicopter, at the recent protest is meant to intimidate and criminalize dissent.

"The unprecedented number of police dispatched to a clearly legal and peaceful protest is an outrageous expense at a time when many in our city go hungry at night and have nowhere to sleep. It is too costly when school children are in need of books and teachers.

"Too often youth in the poorest of communities are targeted for increased police harassment. Their rights have also been denied. In our community work and at the recent council hearings on citations, we heard painful and horrendous accounts by Baltimore city residents who testified to incidents of racism and abuse by Baltimore's police department," she concluded.

AFSCME Council 92, representing 30,000 state and county workers, has voted formally to support the case of Jeff Bigelow. □



WW PHOTO: DEIRDRE GRISWOLD

The July 4 demonstration in Philadelphia brought together the demand to bring the U.S. troops home from Iraq with demand to free Mumia Abu-Jamal.

PHILADELPHIA

Lawsuit wins free speech rights

By Betsey Piette
Philadelphia

A lawsuit has resulted in a major free speech victory for political activists who seek to protest in this city. On the eve of trial, which was scheduled for July 7, the City of Philadelphia agreed that it would no longer use a discretionary scheme for granting demonstration permits, which was successfully challenged as unconstitutional.

The case, International Action Center v. City of Philadelphia, et al., was litigated by the Partnership for Civil Justice and the National Lawyers Guild.

Philadelphia officials agreed to a court order in Federal District Court for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania not to use city regulations to dissuade members of political groups and causes from holding public demonstrations.

"This is a victory for the activist community in Philadelphia and protects and promotes the rights of anyone who wants to demonstrate in Philadelphia in the future," stated Joseph Traub, National Lawyers Guild attorney who was a co-counsel on the litigation.

Over the years in this city, the so-called "cradle of democracy," protesters often found it difficult to get city permits to demonstrate or march. They were made to file for them under the city's "special events policy," which required demonstrators to have insurance coverage to hold a rally. Demonstrators were told that requests not filed months in advance could be denied. If the city didn't like their cause, it simply refused to issue a permit, hoping the demonstrators would give up.

"For too long, activists seeking to exercise their fundamental First Amendment rights in Philadelphia have been obstructed and denied those rights. The city has used unfettered discretion to grant use of the people's parks and streets to favored permittees, like the Republican National Convention, and either denied permits to those who challenge govern-

ment policies or tried to broker inadequate and unequal access to public space," explained Mara Verheyden-Hilliard, co-founder of the Partnership for Civil Justice, who litigated the case.

"This victory for people's rights came about because attorneys and activists initiated a struggle in the courts and in the streets against the illegal abrogation of free speech rights. This unconstitutional permitting process had festered in Philadelphia for years. The time was long overdue for the system to be taken down," she added.

This significant free-speech lawsuit was originally filed on behalf of organizers of a two-day vigil in support of Mumia Abu-Jamal at City Hall in May 2001. They had been told that their permit application was rejected. In cases like this, city officials tried to rigidly enforce every provision of the special events policy, but liberally interpreted the same policy when they dealt with GOP groups using the same city plaza during the Republican National Convention.

After an emergency hearing had resulted in a court order, which required the city to grant the permit and allowed the demonstration to go forward, free speech advocates pursued the case in order to strike down Philadelphia's illegal permitting scheme.

They also successfully challenged a city curfew against minors participating in gatherings or demonstrations protected by the First Amendment that went beyond 11 p.m.

The Partnership for Civil Justice is a public interest law firm based in Washington, D.C., that litigates civil rights and constitutional rights cases, many on behalf of political activists for social justice. Founded in 1937 as the nation's first racially integrated association of attorneys, the National Lawyers Guild brings together lawyers, law students, legal workers and jailhouse lawyers to function as an effective political and social force to put human rights above property rights. □

Mississippi workplace murders

Racism & Lockheed Martin

By Heather Cottin

Doug Williams assassinated six co-workers in Meridian, Miss., on July 9 and injured eight others before shooting himself. Five of the dead workers were African American. It was the worst workplace shooting in the United States this year.

Williams worked in a Lockheed Martin plant that made stabilizers for the newest U.S. fighter plane, the F/A-22 Raptor. Williams was a known racist. The company on several occasions had sent him to "anger management" classes.

He recently dressed up in something that looked like a Klan hood. When a Black worker objected, he was asked to remove it or leave. He left. It was well known among his fellow workers that he believed "Black people had a leg up in society." They said he was angry that he had been passed up for promotions at the plant, where he had worked for 19 years. (Associated Press, July 9)

Williams was an angry worker whose understanding of the economic system was twisted by racism. Rather than seeing the bosses as his enemy—as the class that keeps the entire working class separated, in competition, poor and oppressed—Williams thought that Black people were the cause of his poverty and unhappiness.

Legal segregation ended after heroic struggles by the civil rights movement, but Mississippi is still a racist state. The old ruling class still owns most of it. The Ku Klux Klan still operates openly. And racism has kept both wages and organization low.

In 1998, when 25.4 percent of non-agricultural wage workers were unionized in New York State, only 5.6 percent were organized in Mississippi. Other Southern states like South Carolina and North Carolina had even lower figures. (Bureau of Labor Statistics) In 2002, average weekly wages in New York State were \$909, in Mississippi \$538. Mississippi has no minimum wage law.

Around the country, women and people of color have been leading the most successful union organizing drives. Organization is strongest in areas where white workers recognize the need for solidarity against racism and accept the important role of the nationally oppressed.

Racists like Doug Williams fall into the bosses' trap when they reject worker solidarity against big capital. He could have joined the International Association of Machinists, which had organized the plant. But instead, Williams built his life around his guns and racist ideology. On the day of the murders, he was carrying his 12-gauge shotgun, 22 magnum Derringer, mini-14.223 semiautomatic rifle, .45 Ruger pistol, and a .22 rifle with a scope and a lot of ammunition. (Amsterdam News, July 10)

After the murders, the Lauderdale, Miss., county sheriff's office hastened to assure the media that there was no indication Williams's crimes were racially motivated. The coverage of the shootings in the Mississippi newspapers barely whispers the word "racism." But Hubert Threatt, an IAM union shop steward who had worked with Williams for 15 years, had heard many complaints about him. And Aaron Hopson, a Black employee, told the Associated Press that he had filed a complaint with management in December 2001 after Williams threatened him personally. Hopson said Williams used a racial epithet, threatening to shoot Black workers and kill himself.

Lockheed Martin management was well aware of Williams' explosive racism. But they kept him on.

Lockheed Martin is the largest manufacturer of weapons of war in the United States. It began to produce the F/A-22 Raptor in 2000. This plane was used to murder people of color in Iraq. Lockheed Martin profits from war and murder of Third World people on a global scale. This is the company that claims to have taught Doug Williams how to control his violent impulses. □



PHOTO: CWA

Can you hear them now?

Verizon worker victory

By G. Dunkel

Verizon lost and the Communication Workers of America won. 2,300 workers laid off a week before last Christmas must be rehired with back pay, according to an arbitrator's decision released July 10. Workers reassigned to cover these slots will get their original jobs back.

This victory, "will give 2,300 people their lives back," said Larry Mancino, vice president of CWA District One. "That's how important this decision is."

According to the CWA, the back pay amounts to \$100 million. Verizon, naturally, says the figure is much lower.

The arbitrator ruled that the external events cited by the company to justify these layoffs—a faltering economy and increased competition—did not meet the requirements laid out in the contract.

Since this was an arbitrator's decision, it is final and the company can't appeal it. But the contract between Verizon and the CWA and IBEW—the electrical workers' union which represents some of Verizon's workers—expires Aug. 2.

This contract battle was going to be difficult to settle before the ruling. It is now going to be more difficult.

Verizon is a very profitable company, making \$4.08 billion last year and paying its two top executives a total of \$40 million a year.

The company is in the telecommunication industry, which is subject to sweeping changes and fierce competition.

Most of Verizon's competitors are non-union and so Verizon wants to drive its labor costs down to their level. So it is demanding steep reductions in its health-care costs, a tight absenteeism policy and the right to "flexibility"—that is to reassign workers to shifts and areas at the company's convenience.

Some union members think Verizon wants a strike as a test of how many employees it actually needs to run its 57-million-line network. The actual operation of its network is automated, but repairs and installations are not, so personnel levels are hard to calculate.

Loosing the 2,300 workers in New York was noticeable. The Public Service Commission in New York issued a scathing report about Verizon's poor service after the layoffs and forbade it to raise its prices for three months.

"I think management is really trying to bust the union on this one," Conversent CEO Robert Shanahan told the Boston Globe, July 7. "I think they're prepared to let them strike until they break. As a result, every line we need that we can get in now,

we're trying to get in." Conversent is a telephone company in Massachusetts that rents some of its lines from Verizon.

According to the July 12 St. Petersburg Times, Verizon is forcing non-union employees to attend a week of 12-hour a day training sessions to learn the basics of pole climbing, phone line installation and other jobs. Whether enough replacements can be trained and whether the supervisors will have the physical stamina needed is another question. Retired supervisors are refusing to come back because Verizon has already cut their benefits.

While the company might be planning to bust the union, the CWA is not going to lie down and roll over. The CWA led a bitter 100-day walkout at Verizon's predecessor Nynex in 1989, which won important benefits. They held a major demonstration June 16 in front of the PSC's headquarters in Manhattan to raise the issue of how Verizon's layoffs affect service.

They have told the company that they are going to mobilize and fight. □

Another reason for Pride

Big win at WalMart

By Martha Grevatt

As the celebrations of Pride in the lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans communities come to a close, earthshaking and hard-won victories for these long-oppressed people continue to make the news. First, legalization of same-sex marriage in Canada. Then the Supreme Court ruling overturning the hated anti-"sodomy" laws.

Now the latest news: WalMart, the world's biggest exploiter of labor with 1 million wage-slaves under its boot heel, has agreed to add sexual orientation to its nondiscrimination policy. This victory also reflects the strength of the LGBT movement.

This strength is demonstrated in part by the fact that the labor movement, which is fighting for justice for all WalMart workers, has an LGBT constituency group: Pride At Work.

In response to the news about WalMart, Pride At Work stated:

"As part of a national coalition including many lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) people and organizations working to bring attention to LGBT issues during the Wal-Mart Day of Action last November, we are gratified that Wal-Mart

Record job losses for Black workers

By Monica Moorehead

The overall unemployment rate in the U.S. is hovering around 6.4 percent—the highest since 1994. This figure is based on those who are still looking for work. The rate doesn't include hundreds of thousands of workers who have become so discouraged that they have stopped looking for a job altogether.

Over the past 28 months nearly 2.6 million jobs have been eliminated. Ninety percent of these lost jobs were based in the manufacturing sector.

This is a nightmare for the working class as a whole. But for African American workers in particular, the impact is even more devastating because of the historical legacy of discrimination—being the last hired, first fired.

The July 11 Bureau of Labor Statistics revealed that the unemployment rate for Black workers is rising at a much faster rate than at any other time since the mid-1970s. As a result, the rate for Black workers aged 20 and older has risen 3.5 percentage points—to 10.5 percent—compared to a 1.7 percentage point increase for white workers.

In 2000, 2.1 million Black workers held 10.1 percent of the 20 million manufacturing jobs in the U.S. The great majority of these jobs were landed during the economic boom of the 1990s.

Once the capitalist recession hit hard in March 2001, 15 percent of these 2.1 million jobs—or 300,000—were eliminated. More white workers lost jobs—1.7 million—but because they are much more numerous than Black workers, the percentage of whites who lost work was less.

Over a decade ago, the deepest concentration of manufacturing jobs for Black workers was in the Northeast and Midwest. According to the National Association of Manufacturers, today every state has lost manufacturing jobs as corporations pull up stakes and move factories to

smaller towns and cities here and abroad where profits can be made by lowering wages and downsizing benefits. This is what is commonly referred to as "lowering labor costs."

Autoliv, a Swedish-owned company that makes seat belts, recently shut down a plant in Indianapolis. Some 350 workers lost their jobs, 75 percent of them African American. Many of these workers never graduated from high school. With the loss of these jobs, they face the real prospect of committing crimes for survival that could eventually lead them to prison or even worse.

An important related factor is that the official June unemployment rate for those between the ages of 16 and 19 years old was 19.3 percent—and the Black teenager unemployment rate was among the fastest rising. (New York Times, July 14)

While rich get richer

UNITE, the Union of Needletrades, Industrial and Textile Employees, has made available data illustrating that the disproportionately large job losses for African Americans are not confined to those recently hired but affect workers who have been on the job for 20, 30 or more years. Textile mills that have been the economic mainstays of cities and towns in the South have shut down and set up sweat shops in Asia. This includes the loss of 1,000 jobs in Roanoke Rapids, N.C.; 1,500 in Martinsville, Va.; and 1,000 in Columbus, Ga. Factory closings not only mean lost wages and benefits but diminished pensions and tax revenues.

Bill Lucy, president of the Coalition of Black Trade Unionists, stated, "The number of jobs and the types of jobs that have been lost have severely diminished the standing of many Blacks in the middle class." (New York Times, July 12) By "middle class," he means workers with steady jobs.

A random poll taken by the Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies asked 850 Black workers if they felt financially better off, worse off or about the same. When the poll was taken in October 2000, 45 percent said they were better off, 10 percent worse off and 44 percent said their situation had not changed. But exactly two years later, the numbers had dramatically changed to 19 percent, 42.6 percent and 36.7 percent, respectively.

Economic analysts love to tell workers to be patient and optimistic because the recovery is right around the corner. But a growing number of workers are not buying into this nonsense as they witness how the rich are getting richer with the assistance of the Bush tax breaks and the unimaginably large war budget.

And in periods of capitalist boom or bust, there is no denying that workers, regardless of their nationality, sex, gender, sexuality or age, are exploited for their ability to work by their bosses and the ruling class as a whole. There is no denying that capitalism, a system that feeds off profits at the expense of workers' needs, can never create full employment.

African American workers are not only exploited as workers. They are super-exploited by a racist system that relies heavily on institutionalized racism based on the false premise of white supremacy.

Under a divide-and-conquer system like the capitalist U.S., white workers must extend a hand of anti-racist solidarity to Black workers and all the oppressed in order to build the multinational unity needed to win the right of all workers to a decent-paying job and full benefits. □

has awakened to some of the problems of one segment of the population."

However, PAW stated:

"We believe it's just as important what Wal-Mart did not do last week—they did not make health care affordable for their employees, straight or gay. Nor did they include domestic partner benefits—the kind of benefits unions gain for their employees every day. They did not agree to stop selling sweatshop items, many made by children. Nor did they agree to allow the workers to form a union if the majority wants to do so. While we passionately believe in nondiscrimination language for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender workers, we do not think this one advance fixes what's wrong at the world's biggest company. For that reason, we say it's a little early to pat them on the back."

No doubt the million-strong workforce, including tens of thousands of LGBT workers, would say "ditto" to that.

Martha Grevatt is a former member of the National Executive Committee of Pride At Work. She was instrumental in winning protective language and domestic partner benefits at Daimler Chrysler.

LA 8: One step closer to victory

By Muna Coobtee
Los Angeles

The 16-year legal and political struggle of the LA 8 may finally be coming to an end.

Immigration Judge Bruce J. Einhorn issued a July 11 ruling that forces the Justice Department to drop remaining charges against two of the LA 8—Michel Shehadeh and Khader Hamide—or immediately commence deportation proceedings against them.

Shehadeh, Hamide and six other defendants were arrested in 1987 for their political activities on behalf of the Palestinian people's struggle for justice. The U.S. government never charged the LA 8—seven Palestinians and one Kenyan—with any real crime.

Instead, they were charged with violating the now-repealed McCarran-Walter Act for possessing literature advocating "worldwide communism." Throughout the years the government has openly

admitted that if the LA 8 were U.S. citizens they would not have been charged at all.

The draconian McCarran-Walter Act, enacted in 1952, made it a crime and deportable offense for an immigrant or naturalized citizen to engage in activities deemed "subversive" by the government. Used during the McCarthy period as a tool of repression against communists and other political activists, the act was repealed by Congress after a federal court declared it unconstitutional in 1990.

Yet even after the act was repealed, the government continued its campaign of harassment against the LA 8 by pursuing the deportation of Shehadeh and Hamide under "anti-terrorist" laws. U.S. courts, however, repeatedly found no evidence that the LA 8 were involved in criminal or terrorist activities.

In 1999, the LA 8 suffered a major setback. The U.S. Supreme Court ruled that immigrants are not entitled to basic rights set forth in the U.S. Constitution, such as

free speech, due process and equal protection. This shocking ruling opened the door for the deportation of immigrants on the basis of their political views.

Despite the indefensible ruling, the LA 8 and the huge people's movement supporting them continued to fight for immigrants' rights, winning significant victories over the next several years.

This latest ruling could put the LA 8 one step closer to victory and deal a resounding blow to the government's bogus case.

No longer can the government endlessly drag out the unwarranted prosecution of the LA 8. It must decide either to prosecute Shehadeh and Hamide based on the unconstitutional McCarran-Walter Act, attempt to bring new charges under the Patriot Act, or drop the case entirely.

Shehadeh, a leading member of the ANSWER coalition and currently on the national steering committee of the Free Palestine Alliance, is optimistic about the recent decision: "This positive development in our case results from the strength



Michel Shehadeh

WW PHOTO: JULIA LA RIVA

of the people's movement to demand justice for Palestine and equal rights for immigrants."

Though the case of the LA 8 may soon be resolved, Shehadeh stresses that the struggle for immigrants' rights is far from over: "After 16 years of fighting, I am just as determined as I was on the first day. We must all stand up to government repression and insist that our fundamental rights are not sacrificed in the name of false national security." □

Big business takeover of Buffalo

Continued from page 1

able revisions. The June 25 Buffalo News reported that some politicians were stunned to learn that the board will also have the clout to remove from office any city official who refuses to comply with the financial plan. Offenders could even be charged with misdemeanor crimes.

The board will profit and make money from its power, all off the backs of the workers and their communities. Buffalo had been, in reality, in default and therefore could not borrow money. But the board will be able to get short-term loans from the bankers, who are assured that their debt payments will be squeezed out of the workers and oppressed communities. And since short-term loans guarantee higher interest rates, the banks are assured a nice piece of change in return.

Former State Comptroller H. Carl McCall, an African American, held six separate meetings with more than 20 community leaders and representatives from nine city unions, in which some labor leaders reportedly voiced growing fears that the powers of the board are too broad. Their fears were confirmed when the administration of Buffalo Mayor Anthony Masiello announced that the control board should focus on three problems—a declining property tax levy, "out-of-control" health insurance costs and rising costs for employee pensions. (Buffalo News, July 9)

Council President James W. Pitts, also African American, described the control board's broad powers as "ominous and threatening" and added, "They are playing with fire." Pitts said he believes unions across the state will mount court challenges to overturn the legislation.

Meet the control board

Nine members have been appointed to the board by Gov. Pataki.

Thomas Baker, the appointed chairperson, was with the Wall Street accounting firm of Price Waterhouse for 33 years. Baker is director of the Oishei Foundation, established by the founder of the Trico Products Corp. to supposedly improve quality of life through cultural, social, civic and other charitable contributions. However, quality of life for thousands of Trico workers and their families greatly deteriorated more than a decade ago when the company moved its plants

to Mexico to maximize profits by paying workers very low wages.

Robert Wilmers, president and chief executive officer of M&T Bank, rakes in more than \$1 million a year in salary and bonuses. With 988,000 stock options he has accumulated over the years, however, he was sitting on more than \$56 million in profits at the end of last year. And those options could be worth another \$10 million this year. (Buffalo News, June 15)

Alair Townsend, the only woman on the board, will serve as vice chair. She is the former New York City budget director and deputy mayor in the Koch administration during the years of control board oversight there. She is the current publisher of the weekly newspaper Crain's New York Business and is known as a "fiscal conservative" who champions business causes. She advocates smaller state budgets and corporate tax breaks. She's an enemy of municipal unions and has also condemned teachers' unions for trying to stop attacks on public education and teacher tenure protection. (Buffalo News, July 14)

Erie County Executive Joel Giambra is a controversial appointee to many in this city. He has been working with business to implement a merger of city and county services, called "regionalization." Many here, especially in the African American community, which constitutes 50 percent of the population, are concerned that this really means disenfranchisement. For years Buffalo has been suffering from white flight to the suburbs. According to the July 7 Buffalo News, Giambra and his business allies wielded significant influence in guiding Pataki's appointments.

Completing the panel are Ronald Pirtle, president of Delphi Harrison Thermal System in Lockport; former New York State Comptroller H. Carl McCall; John Faso, former State Assembly minority leader and also known to be a fiscal conservative; Buffalo Mayor Anthony Masiello, and one member yet to be appointed by the State Senate majority leader, State Assembly leader and Assembly speaker.

While it has been suggested that this seat be filled by a union representative, so far no labor leader has reportedly been willing to sit on this board.

The selection of the board was influenced by area business figures, who directly lobbied the governor's office and legislators.

Wilmers appeared to direct many of the talks with top lawmakers, according to legislators, and helped negotiate the final legislation. Also involved in the talks were Mark Hamister, current Buffalo Niagara Partnership head—who gained his wealth by building a nursing home empire—and Partnership President Andrew Rudnick. (Buffalo News, July 3)

Resist!

How do the people of Buffalo feel about who should run this board? A poll conducted for the Buffalo News found that only 24 percent favored business leaders; just 15 percent supported the idea of elected officials.

But 41 percent of those polled thought the control board should be dominated by ordinary individuals and grassroots community action groups. (Buffalo News, July 3)

African American syndicated columnist Ron Watson wrote on July 10: "My worry is that this control board consists of people who'll never need the services that inevitably will be cut. This is the panel that will decide how many firefighters the city should have. But how many live in tinderbox wood-frame houses so close together they can ignite one another? This is a panel that recognizes the importance of Shea's Performing Arts Center and the Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra. But how many are regulars at the Langston Hughes Institute or the African-American Cultural Center, or have kids who rely on programs at a center like that?"

The intent of a big-business-controlled board was already beginning to be publicly questioned in June at a series of town meetings. More than 1,500 Buffalonians turned out to argue and debate the wisdom of a control board.

Myra Holiday, an African American union activist, asked politicians and potential board members, "What are you going to do to help working families?"

Referring to shifts in population from the city to the suburbs, Elizabeth Berry, founder of Save Our Libraries, argued, "I've heard enough about money, money, money, fiscal this, fiscal that. If you take care of our neighborhoods, they will come. If you cut services, they will go."

Joseph Foley, president of the Buffalo Professional Firefighters Local 282—a union that has been in negotiations with

the city for the last four months—stated, "Are you telling me a guy making almost \$10 million a year really knows what I do for a living?"

What is needed is an independent coalition of labor/community forces to begin to prepare to resist this attack on the quality of life of people in this city.

A legal challenge being initiated by an alliance of unions is a good start.

Philip Rumore, president of the Buffalo Teachers Federation, said that his union will be willing to take whatever legal or other actions are required to oppose any further actions detrimental to teachers. The Buffalo Board of Education has just cut 679 jobs, including 413 teaching positions.

The BTF vowed to file a federal lawsuit within a month arguing that any effort by the board to modify contracts would violate the U.S. Constitution.

Concerns about the control board reportedly dominated discussions during a four-day statewide convention of fire fighters in Buffalo.

"It would seem to be the easy way out for every municipality falling on hard times," said Charles Morello, president of the New York State Fire Fighters Association, largest in the country. "Turn it over to a group of executives, do away with services, and send us all back to the Stone Age. It seems to me like these guys should be concentrating on finding people work, not micromanaging city finances."

Weeks before the board was formally created, the International Action Center in Buffalo widely distributing a leaflet that warned the board will attempt a huge transfer of money to the banks at the expense of the working class and oppressed. "These are the same billionaires who have just gotten richer with Bush's huge tax cuts and the bounty of post-war contracts in Afghanistan and Iraq," it read.

The leaflet stressed that no unions or union workers should face economic threat and that no decent-paying jobs should be destroyed. It concluded that the wealth created by working people must be put into city schools and social services, not given to the banks for debt service.

The IAC presented these demands at public hearings held in Buffalo and called for a moratorium on the city's debt. This immediate demand was well received by those who packed the hearings. □

By Mumia Abu-Jamal from death row:

Soldiers of misfortune

Every politician worth his or her salt speaks sweet words of endearment about the young soldiers on the periphery of the American Empire.

They're "brave," "courageous" and defenders of "our" freedoms.

Everyone in power seems to be basking in the glow of spring love for "our" young warriors, but if time teaches us anything about the praises of politicians, it is that such sweet words last about as long as cotton candy in an April shower.

If we are honest, and if we look at things from the perspective of political leaders, we see that soldiers are but instruments of state power. They're seen as, say, a queen bee "sees" a drone; they are expendable.

How can we come to any other conclusion in light of the way veterans of military engagements past are treated, not by protestors who may oppose their imperial violence, but by the state that employed their services?

Soldiers of World War II were subjected to dangerous exposure to radioactive materials, causing uncounted effects in thousands of men over generations. The veterans of Vietnam were exposed to the ravages of Agent Orange, but found their enemies not in grass and mud hootches in the subtropics of Asia, but in the Veterans Administration hospitals, the chemical companies, and the politicians who represent their interests, who rejected their health concerns for at least a generation. When thousands of men and women went to the (first) Gulf War, they experienced serious life-threatening illnesses that they called the Gulf War Syndrome. Who opposed them, assuring them that it was "just in their minds"? The same folks who opposed their predecessors!

The raging protests of Vietnam forced the government to deep-six the draft—which had been unpopular since the Civil War—and institute what it claimed was an "all-volunteer" service. Yet, who volunteers—and why?

Studies have shown that low-income levels and chronic unemployment are an important element in why some people opt for military service. Slick, computer-generated ad campaigns promise thousands of dollars for college, and emphasize individuality under the "Army of One" pitch. With few prospects of a career in an economy driven by recession, and the demoralizing weight of a dead-end job—if one is able to get one—the ads on TV can prove irresistible. The Philadelphia-based Central Committee for Conscientious Objectors considers the military's present recruitment efforts as a "poverty draft."

The Jennifer Lynches of the world, surviving in the low-growth economic battlefield of West Virginia, find the military a viable, stable option in an unstable civilian economy.

How many people in the services would be there if education was truly affordable? Or if the economy was out of recession?

As Congress passes resolutions praising the troops, the very same House of Representatives moves to cut some \$25 billion from veterans' health benefits over the next decade. The love of politicians seems ever so fickle these days.

Meanwhile, more and more public dollars get funneled into the cavernous maw of the military-industrial-complex.

As this happens, we see the economic underpinnings of war.

Wars are not waged on behalf of the many, but for the few; those few who can and will benefit from ravages of war, like oil companies, defense industries and the like. How can this most recent war be for the benefit of a people who overwhelmingly opposed it, in unprecedented numbers? Least of all are wars fought for those who fight in them.

They are drawn, overwhelmingly, from the ranks of the poor and the working-classes; those who can find no space in a tight economic environment. They fight abroad because they are exhausted from the never-ending fight at home for a decent, affordable education, for decent housing, for a job with some degree of longevity.

They are fighting to survive against a truly ruthless enemy—those who run America's economy.

When thieves fall out

By Fred Goldstein

The so-called Bush Doctrine of world domination and pre-emption has not been mentioned recently. Hailing the "brilliant" Rumsfeld strategy has gone out of vogue. The advocates of empire have fallen silent of late.

Instead, the capitalist media, which spoke out in unison and with enthusiasm for war against Iraq only five months ago, is now filled with headlines about Bush's lies, politicians' claims that they were "fooled," Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld's admission that more troops may be needed in Iraq, the cost of the war skyrocketing, more U.S. soldiers killed or wounded daily, and the occupation overlord Paul Bremer having to hastily reverse course and come up with an Iraqi puppet "governing council" in a feeble attempt to give the occupation a "democratic" façade.

Driving it all is the steadily growing Iraqi resistance to colonial rule.

The Democratic Party politicians and even sections of the Republican Party are making a huge case out of the concocted story about the Iraq government trying to purchase uranium from Niger for a nuclear weapons program. It is important that such lies are exposed for the education of the people, who are now watching the Bush administration twist in the wind and say that "George Tenet did it," or "the British swore to it," or National Security Advisor Condoleezza Rice's memorable phrase: "It was only 16 words in a speech."

Suddenly the media and the politicians have discovered that the charges about the Hussein government seeking

uranium from Niger were expunged from Bush's speech on Oct. 6, 2002, at the demand of the CIA. The charges were put back into his State of the Union address on Jan. 28, and then omitted from Secretary of State Colin Powell's address to the United Nations a week later. "How it met Mr. Bush's standards and not Mr. Powell's is one of the mysteries the White House has not addressed," wrote the July 15 New York Times.

The establishment wakes up—why now?

But even greater than the "mystery" of the contradiction between Bush's and Powell's speeches is the mystery of why the New York Times, and, indeed, the entire capitalist media establishment, took six months to notice the contradiction—which was readily apparent to any casual observer in February, after Powell's speech.

If a war was being planned based upon such a serious charge, if Washington's efforts to scare people into approving the war by references to "mushroom clouds" and nuclear attack were based on evidence so flimsy that the secretary of state refused to include it in the most important world presentation of the case for war, why not call for an investigation before the war? Why wait until three months after it is over and tens of thousands of people have been killed or wounded and an entire country crippled in a brutal, unprovoked invasion?

All Washington insiders were fully aware of the contradiction. The evidence was tainted then. And it was clear that the CIA and its director, George

Tenet, did not want to sign on to this particular falsification—not because the department of "dirty tricks" suddenly had scruples about lying. Lying, spying, subversion and killing are what they do. It was because Tenet was reluctant to go war in the first place and did not want to get the rap for falsification of evidence if things went wrong.

And that is precisely what happened. Things went wrong. The Iraqi people never could overcome the super-power military machine in a conventional war. But the U.S. war machine could not break the will of the Iraqi people to resist and is now bogged down in a guerrilla war where much of the Pentagon arsenal is neutralized and unusable. And now the blame game is in full swing.

The failure of the Pentagon to vanquish the Iraqi population and smoothly accomplish political stability with a surgical "regime change" has brought about demoralization in the ruling class. Washington, which seemed to be on top of the world just a few months ago, is losing control of events.

Rumsfeld: 'More people will die'

This was dramatically illustrated by the remarks of Donald Rumsfeld about the occupation, reported by cbsnews.com on July 14: "Is it an important thing to be doing? Yes. Is it tough? You bet. Are more people going to be killed? You bet. Does it cost some money? You bet. Can we tell the world precisely what it's going to cost or how long it's going to last? No."

In addition, Rumsfeld—the prophet

Why best-laid plans can go

By Sara Flounders

Before the water was running in Baghdad, before the electricity was operating, or the phone system, or mass transit or even the hospitals, L. Paul Bremer III, the U.S. top administrator, declared Iraq "open for business."

The looting of Iraq by U.S. corporate raiders had begun. Pentagon bombers and tens of thousands of invading troops had smashed open the doors.

Some of the same giant U.S. corporations that had received multi-billion dollar contracts to participate in the destruction of Iraq were the first to receive no-bid contracts for reconstruction. Halliburton, MCI World/Com, Bechtel—all insiders in the Bush administration—were at the front of the line for giant handouts.

The Bush administration and Corporate America had a detailed plan for the reconstruction of Iraq long before Bush gave the order for the massive destruction and military occupation. The May 1 Wall Street Journal reported that the confidential plan prepared by U.S. Agency for International Development and the Treasury Department was drafted in February—before the U.S. invasion and occupation.

The plan calls for mass privatization of Iraqi industry, liquidation of insolvent Iraqi industries and assessment of others for sale. It also proposes a year-long propaganda effort to persuade the Iraqi people that this is in their best

interests.

Overseeing the restructuring of Iraq's financial system is Peter McPherson, a top Treasury Department official who is now the head of the Iraq National Bank. The U.S. AID/Treasury Department report echoes the recommendations of the Heritage Foundation. This powerful, neo-conservative think-tank calls for preparing state assets for privatization, including industries, utilities, transportation, ports, airports—and most importantly, the energy sector.

Ariel Cohen, a research fellow at the Heritage Foundation, wrote a June 17 UPI analysis entitled "Oil Privatization—Key for Iraq." The international implications of restructuring Iraq are made clear. "Iraq's privatization of its oil sector, refining capacity and pipeline infrastructure, could serve as a model for the privatization by other OPEC members, thereby weakening the cartel's domination of the energy markets."

According to the Heritage Foundation, windfall oil revenue should be distributed to individuals.

What the war was all about

The restructuring of Iraq and re-conquest of the entire region is what the war was really all about. Corporate America is determined to lay hold of the fabulous oil resources and the developed infrastructure.

The reconstruction plan is so deadly, though, that it is fueling greater resistance. No wonder. Every sector in soci-

ety, except a handful of collaborators, stands to lose.

Decisions are being made, multi-billion-dollar contracts signed and basic industries sold off or closed down by U.S. corporate executives without any Iraqi participation. These decisions will affect the future of Iraq for years to come. All this has been done before there is even an appointed government in place.

This secret corporate plan was very different than the excuses Bush, Cheney, Powell and Rumsfeld gave for the invasion, which are now being exposed as a massive lie and a forgery.

The Bush administration's deception is now being called into question, but only because growing Iraqi resistance is challenging the real plan of corporate looting and quick super-profits.

Iraqi acts of armed resistance now average 10 to 20 a day. GI deaths from attacks and accidents average one a day.

The cost of occupation is rising in political and military terms. Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld admitted that the military cost is now \$1 billion a week.

The changes ahead that the occupiers are planning are every bit as brutal as the 13 years of U.S.-led economic sanctions. The resulting consequences for the average Iraqi would be even more devastating.

Shackled in the 'free market'

Bremer, optimistically announcing plans to open Iraq to foreign invest-

'If Washington was trying to scare people into approving the war by references to "mushroom clouds" and nuclear attack on the basis of evidence so flimsy that the Secretary of State refused to include it in the most important world presentation of the case for war, why not call for an investigation before the war? Why wait until three months after it is over and tens of thousands of people have been killed or wounded and an entire country crippled in a brutal, unprovoked invasion?'

of "military transformation" and the replacement of ground troops by high-tech terror weapons—told Meet the Press on July 14 that "It seems to me that the numbers of forces are unlikely to go up. Now could they? You bet. If needed, they will be there."

So the ruling class, which was promised a quick war to be followed by a quick transition to a stable pro-U.S. regime and troop reductions to the level of 30,000 by September, is now facing an open-ended guerrilla war with escalating costs, a force level of 145,000 U.S. troops, and escalating casualties in a conflict of unknown duration and outcome.

War costs skyrocket, services cut

Rumsfeld had to tell a Senate committee last week that the occupation is costing close to \$4 billion a month. That is approximately what the war itself cost. "This week," wrote the July 13 Washington Post, officials expect to announce that the "federal deficit is exploding" and will "exceed \$400 billion for the fiscal year ending Sept. 30, the largest in U.S. history by a wide margin."

With the added rising war costs, Goldman Sachs Group calculated that the deficit may climb to \$475 billion.

Thus the occupation is putting unexpected pressure on the financial system and is causing anxiety among the bankers and bosses.

More importantly, from the point of view of the workers and the oppressed at home, the war is measured in terms of vital services lost. Anti-war activists in Boston estimate the costs of the war at \$67 billion this year already. On their web-

site—www.costofwar.com—they have calculated that this amount of money could have put 9.5 million more children in Head Start, financed the hiring of 1.3 million school teachers, covered the health insurance costs for 29 million children, or built 977,000 new affordable housing units.

In addition to weakening the financial system and laying the basis for mass rebellion at home against the intensified cuts to social services, the growing Iraq quagmire has stretched U.S. military forces to the extent that the Pentagon has had to once more postpone the departure of two brigades of the Third Infantry Division and is casting about desperately, trying to find a way to shore up its forces.

The Pentagon suffered a severe setback when the government of India, after months of lobbying by the entire Bush administration, rejected a proposal to send its troops to be part of the occupation. The Pentagon was counting on a full division of 17,000 or more Indian soldiers. Up to 87 percent of the Indian population is opposed to the war, according to the July 15 New York Times.

The Iraqi resistance has pushed the reactionary Indian government to turn Washington down. "Public opinion is sharply critical of the war," a prominent Indian journalist told the Times. "It just doesn't make sense for Indian soldiers to be basically used as cannon fodder when the U.S. is getting bogged down and taking casualties."

The Times cited a "more prevailing view," written in the magazine Outlook by Prem Shankar Jha: "Iraq has not been liberated, but invaded and occupied. The

Iraqis know it, resent it, and are preparing to resist it. If India sends troops now, it will be as part of an occupation force. Stabilization will mean oppression."

Puppet council outlaws anti-colonial holiday

Pressured by the growing resistance, L. Paul Bremer was compelled to come up with a fig-leaf "governing council" of 25 Iraqis to try to take the steam out of the charges of occupation. He changed the name from "advisory" to "governing" under pressure, even though Bremer has the absolute veto over anything they do, sits in on all their meetings, and holds all the military and economic cards as the occupier.

The council showed its political colors in its first official act. On July 12 it abolished all the holidays that existed during Saddam Hussein's government. It even abolished the July 14 holiday commemorating the anti-colonial revolution that liberated Iraq from the British colonial puppet monarchy. That has been the national holiday ever since 1958—10 years before Saddam Hussein played any governmental role in Iraq.

In place of the anti-colonial holiday, the council declared April 9, the day of the new colonial occupation, to be the new national day. Of course, this truly expresses the sentiments of people like the principal advocate for the U.S., Ahmad Chalabi—a rich, U.S.-educated, philandering banker whose family fled the anti-imperialist revolution in 1958.

The July 14 ban did not work out that well, according to the July 15 edition of the London Guardian. It reported: "Thou-

sands of Iraqis marched through Baghdad yesterday, celebrating the 45th anniversary of the overthrow of the monarch and calling for the restoration of national independence." Many carried pictures of Abdul Karim Kassem, the leader of the 1958 overturn of the British puppet monarchy.

The real issue: colonial aggression

The debate inside U.S. ruling circles is fueled by the coming election campaign. Democratic Party luminaries are saying they were "misled" into voting for war by tainted evidence.

The charges flying against Bush are a clear case of thieves falling out and truth coming into its own. The Democratic Party politicians are not interested in truth, but votes. They are interested in not getting in the way of the growing anger and disillusionment of the people as the casualty count of U.S. troops mounts. But they will never say that which needs to be said.

Evidence of lying, bad as that is, is not the basic issue.

The issue is that this was an unjust war of aggression in pursuit of expanding the U.S. empire in the Middle East. Washington's goal was to conquer Iraq, get its oil, put in a pro-U.S. colonial regime and take this strategic outpost on the Persian Gulf.

It was the implementation of the doctrine of so-called "pre-emption," a doctrine that proclaims an end to the right of sovereignty, the right of self-defense and the right of self-determination.

It was a criminal war of colonial aggression. That is the issue. □

astray The corporate looting of Iraq

ment, declared "Iraq will find that opening its borders to trade and investment will increase competitive pressure on its domestic firms and thereby raise productivity."

Bremer took the same message to the world's corporate and political elite gathered at the World Economic Forum meeting in Switzerland in late May.

The terms used are all too familiar: protecting property rights, lowering barriers, changing laws governing trade and commerce.

During the 13 years of sanctions, the U.S. shut Iraq off to any economic and commercial relations with the countries of the world, froze all Iraqi assets and barred all forms of trade. Iraq was prohibited from exporting or importing and was unable to modernize equipment or purchase spare parts. Bombing and military occupation followed this.

Now Iraqi industries are told they must compete in the "free market."

Edmund L. Andrews described how a flood of imports threatens the survival of Iraqi businesses. "Iraq's cloistered industry suddenly faces the full fury of globalization and international competition," he wrote in a June 1 New York Times article entitled "After Years of Stagnation, Iraqi Industries Are Falling to a Wave of Imports." Andrews explained that "... since American forces seized Baghdad, Iraq has been transformed from one of the most isolated economies into a huge new free-trade zone.

"Iraqi manufacturers, which employed more than one-tenth of all workers before

the war, are almost powerless to match the new competition. Their equipment is badly outdated. ... The free market shocks are even bigger for Iraq's state-owned industrial companies, which produce everything from packaged food to electrical equipment and employ more than 100,000 people."

Duty-free, cheap electronic products, packaged food and tons of other materials have flooded into Iraq. They have pushed Iraqi business that survived years of sanctions into overnight bankruptcy.

Privatizing of industry and public services is usually called by the innocuous term "structural adjustment." Throughout the former Soviet Union, Eastern Europe and many Third World countries, the results for the overwhelming majority of the people have been a total disaster. These measures, dictated by the International Monetary Fund and World Bank, led to years of massive, chronic unemployment. The people of Argentina, Mexico, Bolivia, Korea, Thailand and every other developing country have lost jobs and essential services while transnational corporations with capital to invest have picked up the windfalls.

U.S. Labor Against the War (USLAW) released a report in mid-June entitled "The Corporate Invasion of Iraq: Profiles of U.S. Corporations Awarded Contracts in U.S./British Occupied Iraq."

USLAW explained in a release: "Most of these corporations have been awarded no-bid contracts worth billions of dollars to rebuild and privatize Iraq, and bring its economy firmly under U.S. control. Their

names read like a rogue's gallery of anti-union U.S. multinationals, including Halliburton (VP Cheney's former company), MCI (formerly MCI/WorldCom, notoriously anti-union and now charged with the largest fraud in history), and SSA (the leader of the attack on the ILWU during 2002 contract negotiations)." The contracts are enormous handouts worth billions.

USLAW says its report "exposes the labor, human rights, environmental and business records of these corporations—a sordid history of ... fraud, bankruptcy, overcharging, price-gouging, profiteering, wage-cheating, deception, corruption, health and safety violations, worker and community exploitation, human and labor rights abuses, union-busting, strike breaking, environmental contamination, ecological irresponsibility ..."

The best-laid plans

The occupiers are committed to their plan.

It calls for big layoffs of Iraqi workers, massive turnover of industries and services, cutbacks in all social programs. And it aims to end the numerous free services—from health care to schools—that the previous government had provided. Bremer also wants to cut the free food distributions to the entire population that kept 80 percent of the Iraqi population alive during years of sanctions. He considers them a wasteful subsidy.

Bremer's ban on employment for 30,000 members of the Baath Party impacts on many vitally necessary low-

level civil servants. Bremer dissolved the Iraqi Army, putting 400,000 Iraqis out of work without pensions or retraining. He is engaged in a full-scale assault on the Iraqi state. This is calculated to shrink the public sector, including schools, hospitals and other essential social services, including sanitation and sewage and infrastructure needs of a modern country.

However, in order to have stability, the U.S. occupation must be able to provide the basic requirements of life. Electricity, potable water, communications, transportation, jobs, schools and health care are essential. But since taking over two and a half months ago, the U.S. has failed to provide even the bare minimum needed by the people while concentrating on suppressing their resistance and taking over their resources.

The Iraqi people, seething with rage against the occupation and re-colonization, are putting up increasingly fierce resistance. As it grows, U.S. congressional critics are beginning to complain that there is no plan on how to stabilize Iraq.

The plan to hijack the entire economy creates a contradiction that U.S. occupiers will not be able to solve.

This unsolvable crisis, the criminal nature of the occupation and the growing resistance of the Iraqi people means that the only real solution will become increasingly clear to GIs on the front lines, their families and millions worldwide. Their voices will rise in a resounding demand to bring the troops home and end the occupation of Iraq. □

Growing sentiment across continent

'Africa is not for sale!'

By Monica Moorehead

The following article is based on a talk given at a New York Workers World Party meeting on July 11.

President George W. Bush has just returned from a visit to Africa. Bourgeois analysts are asking: Was the trip a "success" or a "bust"?

Some editorials have made the point that with 2004 presidential elections coming soon, Bush was especially trying to score major points with the African American community by showing his "concern" for Africa, such as visiting the centuries-old "Slave House" in Gorée Island, Senegal. Bush is certainly trying to attract more of the Black vote. And he is undoubtedly worried about the growing disaffection of U.S. troops, Black, Latino and white, who have been thrust into the position of being colonial occupiers in Iraq.

But Bush's trip to Africa goes much deeper than publicity stunts, like shaking hands with African children living with AIDS or affected by the HIV virus.

In his work "Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism," V. I. Lenin examined the various stages in capitalism's evolution into imperialism as a worldwide economic system that is governed by the expansion of profitable markets. Lenin stated, "Imperialism is capitalism at that stage of development at which the dominance of monopolies and finance capital is established; in which the export of capital has acquired pronounced importance; in which the division of the world among the international trusts has begun, in which the division of all territories of the globe among the biggest capitalist powers has been completed."

What does this pamphlet, written in 1916 during World War I, have to do with Africa? Everything. Especially the last point, which reflects the current world reality of the U.S. drive to recolonize the world, including Africa.

Up until the early 1990s, when the collapse of the Soviet Union and the socialist camp was in motion, the U.S. rulers' interest in Africa was mainly from a geopolitical perspective. The CIA had helped to overthrow and assassinate pro-independence leaders, like Patrice Lumumba in Congo in 1961, to counter the progressive role that the Soviet Union was playing in the 1950s and 1960s, when it provided material aid to national liberation movements, especially in southern Africa and the former Portuguese colonies.

But all of this changed once U.S. finance capital gained hegemony over the former European colonial powers in Africa. This new neocolonial relationship took root in the 1980s and has deepened ever since. The U.S. ruling class, through organizations like the International Monetary Fund, has been telling African leaders that if they hope to receive aid and loans, they must first bring stability to Africa—a code word for letting cheap government-subsidized U.S. goods, especially agricultural products, flood African markets, destroying local economies in the process.



Johannesburg.

They must also adopt "democracy"—that is, U.S.-style elections, in which the candidates with the most money behind them usually win. The U.S. tries to influence elections with promises of aid if the opposition it supports wins. The Zimbabwe Democracy and Economic Recovery Act, passed by the U.S. Congress before the last election in that country, promised \$25 million in aid if the U.S. president certified that Zimbabwe was making "progress" toward democracy, as well as "a U.S. commitment to reschedule or eliminate Zimbabwe's billion-dollar debt to the World Bank and other international lending agencies."

Many African leaders are not seeking U.S. aid. They want African products to be able to compete on the world capitalist

market, especially in the area of agriculture, the backbone of many African countries' economies. An opinion piece entitled "Your Farm Subsidies Are Strangling Us" and signed by Amadou Toumani Touré and Blaise Compaoré, the presidents of Mali and Burkina Faso, respectively, appeared on the op-ed page of the New York Times of July 11.

The column is an appeal to reduce the billions of dollars of subsidies that the U.S. government pays to agribusiness each year, especially in the area of cotton production. In the production year 2001-2002 it paid \$3 billion in subsidies to 25,000 U.S. cotton farmers—the equivalent of the entire economic output of Burkina Faso alone. As a result, African cotton cannot compete on the world market with the low-priced cotton exported from the U.S. and other rich capitalist countries.

This is but one example of how the destruction of local economies in the less developed countries by the highly industrialized capitalist countries leads to a brake on their economic development and resulting dire unemployment, poverty and civil wars.

The discovery of oil in the Gulf of Guinea off Nigeria and close to Liberia was the primary motivation for Bush's trip. This is why Bush is considering sending troops to Liberia and West Africa. It has nothing to do with humanitarian reasons and everything to do with the U.S. wanting to dominate the oil market and increase its imports from Africa by at least 25 percent.

Anti-imperialist ideas spreading

Anti-war protests occurred throughout South Africa before and during Bush's

visit. Indymedia reported 10,000 demonstrators in Pretoria on July 9. These mobilizations seem to escape the attention of the big business press. The demands were highly political and militant. For instance, a major slogan called for the arrest of Bush and his trial before an international tribunal for war crimes against the Iraqi people.

There were signs that read "Africa is not for sale," especially the oil.

The main protests were organized by the South African Anti-War Coalition, a united front of hundreds of groups that came together last year to oppose the war on Iraq. The coalition's call for protests against Bush had support from the leading Tripartite Alliance of South Africa—the African National Congress, the Congress of South African Trade Unions and the South African Communist Party.

These three organizations, along with Friends of Cuba, held a protest in front of the U.S. Embassy in Pretoria on July 9. To quote their official statement: "The U.S. government continues to display contempt for the right of all nations to self-determination, the right to determine their own policies in the interests of their own people. This is evident, among other ways, in the U.S. policy towards Cuba, Iraq, Afghanistan and other countries it does not agree with. It remains the critical stumbling block in the struggle for the self-determination of the people of Palestine. ... We call on the U.S. to respect the right of all nations to determine their own future free from any external military, economic or other pressure."

Mandela lambastes Bush, Blair

On July 10, former South African president Nelson Mandela spoke in Westminster, England, where he lambasted both Bush and British Prime Minister Tony Blair for carrying out the war on Iraq. Mandela accused Bush of caring only about Iraqi oil and accused Blair of being the "foreign minister of the U.S." Mandela's criticisms of Bush and Blair are a moral blow against imperialism and a boost to the worldwide anti-war movement.

During a week-long strike in Nigeria against painful oil price increases, the youth carried signs calling for an end to the anti-poor, pro-rich imperialist agenda. A new generation of revolutionary African leaders seems to be on the horizon, who will look for political solidarity from the movements in the imperialist countries, especially the U.S.

A number of African thinkers have stated that the only way Africa is going to find its way out of gross underdevelopment, poverty, civil wars, disease and much more is for Africa to be genuinely independent from the legacy of colonialism and the present-day slavery of neo-colonialism, especially the banks. This goes against everything imperialism stands for—which is to suck out all the resources from other countries in order to enrich the coffers of the imperialist ruling class.

African peoples were enslaved in the U.S. and throughout the Western Hemisphere centuries ago, and are still being enslaved by capitalist greed and plunder. The imperialists should be forced to pay reparations to Africa, including providing all the up-to-date technological advances, with no political and economic strings attached. □

Bush visit to Senegal sparks protests

By G. Dunkel

Dakar, the capital of Senegal, was shut down on July 8. There was no traffic on major streets, no parking allowed in many places, road blocks, public transportation perturbed, markets closed. Many people had a lot of trouble getting to work. Under pressure from U.S. security, the city of Dakar and the Senegalese government had taken extraordinary measures for the visit of U.S. President George W. Bush.

So the demonstration against his visit took place on July 7.

Demonstrators chanted "Bush is a killer" and "Abdoulaye Wade is his accomplice." Wade is the president of Senegal. Banners read "American-English troops out of Iraq, Bush-Blair to the World Criminal Court" and "No to the Senegalese-American agreement." This agreement prohibits Senegal from extraditing U.S. citizens to the World Court.

Malick Ndiaye, a leader of the Coalition of Senegalese Intellectuals, speaking at a wrap-up rally, raised the three big priorities of the struggle against Bush's visit: the U.S. must "compensate the diaspora," "annul Africa's debt" and "publicly and officially apologize at Gorée" for "all the evil that the traffic in African slaves caused Black people." After Ndiaye spoke, trade union and political leaders spoke of the dangers that Senegal was running in welcoming Bush.

Bush had a meet-and-greet at the airport with the presidents of Sierra Leone, Bénin, Gambia, Mali, Niger and Ghana. The president of Cape Verde was also announced as a visitor. This was not just protocol. It was a notice to France that the U.S. government intends to be much more active in West Africa, both Francophone and Anglophone, where France has previously felt it had a free rein. □

Mobilization to halt murders of Colombian unionists

Coca-Cola: Unthinkable! Undrinkable!

By Nathalie Alsop

It is dangerous in Colombia to be a unionist, a student, a campesino, anyone who organizes for justice. The government of Alvaro Uribe Velez, with the political and financial support of the U.S. government, is broadening the more than 40-year-old civil war and paramilitarism in Colombia. Paramilitaries, who are closely allied with the Colombian military, routinely intimidate, torture and murder union organizers and others.

In the year 2000, three of every five unionists murdered in the world were killed in Colombia.

Transnational corporations have moved much of their operations to countries like Colombia where neoliberal policies have destroyed obstacles to profit making. They take advantage of the rampant paramilitarism in Colombia.

Coca-Cola, Drummond and Nestle have all been accused of collaborating with paramilitaries to intimidate and murder union organizers.

An international campaign is being organized to call attention to the abuses of transnationals in Colombia. It is focusing in particular on Coca-Cola, one of the most brutal and greedy corporations.

Coca-Cola routinely exploits workers by subcontracting employees, laying them off

without benefits, and by overworking and underpaying. But activists charge it also collaborates with paramilitaries to further repress workers who organize against these conditions.

Eight Coca-Cola workers have been murdered, half of them as a response to the unions' demands for better working conditions or wages; 38 workers are displaced and 67 are living under death threats. Their families have been threatened and relatives kidnapped. Demonstrations have been attacked and union offices searched, bombed and burned.

The United Steelworkers of America and the International Labor Rights Fund on behalf of SINALTRAINAL—the National Union of Food Industry Workers—filed a suit in U.S. courts in July of 2001 against Coca-Cola.

The suit maintains that Coca-Cola is responsible for the intimidation and murder of union organizers in its bottling plants in Colombia.

Javier Correa, president of SINALTRAINAL, said in a Dec. 5 speech that “According to a published article, in 1998 Coca-Cola officials met with paramilitary leader Carlos Castano in Cordoba.”

The defendants in the case include Coca-Cola Corp., Coca-Cola Colombia, Panamco Beverages, Bebida y Alimentos, and Richard Kirby—the U.S. citizen who

owns three of the bottling plants where union organizers have been murdered.

In March, a U.S. district court judge awarded the unions a partial victory. Judge Jose E. Martinez ruled that the unions can go ahead with the suit against Panamco, Bebida y Alimentos and Richard Kirby. However, they removed Coca-Cola Corp. and Coca-Cola Colombia as defendants in the case. The unions are appealing the decision.

Unthinkable! Undrinkable!

An international campaign is beginning July 22 to demand that Coca-Cola stop collaborating with paramilitaries, respect workers' rights and pay reparations to the workers. The union is asking people to support the campaign in any way possible.

The campaign is the result of three town hall meetings held in Atlanta, Ga., Brussels, Belgium, and Bogotá, Colombia, in 2002. SINALTRAINAL, along with organizations that participated in these public tribunals, decided to call on the world to protest the abuses that Coca-Cola has committed against Colombian unionists.

On July 22 there will be a general strike and a protest in Colombia to begin the campaign against Coca-Cola.

In the United States on that date there will be media conferences and actions in New York, San Francisco and other cities

to begin the “Unthinkable! Undrinkable!” campaign against Coca-Cola.

Teresa Gutierrez, co-director of the International Action Center, reported that the International ANSWER coalition—which has organized massive protests against the war in Iraq—has officially endorsed the campaign and will hold a major media conference in Washington, D.C., on July 22.

Gutierrez told Workers World, “As Colombian workers and students, peasants and teachers continue their fight against privatization, dire economic crisis and repression, the Bush and Blair governments are arming the Uribe government to stop the struggle of the Colombian people for social change. The Bush administration has just released \$800 million more for Colombia. The U.S. and Britain are carrying out overt and covert warfare to protect Occidental Petroleum and other transnational corporations that are exploiting our sisters and brothers in Colombia.

“Just as SINALTRAINAL make clear their opposition to the imperialist war against Iraq,” Gutierrez concluded, “ANSWER sees the urgent necessity to link the struggle against the military occupation in Iraq with this dirty war against the Colombian people and to mobilize to get the U.S. out.” □

‘Into the Neighborhood’:

Deepening social roots of Venezuela's revolution

Plan benefits poor, working people

By Andy McInerney

When Venezuelan President Hugo Chávez was first elected in 1998, millions of Venezuelan poor and working people put their hopes on him to build a government capable of advancing their interests. Four and a half years later, despite fierce resistance on the part of the South American country's economic elite, the Chávez government is attempting to address the needs of the 80 percent of the population who live in poverty amid vast oil and mineral wealth.

July 5 is celebrated as Venezuela's Independence Day, commemorating the day in 1811 when Simón Bolívar declared independence from Spain of the region that now includes Venezuela, Colombia and Ecuador. Chávez has named the movement that his election campaign launched as a “Bolívarian Revolution,” invoking Simón Bolívar's legacy of national liberation struggle and Latin American unity.

This July 5, tens of thousands of Chávez supporters took to the streets of Caracas to celebrate the accomplishments of the Bolívarian Revolution. President Hugo Chávez took the opportunity to promote the “Into the Neighborhood” Plan—in Spanish, Plan Barrio Adentro.

“Into the Neighborhood” is an ambitious program aimed at addressing the needs of Venezuela's poorest citizens. It began with a literacy campaign targeting 1 million Venezuelans who cannot read or write. This campaign involves the Ministry of Education, the National Institute of Cooperative Education and the Venezuelan Armed Forces.

“In the first stage, in July, we will teach 120,000 people to read and write,”

announced President Chávez. “We are going to wage this battle by land, sea and air, and we will reach every person who needs our help.”

Named “Mission Robinson” after Samuel Robinson, Simón Bolívar's teacher, the campaign involves at least 50,000 volunteers, as well as some incentives for families that participate, like small loans from state-owned banks. Prisoners who help fellow prisoners learn to read and write may earn reduced sentences, according to a July 2 IPS report.

One component of the literacy cam-

paign will be “family libraries” containing 25 books of Venezuelan and Latin American literature to be donated to 550,000 children who complete the sixth grade.

Another axis of the “Into the Neighborhood” Plan is a wide-reaching health-care program, also aimed at the poorest neighborhoods in the country. Fernando Bianco, president of the Metropolitan Medical School in Caracas, explained the program on the July 6 radio program “Hello President.” The plan “can be the reestablishment of the primary healthcare system in the country, which is non-exis-

tent.” He projected that the plan would assist over 1 million people.

Cuban solidarity

Key to both aspects of the “Into the Neighborhood” Plan is the solidarity of the Cuban government and the Cuban people. For example, the health care program will benefit from 300 new Cuban health professionals deployed in the poorest neighborhoods—bringing the total number of Cuban medical personnel in Venezuela to 800, according to a July 7 Xinhua report.

The Cuban government will also provide 80 education specialists and other materials for the literacy drive. “An ‘army of light’ is working for us in Cuba,” Chávez announced on July 2, “rapidly producing copies of videos and reading primers. ... In addition, President Fidel Castro ordered the donation of 50,000 TV sets that we will use in the program, the first 23,000 of which have already arrived.”

The Venezuelan ruling classes, which still hold a virtual monopoly on the media and major parts of the economy, have attempted to demonize the “Into the Neighborhood” Plan. Acting on these provocations, rightist thugs firebombed a mobile clinic in Caracas on July 7.

To date, however, the Venezuelan Revolution continues to advance in the face of attacks by supporters of the old ruling class.

The “Into the Neighborhood” program is a sign that the Chávez government is deepening the working-class basis of the Bolívarian Revolution, strengthening its roots among the most oppressed—and gathering strength against the forces of counter-revolution that continue to try to topple the Chávez government. □

From the Cuban Five Message to caravanistas

The following message from the Cuban Five—political prisoners jailed in the United States for monitoring terrorist activities by right-wing Cubans in Miami—was sent to the 14th U.S./Cuba Friendship Caravan. This solidarity effort, organized by Pastors for Peace, challenges the illegal U.S.-led economic strangulation of Cuba.

July 2003

Dear brothers and sisters:

All of you, who are collecting aid for the Cuban people at this moment in spite of the illegal and immoral U.S. blockade against Cuba, are beautiful examples of love, friendship and courage that dignify the human being.

We admire you so much. You are showing that a different world is possible. You represent the real American people and show how the relations between our two nations will be, some day in the near future.

We just hope to have the privilege of meeting all of you soon and to join you in future caravans and in dreams of a better world for everybody.

Congratulations and many thanks from the bottom of our hearts on behalf of the Cuban Five.

Long live the friendship of the American and Cuban people!

Ramón Labañino

U.S. Federal Penitentiary, Beaumont, Texas





Help! Help!

Dear Readers:

A couple of months ago we put an ad asking for funds in this newspaper and got a gratifying response. Thanks so much to those who sent in contributions.

This is addressed to all our subscribers and to the many tens of thousands who read Workers World online. We need your help again, just as you need our facts and analysis again and again. It takes a lot of time, work and resources to put out a well-researched, -written and -edited newspaper every week. You know how the commercial, pro-capitalist news media do it. Their news stories are just the wrapping around the real stuff: ads. They pay their bills that way, and it makes them dependent on the corporate system.

We often hear from you that you think WW is the best paper on the left. It's not that we're the most professional or have the most journalistic training. Most of our writers are not journalists but activists in the many areas of struggle we cover. But what makes us different is our total independence from the capitalist establishment, including its liberal institutions.

We don't survive on foundation grants or paid advertising. We're too radical for them, anyway. We're the folks who are constantly being attacked by the right and even some liberals, because we won't join in with the demonizing of whatever country or leader is in U.S. imperialism's sights. We think the social movements that are developing right now need to be more militant, not less. And we won't bow down to capitalism as an eternal system, one that just needs a little fixing. We promote the struggle of the multinational working class for socialism, because it's the only way out of the hell capitalism has created.

How do we get by? Partly on the donated labor of our staff, from editors and writers to the hard-working people who every week enter names into the computer, put on the address labels and take the bundles to the post office. That doesn't cover the printing, however, or the rent or phones or web site or all the expenses that go with running an office. Our subscription price is low—the paper is actually mailed free to prisoners—so workers can afford it. So covering most of our expenses depends on the contributions of our supporters.

So it's time again to ask you to dig in your pockets or write a check. And we'll probably be after you again in the not too distant future—because the bills always keep coming. One way you could help keep us on an even keel is to join the WW Supporter Program, listed below. That way you can rather painlessly make a contribution each month. You can even do it with your credit card. That helps us to budget, too.

Thanks for your help.

Deirdre Griswold, Editor

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Weapons of mass deception

Bush uses WMDs to drag U.S. into attack on Korea

By Deirdre Griswold

Workers in the United States have many things to worry about right now. Korea is far from the thoughts of most of them. But so was Iraq only a year ago. Now a great number of people here are frantically trying to figure out why those they love and need were sent to the other side of the world, first to inflict horrendous destruction on Iraq, and then to reap the anger and resistance of the Iraqi people.

A healthy skepticism among many about the motives of the Bush administration led to huge demonstrations against the war. Now, even those who stayed on the sidelines are beginning to tell pollsters that they were deceived by Bush and his crew. They wish they had known what was really going on and not been stampeded into the war by the false claim that Iraq had "weapons of mass destruction" that threatened the world.

Understanding the Korean situation is just as important. As long as the U.S. keeps almost 40,000 troops in South Korea, refuses to sign a peace treaty with the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) in the north, and insists on calling the DPRK part of an "axis of evil," there is the potential for another horrible war on the Korean peninsula.

The Korean War ended 50 years ago this month, after a terrible loss of lives. Millions of Koreans were killed and so were more than 50,000 U.S. soldiers. It was essentially a war of U.S. big business against a revolution of the Korean workers and farmers. At that time, however, the U.S. was so dominant politically in the world that it was able to get the United Nations to sign on to the war—unlike today. Washington has maintained the fiction ever since that U.S. troops are serving the UN in Korea—even though the so-called UN Command is completely controlled by U.S. officers and no other countries contribute troops.

How many people in this country realize that, officially, the war never ended? There is no peace treaty, just an armistice that left Korea divided along the 38th parallel. The DPRK has called again and again for discussions to end this dangerously ambiguous state of affairs. The Korean people as a whole have passionately expressed their desire to end the division of their country. Every political party in Korea, north and south, says it's for reunification.

What keeps Korea divided? The continued occupation of the south by U.S. troops—50 years after the shooting stopped.

The movement in the south to get those troops out has been growing stronger and more militant over the last few years. The heads of both North Korea and South Korea held a summit meeting in June 2000, and some families got a chance to see their relatives on the other side for the first time since the war. Plans for trade and joint ventures got underway.

But then came the Bush administration's military push for world domination, starting in Afghanistan and Iraq, its declaration that it would carry out "pre-emptive" wars if it felt them necessary, and President George W. Bush's speech that put the DPRK into an "axis of evil." The leaders in the north saw the imminent threat of another devastating U.S. invasion like the one in 1950-53. They have been bolstering their defenses ever since.

It is these defensive moves by the DPRK that Washington now tries to frighten us with, using that old familiar phrase, "weapons of mass destruction." The north may have been able to process spent fuel rods from its nuclear power project, it may have accumulated enough plutonium to build one or two nuclear bombs, it may have actually begun to build them. Sometimes the administration acts alarmed, as though bombs exist; at other times, when it is too busy in other parts of the world, it downplays the Korean situation.

It should be obvious to any thinking person that whatever weapons the DPRK has, they are for defense against a U.S. attack. The Pentagon has ringed the DPRK with nuclear weapons for decades. No country that has suffered the way Korea has wants war. North Korea has no troops on foreign soil. It has no ships or planes surrounding the U.S. The aggression is all the other way.

On the other hand, Korea is no pushover. If this adventurist administration in Washington attempts a strike of any kind against the DPRK, there will be fierce resistance, just as there was in the 1950-53 war.

On the 50th anniversary of the armistice, Koreans in the north and south will be meeting with anti-war activists from around the world, including the U.S., in solidarity events calling for an end to U.S. hostilities and the signing of a peace treaty to end the decades-long crisis on the Korean peninsula. □

TYREE SCOTT 1939-2003

By Jim McMahan
Seattle



Around 700 people gathered at Mercer Middle School here on July 12 to celebrate the life of Tyree Scott, who died of cancer in June. Scott was a civil rights and labor leader, beginning in the late 1960s, who became a Marxist-Leninist in the struggle against capital.

Scott was born in Hearne, Tex., in 1939. He and his family moved to Seattle in 1966 after he came home from the Vietnam War. A skilled electrician, he was denied construction jobs due to racism. So he began to organize.

Workers of color couldn't get the better-paid construction jobs back then. In 1970 he founded the United Construction Workers Association, which mobilized Black, Latino,

Native and Asian workers. They shut down hundreds of construction sites to win affirmative action. Sea-Tac Airport was one project not complying with affirmative action. Hundreds of UCWA workers went out on the tarmac and blocked planes from moving into the terminal. They also blocked the ticket counters.

Those who may think affirmative action was handed out on a platter by the courts don't realize how many arrests, threats, beatings and jailings workers like Scott took to get those jobs.

After winning victories in Seattle, Tyree Scott organized teams to take the struggle to dozens of cities in Texas, Louisiana,

Washington demands right to commit war crimes

By John Catalinotto

The Bush government is twisting arms to make sure U.S. political leaders, generals and soldiers can commit war crimes without facing trial. The Pentagon's military occupations of Afghanistan, Iraq and the Balkans, plus the current plans for intervention in Africa, have put this goal up front.

Washington's latest offensive against the United Nations International Criminal Court (ICC) took place July 1 as the White House announced penalties against 35 countries that failed to exempt U.S. soldiers from trials in that court. The countries were denied a total of \$48 million in military aid.

While the amount involved is relatively insignificant for most of them, the White House message is clear: Washington's actions are to be above the law. There is not to be even the pretense of equality before the law, even when the court involved is itself biased in favor of the richer and more powerful nations.

Among those countries Washington is punishing for refusing to bow and scrape to the U.S. are allies like Colombia and six countries of Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld's "new Europe" that are candidates for entry to NATO. The list also includes South Africa, which Bush visited on his Africa tour.

On July 5 Caribbean leaders ending a four-day summit in Montego Bay, Jamaica, sharply criticized the United States for threatening the cutoffs.

Asked at a July 1 White House press briefing why the anti-court offensive was given such priority, spokesperson Ari Fleischer said the military aid cutoffs are "a reflection of the United States' priorities to protect" its troops, and that "the president's first priority is with the servicemen and servicewomen."

Like many White House statements, this one is aimed at public relations.

Last September, before they had 140,000 troops getting shot at under the Iraqi summer sun, the U.S. rulers were more open in discussing their real reasons for opposing the court.

Their real concern is for the big shots in the White House and the Pentagon who decided to make the war in the first place. A quote from a top administration official

published in the Sept. 7, 2002, New York Times put it bluntly. "The soldiers are like the capillaries; the top public officials—President Bush, Secretary Rumsfeld, Secretary Powell—they are at the heart of our concern," the senior official said. "Henry Kissinger, that's what they really care about."

Targeting civilians is illegal

John Bolton, undersecretary of state for arms control and international security, has in the past been a frank spokesperson for what is now the Bush program on this question. On July 23, 1998, when Bolton was heading the right-wing American Enterprise Institute—also home to Rumsfeld and Vice President Dick Cheney—he wrote in a summary of his remarks to a meeting of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee:

"Much of the media attention to the American negotiating position on the ICC concentrated on the risks perceived by the Pentagon to American peacekeepers stationed around the world. ... [O]ur real concern should be for the president and his top advisers." In other words, the troops are expendable, but the rich and powerful must be protected.

Bolton continued: "The definition of 'war crimes' includes, for example: 'intentionally directing attacks against the civilian population as such or against individual civilians not taking direct part in hostilities.'"

Bolton wrote that under the ICC rules, U.S. leaders could have been found guilty of a war crime for dropping atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, and for all the aerial bombardments of German and Japanese civilian areas.

Today, U.S. leaders could be found guilty of ordering the bombing of Iraqi civilian sites, or for bombing wedding parties in Afghanistan. They have plotted and carried out aggressive wars against Iraq, Afghanistan and Yugoslavia. They could be liable for the persistent murderous attacks on Iraqi and Afghani civilians during the resistance to U.S. occupation.

It is a serious problem for them. Former Secretary of State Henry Kissinger had to revise travel plans after being charged with war crimes for his role in overthrowing the Salvador Allende government and installing dictator Gen. Augusto Pinochet

in Chile in 1973.

The latest crop of mass murderers—Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld, Vice President Richard Cheney, Deputy Secretary of Defense Paul Wolfowitz and President George W. Bush—know they could potentially be charged for these crimes.

Most recently the Belgian anti-war movement Stop USA brought war crimes charges in Belgian courts against U.S. Gen. Tommy Franks for his role in directing the war on Iraq.

Nature of the ICC

A 1998 UN treaty created the ICC to prosecute cases of genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity against nationals of countries unwilling or unable to try the cases themselves. The court was inaugurated this March and charged with prosecuting crimes committed after July 1, 2002. Some 78 countries supported it.

The Clinton administration originally signed the treaty, but didn't push for its ratification by Congress. The Bush administration then nullified Clinton's signature and has sought a permanent exemption from prosecutions. The European Union blocked the permanent exemption, though the UN Security Council last year gave the United States a second one-year exemption.

Meanwhile, the Bush administration has tried to bully nations into signing bilateral treaties guaranteeing exemptions to U.S. officials and soldiers.

The ICC has the possibility of embarrassing U.S. leaders, of putting them in the dock. But Marxists who champion the rights of the oppressed recognize that the ICC is still biased against nations and peoples that bear the marks of colonialism and imperialist domination.

From a legal point of view, the ICC puts an equal sign between oppressed and oppressor. In theory, the ICC is supposed to be neutral, whether the contenders be U.S. imperialism against Iraqis heroically fighting U.S. occupation, the Israeli army against Palestinians fighting for their land, British troops against Irish patriots trying to free their nation, or Zimbabwean patriots trying to keep their country independent.

Communists, as well as all people sympathetic with the fight for national liberation from imperialism, have no business being neutral in these struggles. They take the side of the oppressed fighting for national liberation.

In addition, even without U.S. participation, the ICC will reflect imperialist domination of today's world. Though it claims to provide equal treatment under the law, the ICC is more likely to target Third World leaders who irritate the rulers in Europe, Japan or the U.S. than to target the criminals in charge of imperialist war machines. Though the tactic is subtler than a B-52 bombing run or a cruise missile, it can still depose an independent regime and replace it with a colonial puppet.

The ICC is different, however, from the so-called tribunals directed against Yugoslavia, for example. Those tribunals were victors' courts, imposing the decisions of the mighty upon the war's losers with only a fig-leaf of legal proceedings.

The International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia (ICTY) was set up to try only people from the Balkans. Former Yugoslav President Slobodan Milosevic was one of those brought up on

charges for alleged steps taken to defend his country. The U.S. and German politicians who plotted to tear Yugoslavia apart with economic sanctions followed by massive bombings do not stand trial. There is not even a pretense of impartiality.

Likewise, only Rwandans could be brought before the tribunal aimed at that country, not any French or Belgian or U.S. agents who have manipulated central African countries for their rich resources.

These are the kinds of tribunals that the U.S. ruling class and especially the Bush administration prefer—those that prosecute only countries on the U.S. enemies' list. They don't want to take even the smallest risk that would come with a court that tries to appear impartial.

Washington is guilty of so many war crimes—against Korea, Vietnam, Cambodia, Laos, Angola, Congo, Panama, Cuba, Iraq, Yugoslavia, Afghanistan and many others—that it fears anybody it cannot fully control.

Where this leaves U.S. soldiers

Naturally, the U.S. ruling class prefers that no one else sit in judgment of its troops. In a throwback to the 19th century, the Bush administration wants total extraterritoriality—that is, only U.S. courts should try its citizens for crimes committed abroad.

Washington also wants the troops to believe that it has their interests at heart. This doesn't stop the brass from exposing them to hostile fire, to health dangers from Agent Orange and depleted uranium, or to guerrilla wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.

The war on Iraq and its subsequent occupation was carried out on behalf of a small group of enormously wealthy monopoly capitalists. To serve their interests, the White House and the Pentagon brass have put the troops in a position where they have no good choice.

Along with enormous discomfort from oven-like summer heat, tasteless meals and lack of sleep, and the long separation from their families, comes the knowledge that the Iraqi population considers them the enemy. U.S. forces have already killed thousands of Iraqis, many of them civilians, including children. Even if they don't know all the politics and history, they know the Iraqis want them to leave.

If they stay, they know they will be killing more civilians, more children. They know they will be committing war crimes, whether or not they face trial for them.

The rank and file of the U.S. military are mostly young members of the working class, even in today's so-called professional armed forces. A disproportionate number of the troops are from communities of color, attracted to the "services" because they provide at least some salary and training and seem like a better choice than the streets or prisons of a racist society.

During the long war in Vietnam, both drafted and enlisted GIs became part of the movement that forced the U.S. to stop its aggression. From the reports on troop morale coming out of Iraq today—as well as those about the anger of their families at U.S. bases—this is once more a real possibility.

What these troops need is not protection from an international court. They need to be brought home. □

Fighter for oppressed workers

Oklahoma and Arkansas.

In 1972 Scott joined with Filipino cannery workers and Latino farm workers to form the Labor Employment Law Office. Silme Domingo and Gene Viernes, Filipino organizers who had joined with Scott to form LELO, were both assassinated in 1981 for organizing workers and opposing the Marcos dictatorship in the Philippines.

During the anti-apartheid struggle, Scott was instrumental in a campaign to stop the Port of Seattle from trading with racist South Africa.

In 1990 he and his family moved to Mozambique for two years to work on irrigation projects in solidarity with the besieged liberation struggle there.

In 1997 Scott brought together workers from 10 different countries for a conference on common strategies for dealing with capitalist globalization. He influ-

enced countless young activists in the months leading up to Seattle's World Trade Organization protests in 1999. He and LELO also brought in workers' representatives from Mexico and from COSATU, the union federation in South Africa, to represent their own struggles against corporate globalization before the WTO.

Scott worked as an electrician for the Port of Seattle repairing the waterfront cranes. He retired in 1999. He returned to the Port in 2003 to help his co-workers on the maintenance crew organize against the privatization of their jobs by the union-busting Stevedoring Services of America. Scott raised six children, along with his partner Beverly Sims and his previous partner Estella Scott.

Tyree Scott wanted to be known as an ordinary worker. Speaker after speaker at his memorial said he would never back down from a struggle. □

REPÚBLICA DOMINICANA

La policía ataca a trabajadores en la 'Marcha del Burro'

Por Andy McInerney

En Santo Domingo, capital de la República Dominicana, la policía hirió a cinco trabajadores y arrestó a por lo menos 40 más el primero de julio cuando cientos de personas se reunieron para protestar el aumento de precios y el nuevo acuerdo con el Fondo Monetario Internacional.

El Comité de Coordinación de las Organizaciones Comunitarias, Sindicales y del Transporte, quien convocó la manifestación, planeó marchar hasta el Palacio Nacional con 100 burros. Ramón Pérez Figueroa, líder de la Federación Nacional

de las Organizaciones de Transporte, dijo al diario El Nacional, "Nosotros queremos mostrar que estos burros y bicicletas serán la transportación del futuro."

En los días antes de la marcha, el gobierno había aumentado el precio de la gasolina, la electricidad y el pan. La inflación está de 25% hasta 75%. Además de estas medidas, el gobierno de Hipólito Mejía se está preparando para firmar un pacto con el FMI que traerá más austeridad y más recortes. Mejía también ofreció enviar 300 soldados dominicanos para ayudar en la ocupación de Irak.

Mientras los participantes se prepara-

ban para marchar en la 'marcha de los burros', la policía obstruyó su paso. Cuando los manifestantes insistieron en marchar la policía abrió fuego contra ellos.

Rogelio Cruz, un sacerdote quien es parte de los organizadores, acusó al gobierno de ser una dictadura. Él advirtió que si no se permite una protesta pacífica, aparecerá en el horizonte una "explosión social".

Hay señales de que esta advertencia pueda ser más que una hipérbole. El 23 de junio, hubo batallas entre los manifestantes contra el FMI y la policía de Barahona, como a 120 millas al oeste de

Santo Domingo. Según El Nacional, los manifestantes bloquearon las carreteras con barricadas de llantas en fuego. Cuando la policía trató de romper la protesta con gas lacrimógeno y dispararon, ellos respondieron tirando botellas y piedras. Las batallas continuaron todo el día, culminando en varias batallas con armas de fuego entre la policía y los residentes de Barahona.

El 5 de julio, la Fuerza de la Revolución, uno de los principales partidos de izquierda en la nación caribeña, publicó una declaración convocando a una protesta nacional contra la crisis económica y el tratado con el FMI. □

Soldado de la Marina de EE.UU. Dice: 'La gente no se está re-alistándose'

Por Heather Cottin

Él es homosexual, joven y está luchando contra la más poderosa institución militar en el mundo. Stephen Eagle Funk, de la ciudad de Seattle en el estado de Washington, es un soldado de la Marina de Reserva a quien se le dio autorización para retirarse antes de que él públicamente declarara su objeción en abril. Desde entonces él ha venido hablando contra el ejército. Ahora se enfrenta a una corte marcial y a dos años en prisión.

Él dice que los reclutadores militares lo manipularon a él y a miles de jóvenes para que se unieran al ejército. El Ejército crea anuncios que lo muestran como algo "bueno" y "muchos jóvenes no se dan cuenta de lo que se trata."

"El ejército convence a la gente para que mate," dijo Funk de 20 años de edad en una reciente entrevista con este periódico.

Los reclutadores "reciben recompensas al reclutar jóvenes para que sirvan en la Marina por cuatro a seis años y no te dicen que puedes servir por menos tiempo."

Funk pasó por el entrenamiento básico de la Marina. Es excelente tirador, pero

quería salirse. Los oficiales le dieron muchas excusas cuando él trató de solicitar el estado de opositor por conciencia, sirvió por seis meses, y recibió mucha hostilidad por ser gay.

Se dio cuenta que las Fuerzas Armadas cultivan un sentimiento anti-homosexual, pero también cree que "perpetúan sentimientos de odio en contra de todos los que tengan una cultura o nacionalidad diferente. Yo creo que esta es la forma con que los militares deshumanizan al enemigo —cualquiera que este sea— para que así los soldados puedan matarlos".

Funk se dio cuenta que se oponía a todas las guerras durante su entrenamiento, el cual incluía pasar la bayoneta por la figura de un maniquí de figura humana gritando "Mata, mata". Él es hijo de una familia de ideas progresistas. Su madre es filipina y no estaba contenta de que él se hubiera reclutado en la Marina, pero le dijo que estaría a su lado cuando decidiera salirse. Ella apoya la decisión de él de pedir el estado de opositor por conciencia, sin importar que esto conlleve prisión.

Stephen Funk era activista antes de

reclutarse en la Marina. Había participado en las protestas en contra de la globalización de 1999 en Seattle. También protestó en Los Angeles en la Convención Nacional del Partido Demócrata y estuvo activo políticamente en San Francisco.

Funk fue reclutado en la Marina durante un período cuando se sintió deprimido y buscaba sentido a su vida. El le dijo a Judi Cheng, miembro de la Red de Apoyo por un Sindicato en las Fuerzas Armadas (SNAFU por las siglas en Inglés), "Si fue posible que ellos me reclutaran, es posible reclutar a cualquiera". Funk se dirigió a la multitud concentrada en Filadelfia el 4 de julio protestando en contra de las guerras domésticas y del exterior. Él dijo a las 5.000 personas reunidas que se dio cuenta que la guerra contra Irak fue inmoral por razón del engaño perpetrado por el gobierno. Dijo que, "Los soldados en las Fuerzas Armadas no están volviendo a reclutarse porque las condiciones son opresivas".

Stephen Funk habló suavemente por sólo unos pocos minutos, explicando a los manifestantes en Filadelfia que las Fuerzas Armadas mienten a los reclutas. Dijo que durante la época de la Guerra de Vietnam, la gente supo del estatus de opositor por conciencia, pero hoy, los jóvenes no saben de eso. "La única razón que yo sabía de eso es por haber visto la película 'Forrest Gump'", dijo a Mundo Obrero.

Describió su entrenamiento en las Fuerzas Armadas. "Uno se encuentra en un estado de pensamiento suspendido. Te entrenan para estar subordinado. Produce tanto estrés que a la gente se le olvida pensar". Hasta los capellanes lo engañaron diciendo que su religión permitía matar. Tampoco le mencionaron sobre el estatus de opositor por conciencia.

Cuando decidió resistir, los oficiales de la Marina se irritaron porque muchos de sus compañeros lo apoyaron. Cuando mencionó la cuestión de la destrucción del ambiente y la muerte de civiles inocentes, muchos de los demás soldados estuvieron de acuerdo con su análisis. "Descubrí que

la gente aceptó [la guerra] porque se sintieron que no tuvieron otra opción".

Stephen Funk descubrió que los jóvenes en la Marina son pobres, y se sintieron con pocas oportunidades excepto la de reclutarse en las Fuerzas Armadas. "Están oprimidos por las mismas personas que oprimen al pueblo de Irak. Aprenden a aceptar la falta de esperanza. Aprenden justificaciones para la matanza. Aprenden a deshumanizarse a sí mismos así como a otra gente, a subordinar sus acciones y sus pensamientos. Las Fuerzas Armadas no quieren que tengamos opiniones sobre política".

"Nuestra economía", dice Funk, "está basada en nuestras Fuerzas Armadas". Él está muy entusiasmado sobre la posibilidad de dirigirse a los estudiantes en las escuelas secundarias y universidades para abogar en contra del reclutamiento militar. Dijo, "Los Estados Unidos no van a gastar dinero para la educación y los maestros. Basamos toda la economía en las Fuerzas Militares. Conformamos parte de un plan. Pero no podemos explotar a todo el mundo para siempre".

"Tengo buena suerte", dijo, "perteneciendo a una minoría nacional y siendo homosexual. Ya estuve en contra de los militares. Es más fácil para mí resistir lo que me ordenaron hacer. Solo me hizo ser más fuerte".

Dustin Langley, un veterano de la Marina de Guerra de los EE.UU. y miembro del SNAFU del grupo Internacional ANSWER, dijo, "Lo que más me impresionó de Stephen fue su tremendo valor. Él nota que nuestra conciencia y preocupación por toda la humanidad es más grande que nuestra obligación a obedecer órdenes militares sin reflexionar. Stephen es uno de los héroes verdaderos de esta guerra".

Langley notó que SNAFU (www.JoinSNAFU.org) está organizando una campaña para presionar a la Infantería de Marina a abandonar la acusación en el proceso judicial militar en contra de Funk. □

Jóvenes se preparan para viajar a Cuba

La cena para recaudar fondos organizada por el Campamento Juvenil Mundo Obrero/Red de Video Popular (WW/PVN) el 22 de junio en Nueva York, incluyó charlas de jóvenes de segundo y sexto grado sobre Cuba, la solidaridad entre Cuba y Jamaica, y los planes para una visita de 10 días a la Habana este mes de julio. El caso de los Cinco Cubanos se presentó también.

Se recaudaron cientos de dólares, pero se necesitan más para ayudar al grupo a viajar a Cuba, donde ellos van a filmar y entregar juguetes a los niños cubanos.

Los lectores pueden enviar cheques a People's Video Network/Youth a la 39



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—Sara Catalinotto