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PRIDE

100,000 MARCH IN KHARTOUM

Will Sudan be the next Iraq?

By John Parker

Oil and the disappointing results for U.S. imperialist designs in Iraq have brought the continent of Africa into even greater focus.

The pieces are being assembled to further U.S. imperialist aims in Sudan. Already the Bush administration has forced sanctions and has assembled troops in the region under United Nations cover.

Washington is using the tragedy in Western Sudan to justify its actions. UN sources estimate at least 30,000 people have been killed and more than a million others displaced by the conflict.

More than 100,000 people marched in Khartoum, Sudan's capital, Aug. 4 to protest against any foreign intervention. Marchers said they were ready to fight against the invaders, the BBC reported.

As stated by an Aug. 2 Guardian article, many people have failed to notice the primary motivation for this renewed interest: "The absence of anti-war skepticism about the prospect of sending troops into Sudan is especially odd in view of the fact that Darfur has oil.

"For two years, campaigners have chanted that there should be 'no blood for oil' in Iraq, yet they seem not to have noticed that there are huge untapped reserves in both southern Sudan and southern Darfur.

"As oil pipelines continue to be blown up in Iraq, the West not only has a clear motive for establishing control over alternative sources of energy, it has also officially adopted the policy that our armies should be used to do precisely this. Oddly enough, the oil concession in southern Darfur is currently in the hands of the China National Petroleum Company. China is Sudan's biggest foreign investor."

In August 1998 then-President Clinton bombed Sudan, one of the poorest countries in the world, using fabricated evidence to accuse Sudan of manufacturing chemical weapons. Following the bombing, a fact-finding mission in 1998 that included former U.S. Attorney General Ramsey Clark gathered and reported first-hand evidence exposing U.S. terror against Sudan.

The report noted that the bombed Al-Shifa pharmaceutical plant had produced over 50 percent of Sudan's medicines. This included 90 percent of the most critically needed drugs. Bombing that plant caused the suffering and death of tens of thousands of innocent people, many of them children, by depriving them of basic medicines against malaria, tuberculosis, and other easily treatable diseases.

The bombing followed a policy of destabilizing Sudan that intensified under the first George Bush presidency after the Sudanese government refused to support

the 1991 war on Iraq. Washington considered Sudan a rogue nation and the Bush administration pushed the UN into sponsoring sanctions. The year before Sudan refused to join U.S. imperialism's war on Iraq Bush called Sudan a good role model for "democracy."

The Aug. 1 Sunday Telegraph reported that U.S. Marines based in Camp Lemonier in nearby Djibouti are undertaking special anti-terrorist operations in Sudan and the Horn of Africa.

The Sudanese government has attempted to accommodate the U.S. by allowing small teams of U.S. soldiers to pass into the country as part of official visits. This happened last month on Secretary of State Colin Powell's trip. Despite these conciliatory steps, Sudan is now under threat of international invasion. In actuality the invasion has already started.

The Sunday Telegraph reported that a team of five Special Forces soldiers broke off from the Powell entourage for a week-long mission in the Kurush Mountains. There U.S. aerial surveillance allegedly backs up claims that Al-Qaeda is operating in the region.

French imperialism, with its long history of colonialism in neighboring Chad, is also intensifying its threat against Sudan. The BBC on July 31 reported that the French army with about 1,000 troops in Chad was moving to the Sudanese border. French ambassador Jean-Pierre Bercot told the BBC from Chad's capital, N'Djamena, that 200 French soldiers

would now be deployed to Chad's eastern frontier with Sudan.

The U.S.-drafted resolution that the Security Council adopted July 30 demands that Sudan end the fighting in the Darfur region. Although the Sudanese government has held negotiations with the warring parties and severely punished some of the combatants, the resolution's punitive actions are in effect.

The resolution calls for UN Secretary General Kofi Annan to issue a report in 30 days on the progress made in each of those areas. The resolution passed the UN Security Council only after the U.S. dropped the word "sanctions" and added economic and diplomatic "measures."

As reported by the BBC July 31, Sudan's UN ambassador Elfatih Erwa, and its ambassador to the African Union, Osman al-Said, separately said Khartoum would comply.

"We are not happy with the resolution, but we are going to implement it—we have no other option," Mr. al-Said told reporters in the Ethiopian capital Addis Ababa earlier this week."

The stage is set for a repeat of U.S. imperialist plunder under cover of "humanitarian" operations and supported by the European imperialist powers—unless the progressive movement here can recognize the intervention for what it is soon enough to resist it here in the U.S.

John Parker, who accompanied Ramsey Clark on the 1998 mission to Sudan, is the 2004 presidential candidate for Workers World Party.

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SAN DIEGO PRIDE

Support for anti-war message

On July 31, the San Diego and Los Angeles chapters of the International Action Center provided a loud and spirited contingent in San Diego's largest parade, Lesbian/Gay/Bi/Trans Pride.

Accompanied by a 10-foot painting depicting political prisoner Mumia Abu-Jamal and a banner proclaiming "No pride in war, occupation and racism," these activists and their political slogans were greeted with enthusiastic applause along the entire two-mile march route.

The local Coalition for Justice, along with the IAC contingent, addressed anti-war concerns. Many of the 50,000 spectators joined in chanting "Bring the troops home!" Even in a major military town like San Diego, growing frustration toward an illegal war and occupation continues to mount.

—David Tworkowski

IAC banner demanding freedom for death row political prisoner Mumia Abu-Jamal at July 31 San Diego Pride march.



At Houston City Hall

Birthday protest backs innocent man on death row

By Gloria Rubac
Houston

Kids from 3 to 83 years old beat candy labeled "Justice" out of a big Texas-shaped piñata on Aug. 1 as dozens gathered in the Houston City Hall Park to celebrate the 30th birthday of Nanon Williams, an innocent person on Texas death row.

Amid cries of "We want justice," "Where's the justice in Texas," and "Beat it out of Texas, now," the candy flew out of the piñata after almost everyone got to beat "Texas" with a few strong swings.

Because of false testimony by the now-discredited Houston Police Crime Lab in his 1995 trial, Williams sits on death row waiting for Texas justice. He has been locked up since he was 17 years old. As family, friends and supporters sang "Happy Birthday" and ate cake and ice cream without Williams, it was apparent to all that justice comes very slowly in Texas.

Those celebrating took turns reading aloud pages of birthday greetings that were emailed to the party's organizers in the Texas Death Penalty Abolition Movement. Readers included Kofi Taharka of the National Black United Front, Brother Equality with the Blackout Arts Collective, Art Browning of the Green Party, Alma Cooper and Henry Cooper of KPFT Pacifica Radio, Marta Olvera of the Serafin Olvera Pro Justice Committee, and Williams' cousin Bryan Williams.

The Australian Coalition Against the Death Penalty wrote: "It may thrill you to know that American ambassador in Australia, Tom Schiefer, had brown hair three years ago—but since he's had to deal with ACADP on almost a weekly basis, we have watched his hair (the little we can see on his head anyway) slowing turning grey.

"Have a cool birthday Nanon. Our special Aussie hugs and kisses are being sent all the way to Texas. We'll be playing and dancing for you around the Didgeridoo and celebrating your birthday, eating them Aussie traditional meat pie 'n' sauce, then washing it down with a pint of



Free Nanon Williams



PHOTO: RENEE FELTZ

Njeri Shakur welcomes the family and supporters of Nanon Williams to his birthday party as Lonnie X holds the Texas piñata that folks will beat the justice out of.

Fosters. Love and best wishes to all on Death Row Texas."

A message from Claudia in Germany said: "You belong to the juveniles on death row like my friend, Eddie. I have you all in my thoughts and prayers ... I wish for you that you will be freed from death row and then can walk out one day. Stay strong. I know your time will come. Happy Birthday!"

Native activist Jacquelyn Battise of the Alabama-Coushatta Nation wrote: "Today we honor that time when you were first welcomed into this world. Now as you continue your journey you have endured the treachery that has been aimed at you, that was aimed at your father.

"We are all the descendants of strong, powerful and brilliant people before the invasion, the colonization. We are interconnected, no matter how much they try to separate us. Thank you for surviving, thank you for making it this far. Thank you for your voice."

Williams' recent autobiography, "Still Surviving," can be purchased online at www.leftbooks.com.

Support letters can be sent to: Nanon Williams #999163, Polunsky Unit, 3872 FM 350 South, Livingston, TX 77351. □

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WW CALENDAR

LOS ANGELES

Sat., Aug. 7

IAC office warming party. Featuring music by Will B and Michelle Shocked, including a report about the DNC demonstrations by John Parker. \$10-\$20 donation (no one turned away for lack of funds). From 5:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. At 5274 West Pico Blvd. #203. For info (323) 936-7266.

Fri., Aug. 13

IAC Forum on Million Worker March featuring Clarence Thomas, president of Local 10 International Longshore Workers of San Francisco and a special report on Haiti by Johnnie Stevens of NY's IAC. \$5 to \$10 donation (no one turned away for lack of funds). 7 p.m., dinner available before the forum. At 5274 W. Pico Blvd. #203. For info (323) 936-7266.

Workers World

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E-mail: editor@workers.org
Web: www.workers.org
Vol. 46, No. 32 • Aug. 12, 2004
Closing date: Aug. 4, 2004

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

Selected articles are available via e-mail subscription. Send an e-mail message to wnnews-on@wwpublish.com.

Periodicals postage paid at New York, N.Y.

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



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Cruel and unusual punishment: In the eye of the beholder

Following are excerpts from a July 27 article by political prisoner Leonard Peltier distributed by the Boston-Area Leonard Peltier Support Group. On Aug. 1, the 80,000 member Peace and Freedom Party nominated Peltier as their candidate for president in the upcoming November elections.

Amendment VIII. Excessive bail shall not be required, nor excessive fines imposed, nor cruel and unusual punishments inflicted.

The Eighth Amendment is supposed to be about dignity, humanity and decency. It is intended to prohibit "deliberate indifference to serious infliction of unnecessary or wanton pain or physical torture or lingering death." The Eighth Amendment, I'm told, should reflect the standards of a "maturing" society and your correctional system shouldn't be just about depriving people of freedom, but rehabilitation.

But that is not how it works for me or many other prisoners. Protection against "cruel and unusual punishment" has faded away as have the rights of ordinary citizens under such things as the Patriot Act and Homeland Security. More and more information about FBI misconduct has come to light recently. Our government continues to fabricate and/or withhold evidence. They do this not to "protect and serve," but for political gain.

Prison is a very cruel reality. But unusual? Imprisonment has become a common experience, especially among Native Americans...

The Constitution protects against "cruel and unusual punishment," and, therefore,

if the Constitution has meaning, then you, as citizens, MUST care. To ignore the cruel and extreme conditions prisoners endure—overcrowding, poor medical care, and unhealthy conditions—is to return to a way that the Eighth Amendment was intended to end.

The courts say prison officials have to have acted with "deliberate indifference" to the safety, health and welfare of prisoners for punishment to be considered cruel and unusual. I don't know what this means because "deliberate indifference" is a way of life in prison. Imagine suffering a stroke, as I did, and slowly losing part of your sight in an environment where all of your senses are required for survival; or suffering extreme jaw pain for years, until the United Nations forced your government to stop the torture and provide the necessary health care.

There are other ways prisoners are deprived of their humanity. In many prisons, we Native Americans are not allowed to practice our spiritual beliefs and traditions, as if separation from the earth with which we are one—as stewards, not owners—were not punishment enough.

The Eighth Amendment prohibits arbitrary and disproportionate punishments, too. The normal Federal guideline for prisoners convicted of homicide offenses is 200+ months. This means that I should have been released from prison over a decade ago. The U.S. Parole Commission refuses to consider the possibility of my receiving parole until at least December 2008—when I will have served double the normal time—and there is no guarantee that I will be paroled even then.

This disproportionate sentence is par-

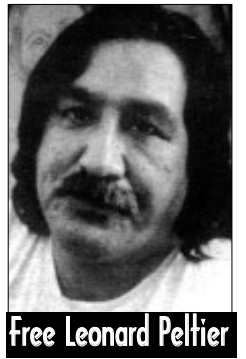
ticularly cruel and unusual because there is no basis to support the commission's reasons for doubling my time for parole consideration. The commission explains its departure from its own congressionally mandated guidelines by saying that I was involved in an "ambush" of two FBI agents and that I executed them at point blank range after the agents had been incapacitated. There's no evidence to support those findings and there never was. The government attorneys have even admitted that they do not know who shot the agents.

The commission's ruling is not supported by my convictions, which the

Eighth Circuit Court of Appeals upheld on an aiding and abetting theory. That was a shift in the government's position after we discovered the government withheld evidence that undercut their case. I was never tried on aiding and abetting and there is no evidence that I knowingly aided and abetted in the shooting of the two agents.

I can tell you I didn't intend to (nor did I) shoot anyone. My only crime was that I

Continued on page 10



Free Leonard Peltier

New York action condemns wall

From July 30 to Aug. 18, Palestinians, Israelis and other activists worldwide are marching along Israel's apartheid wall from Jenin to Jerusalem to say: "Tear it down. This wall is illegal, a violation of international law, and immoral."

On July 31, the Palestine Activist Forum held a march through the streets of midtown Manhattan in solidarity with the one in occupied Palestine.

—Story & photo by G. Dunkel



Demanding reparations

South Carolina kicks off the Black Belt South Long March

Following are excerpts from an article written by Amadi Ajamu for the Millions for Reparations at www.millionsforreparations.com.

The National Millions for Reparations Campaign kicked off the official Black Belt South Long March on July 24 with a rally in Columbia, S.C. Reparations demonstrators hailed from New York, New Jersey, Maryland, Tennessee, Mississippi, Alabama, Georgia, North Carolina as well as South Carolina proper.

The spirited throng assembled at Martin Luther King Park in the heart of the Black community and marched in the blazing sun chanting, "They stole us! They sold us! They owe us!" all the way to the State Capitol. Omowale Clay, the National Spokesman for MFR, said, "From Columbia to Bed-Stuy—Reparations Now!"

Upon arrival at the State Capitol grounds, the masses rallied at the African-American History Monument, which depicts the struggle of African people in the United States.

The history of South Carolina is drenched in the oppression of African people. The ports of Charleston, S.C., were the epicenter of the trans-Atlantic slave trade, receiving enslaved Africans directly from Senegal, Ivory Coast, Ghana, and Congo. The principal crops produced by enslaved Africans on the plantations were rice and cotton.

Today, South Carolina is a bastion of right-wing conservatism and has seen a recent upsurge in Ku Klux Klan activities, according to community residents.

The march was hosted by the local South Carolina Statewide Maafa Reparations Committee. Doretha Bull, a member of the



Reparations march, Columbia, SC, July 24

committee, said: "People are afraid to talk about what they deserve. For every person out here another 25 people wanted to be here but were afraid."

Nevertheless, the reparations movement in South Carolina is growing daily. For the first time in the history of the slave-constructed South Carolina State Capitol, a huge banner demanding "Reparations Now!" was draped across the steps.

In recent years the South Carolina State Capitol has been the site of many demonstrations against the confederate flag, which flew atop. The Black community's consistent demands to take the flag down were successful. The flag no longer flies

atop, but it still flies on the Capitol grounds.

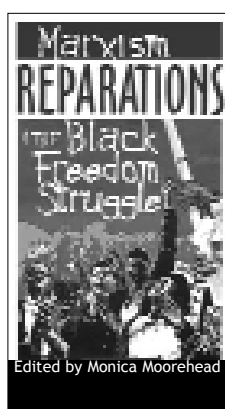
One by one each speaker delivered a powerful message and urged everyone to keep up the fight no matter what. Roger Wareham, the lead attorney in the federal class-action lawsuit against several blue chip corporations, exclaimed, "Our greatest weapon in this struggle for reparations is the grassroots people in the streets making the demand at every turn!"

The Black Belt South Long March will travel to several locations throughout the south culminating in Memphis, Tenn., in September. Omowale Clay stated, "Central to our efforts is the integration of reparations into the strategic liberation goals of African people."

The Millions For Reparations campaign was launched from the victory in the United Nations World Conference against Racism in Durban, South Africa, in September 2001, where the trans-Atlantic Slave Trade was declared a "crime against humanity."

MFR National Chairwoman Viola Plummer said, "As we crystallize these mobilization efforts, we are also participating on the legal front in the ongoing federal class-action lawsuit and we're planning future World Court efforts."

For more information, contact: Millions For Reparations, 456 Nostrand Ave., Brooklyn, NY 11216; phone: 718-398-1766; fax: 718-623-1855. □



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- ◆ Black labor from chattel slavery to wage slavery *Sam Marcy*
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New England grocery workers prepare to fight greedy giant

By Alex Gould
Providence, R.I.

In this intense period of mergers, consolidations and restructuring within the food retailing industry, the Wal-Martization of labor shows no signs of ending.

On June 4, Shaw's Supermarkets, a New England chain recently bought by Albertsons, announced the layoffs of up to 275 of its highest-paid full-time workers. Albertsons was sending a Wal-Mart message to United Food and Commercial Workers union Local 791 and its 6,300 members working at Shaw's in Massachusetts, Rhode Island and Maine only days before bargaining on the next contract was set to officially begin.

On June 10, Albertsons, a Fortune 500 company that extracted \$556 million in profits from its low-wage workforce in 2003, submitted proposals that made it clear it would do anything to squeeze more profits from its employees. Along with the layoffs came a slashing contract proposal—cuts in wages, benefits, vacations and overtime. Meanwhile prices of food and other products continue to skyrocket.

Brian Ravenelle, UFCW Local 791 steward at the Pawtucket, R.I., Shaw's, told Workers World that "squeeze" was too mild a word. Although the situation was still undecided, he estimated that six workers at his store would lose their jobs.

"People are extremely upset about the layoffs, and that they are being asked to drive 40 to 50 miles to a lower-paying job," Ravenelle said. "If Shaw's succeeds in laying off any full-timers, these higher-paid workers can choose to leave or to displace one of the many general-service clerks or part-timers at the lower wage scale. They're extremely upset about the company's take-it-or-leave-it attitude."

Local 791 filed a grievance, and has so far refused to accept any of the layoffs. According to Local 791 Recording Secretary Peter Derouen, less than a third of

Shaw's employees are classified as full-time. The rest, while they may regularly work 40 hours a week, are general service clerks, or part-time clerks, who start at minimum wage (\$6.75 per hour in Rhode Island).

On August 1, Local 791 members will vote on whether to accept the contract proposal or strike. Derouen stated that the rank and file had prepared a community mobilization and strike support plan in conjunction with the Massachusetts and Rhode Island AFL-CIO.

The union published a full-page ad in the Providence Journal exposing Albertson's plans to lay off and downsize the workers, many of whom are women and people of color.

"We do not want to strike," Derouen told WW, "but we are totally prepared to."

Mergers sharpen battle lines

Albertsons is an international food retailing conglomerate. Like Wal-Mart, Safeway, Ahold, Kroger, etc., it's the product of an intense period of mergers and consolidation in the retail food industry that picked up speed in 1996 and shows no sign of ending soon.

Phil Kaufman, a researcher for the U.S. Department of Agriculture in Washington, D.C., estimated that by 2002, just four corporations took over 29 percent of retail food sales in the U.S., up from under 17 percent in 1992. Twenty corporations sold over half the groceries in the U.S. in 2002, according to Kaufman.

He notes that his numbers are conservative, since he factors out sales of non-food items, while major supermarkets have increased their sales of everything from paper goods to hardware to electronics and clothing.

In the report, "Consolidation in Food Retailing," issued in 2000 by the USDA, Kaufman wrote: "Consolidating food retailers often cite the potential for lower costs as an incentive for becoming larger. These retailers believe they can decrease costs through supply-chain

management practices—coordinated activities that generate operating, procurement, marketing, and distribution efficiencies.

"Expected efficiency gains and lower investment requirements will allow them to maintain profitability while keeping prices competitive with mass-merchandisers, warehouse club stores, and other emerging and potential rivals."

What are these "efficiencies" that consolidation "produces," and how does it produce them? Since sales are holding steady or dropping at Albertsons, its owners must make more profit off the same sales dollar by squeezing more work out of supermarket employees for less money.

"Efficiency" is a euphemism for the retail chains' all-out attack on wages, health care, pensions, and working conditions, with union-busting Wal-Mart in the lead. Nothing exemplifies the brutal race for "efficiencies" better than the criminal conspiracy of Safeway, Kroger and Albertsons to scrap the health benefits and wage gains of Southern California supermarket workers last fall.

Yes to Million Worker March

It's time for a labor-community offensive for health care, a living wage and full employment, not endless wars that divert billions of dollars from much-needed social services.

Unfortunately, the UFCW and the entire AFL-CIO leadership is throwing millions of dollars into the effort to replace war criminal George Bush with war criminal John Kerry. But a growing number of rank-and-file activists and militants are questioning organized labor's ties to the Democratic Party.

John Kerry ensured that legislation extending unemployment benefits would fail by one vote in the Senate when he didn't show up. He supported the North American Free Trade Agreement, the Free Trade Area of the Americas, and the World Trade Organization that put millions of workers and peasants around the world under the direct rule of U.S. corporations and banks.

He voted for the Patriot Act and the Homeland Security agency, which took away union rights from tens of thousands of federal employees and increased the repression of immigrant workers. And he proposes to send 40,000 more young working-class women and men to occupied Iraq and squander \$100 million a day to protect oil company investments there.

The millions of dollars collected by the AFL-CIO that are being spent on Kerry's campaign would be better spent on a united fighting campaign to organize Wal-Mart, defend workers at Shaw's, reach out to the low-wage unorganized workforce and to the unemployed, and fight to eliminate the wage and benefit gap between full-time and part-time retail workers.

The Million Worker March set for October 17 in Washington, D.C., is a good way for organized labor to seize the initiative on its own terms. Let's all support the members of UFCW Local 791 so that they can celebrate their victory with the workers, communities and anti-war movement at the Million Worker March!

The writer is a member of
UFCW Local 328.

ON THE PICKET

Layoffs at near-record high

The Bureau of Labor Statistics reported July 30 that the U.S. economy's second biggest contraction since the Great Depression was recorded in 2001-2003. The layoff rate during those three years was 8.7 percent; that's 11.4 million women and men 20 years or older who lost their jobs. This rate is second only to 9 percent in 1981-1983.

Because the unemployment rate is also falling, laid-off workers are finding new jobs. But the BLS survey showed that 56.9 percent of those who found jobs were earning less than before. That's a 10 percent increase over the percentage reported during earlier recessions.

Even the BLS had to admit, as Louis Uchitelle noted in the Aug. 2 New York Times, that "layoffs are more frequent now, in both good times and bad, than they were in similar cycles a decade ago." In fact, he noted that the layoff rate was higher in the late 1990 "boom years" than in the late 1980s when there was a similar period of economic growth.

James Glassman, senior U.S. economist for J.P. Morgan Chase, spoke for the ruling class when he told the Times: "No one should be surprised by the increasing frequency of layoffs. It is an echo of globalization. Companies are shifting production around more frequently to take advantage of low-cost centers."

That's imperialism: Go for the highest rate of profits; damn the workers. No wonder U.S. workers are in a fighting mood!

U-Haul stalls on bargaining

A year ago 39 employees at two U-Haul facilities in Nevada reported widespread racial discrimination and filed to hold a union election to stop it. They were fired and one of the sites was closed. The workers charged U-Haul with discrimination in hiring, wages, day-to-day operations and added scare tactics after they started organizing.

U-Haul couldn't stop the workers. In May 2003 the employees voted by a margin of two to one for union representation. Now, more than a year later, they still don't have their first contract because U-Haul has refused to bargain. This is one of many such cases where employers are stalling to stop unionization.

To stop such anti-labor tactics, the AFL-CIO is trying to get the Employee Free Choice Act through Congress. What would really put some muscle behind that is a strong turnout on Oct. 17 for the Million Worker March.

To endorse the MWM and join the organizing in your area, visit www.millionworker-march.org.

Kodak charged with racism

A group of current and past African American employees of Eastman Kodak filed a class action lawsuit on July 30, charging the company with more than a decade of racist discrimination.

The Black employees said that Kodak paid them less than their white counterparts, promoted them less often, retaliated against those who complained and allowed a pattern of harassment to be directed against them.

The case was filed after months of settlement talks between Kodak and the plaintiffs' lawyers broke down. The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission initiated the talks in February after it concluded a nearly five-year

CHARLOTTE

Greyhound workers fight for union

By David Dixon
Charlotte, N.C.

Union and community activists gathered in Charlotte, N.C., Aug. 2 to support local Greyhound terminal workers fighting for better wages and working conditions. The gathering was in response to the workers' request for support to combat Greyhound's lies and intimidation tactics.

Greyhound terminal workers approached Teamsters Local 71 in June to begin an organizing campaign to raise extremely low wages, put an end to unhealthy working conditions, and gain dignity and respect on the job. An overwhelming majority of workers signed union cards.

Greyhound has engaged in a host of scare tactics and intimidation to distract workers from the issues that led them to unionize. The giant bus company has been on an anti-union ram-

page across the country, fighting organizing drives and intimidating workers into decertifying their unions. In many places, full-time workers were reduced to part-time and lost their benefits.

Anti-war and community activists demonstrated outside the terminal alongside the Teamsters. Members of local ANSWER coalition affiliate the Action Center For Justice, the Auto Workers and the Charlotte Coalition For A Moratorium Now went inside the terminal and spoke with workers. The activists let them know the community supports their efforts to unionize. It didn't take long before management had security escort them from the building.

The Greyhound terminal workers will vote Aug. 4 on whether or not to have a union. Activists said they would return during the voting to let Greyhound workers know that they are not alone in their fight for better conditions and a better life for their families. □

LINE

BY SUE DAVIS

investigation showing that Kodak engaged in discriminatory practices.

Detroit transport workers vs. layoffs

The heads of State, County and Municipal Employees union locals in Detroit have called a demonstration for Aug. 5 to protest the July 30 layoffs of 112 Detroit Department of Transportation workers and to fight for quality bus service in Detroit.

Though the laid-off workers were all the attendants who clean the buses as well as many of the mechanics who repair them, Mayor Kwame Kilpatrick claims these outrageous cuts will not affect services. D-DOT Director Norman White unlawfully walked out of the City Council after he was subpoenaed to answer under oath whether he plans to privatize the laid-off workers' jobs.

A news release from the union presidents noted that "bus service is already unacceptable in Detroit—it's common to wait two or three hours for a bus, if it comes at all. Laying off these crucial workers will only cause further suffering to those citizens who can least afford it."

"School starts on August 25. With Mayor Kilpatrick's attacks on public transportation, how will our children get to and from school safely? We successfully fought Kilpatrick's attempt to charge the disabled to ride the bus, let's continue the fight for quality bus service for all!"

On July 28, a town meeting was held at Detroit's Northwest Activities Center. The union release continued, "Hundreds of concerned citizens, city workers, school workers and students came together to launch an ongoing campaign to take our city back from the contractors and their paid-off politicians and to win equal, quality education for our children."

The Detroit Public Schools Coalition of Unions has also called for an Aug. 12 picket at the Detroit Public School Headquarters on this issue. Another town meeting is planned for Aug. 18.

Defend farm workers' freedom to organize

On June 25, two Farm Labor Organizing Committee organizers, Francisco Heredia and Blake Pendergrass, were arrested during a meeting with 20 cucumber pickers at a Nash County labor camp near Whitakers, N.C. They are to appear in court Aug. 2-3 in Nashville, N.C., on criminal trespass charges.

The immigrant workers were meeting with FLOC to discuss substandard living and working conditions and hourly pay below the federal minimum wage. At the growers' request Nash County Sheriffs broke up the meeting, handcuffed the organizers and arrested them, despite the workers' outspoken defense of FLOC's right to visit their labor camp.

Federal courts, the North Carolina Supreme Court and the state attorney general have all recognized workers' right to determine for themselves who their visitors are. Only farm workers can refuse visitors, not their employer. □

Pension theft is monstrous crime

Dump the UAL scoundrels

By Milt Neidenberg

A potential catastrophe is bearing down on airline workers and their unions, initiated by United Air Lines, the world's second-biggest airline. The issue at stake is billions of dollars that UAL workers have accrued in pension accounts.

The Aug. 1 New York Times reported that UAL "said last month that it would no longer contribute to its pension plans; United also seems intent on shedding some or all of its \$13 billion in pension obligations as the only way to succeed in emerging from bankruptcy proceedings."

UAL has been in Chapter 11 bankruptcy reorganization for the last 20 months. Following the December 2002 bankruptcy, the airline—with the bankruptcy judge's approval—forced disastrous concessionary contracts on UAL unions.

The Flight Attendants union, now merged with the Communication Workers, gave concessions amounting to \$2.4 billion a year for 2003-2008. The Pilots union agreed to a whopping 29-percent cut. And the Machinists union, which includes mechanics and other on-the-ground service workers, agreed to a 13-percent cut.

According to UAL top brass, these huge union sacrifices were necessary to save the company. The truth: UAL was in collusion with Citigroup, J.P. Morgan Chase, Bank One—which recently merged with J.P. Morgan Chase—and CIT to fund operations during the bankruptcy.

UAL guaranteed their investments and fees—profits—by savaging the union contracts. During the last 18 months, these Wall Street allies, including the bankruptcy court, continued to defraud the workers of their resources. They demanded more concessions, approved by the trustee of the court—in work rules, restructuring and downsizing airplane maintenance, furloughing flight attendants, cutting health care for retirees, and forcing pilots and flight attendants to work longer hours.

Pension system under attack

According to an Aug. 1 New York Times headline, "If Airlines Shed Their Pensions ... the U.S. Taxpayers [the workers] Could Face Huge Bills if United Sets Off Chain Reaction."

The Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation, which insures pensions, has stated that "the pension insurance program is there to protect workers' benefits ... it shouldn't be used as a piggy bank to help companies restructure." By law, the UAL pension liability should be secured.

The liability is roughly \$13 billion set aside by the corporation. As of last December, the company has only about \$7 billion in the fund.

And now the bosses want to default on that.

UAL is violating pension law. ERISA, the Employment Retirement Income Security Act, protects pensions. Once a pension is earned it cannot be legally taken away. But UAL is in bankruptcy. The banks, in collusion with UAL and the bankruptcy court, are preparing to break the law by defaulting on UAL pensions that ultimately can amount to \$13 billion.

This is scary to the seriously underfunded PBGC. It has picked up the tab for 3,200 failed pension funds in its 30-year life. Yet the pension law Congress passed in 1974 clearly states that any company that promises pensions to its workers would be required to set aside funds to pay them. And ERISA guarantees a grievance

and appeals process to fight violations.

Breaking the law to suit their class interests is nothing new for Wall Street corporate and banking institutions. The pension swindle is a critical issue that the entire labor movement must meet head on. It can spread to other airlines, which can also claim they can't meet their pension obligations, as well as to the rest of corporate America, only too anxious to dump pension funds.

Coming on the top of the recent defaults of seven steel companies, including Bethlehem Steel with a default of almost \$4 billion that the PBGC was forced to take over, all this undermines the PBGC's scarce resources. The Aug. 1 New York Times report compared the situation to the savings and loans collapse of the 1980s.

"The similarities are incredible," said George J. Bentson, a finance professor at Emory College. He has written extensively on the regulatory failures that led to the multi-billion-dollar S&L bailout.

UAL unions are furious

Earned pension funds are security for workers when they reach retirement age. They have worked long and hard to build up this equity. In 1974, they won ERISA legislation in struggle, protesting a string of pension failures in the auto industry.

Machinists President Randy Canale, representing 37,000 members, responded to UAL: "We are at war with United Airlines." (New York Times, Aug. 3)

On July 29, the Machinists filed lawsuits against UAL Chief Executive Officer Glenn Tilton, Chief Financial Officer Frederic F. Brace III and Chief Operating Officer Peter McDonald claiming, "As fiduciaries of the pension plan, the defendants had a responsibility to compel United to meet its funding obligations."

Airline Workers Unite, a rank-and-file caucus of flight attendants, has spread the word in their recent bulletin: "UAL cannot operate without us. We have power and strength. We must contemplate a courthouse [bankruptcy court] protest. "NO MORE CONCESSIONS!"

Protests including wildcat strikes, sick-outs, and other actions to disrupt airline operations are being considered. Such protests would present an ideal opportunity for the UAL unions to force the bankruptcy court to grant them status as the principal UAL creditor.

What gives them that right? The work-

ers' skills, experience and labor power are indispensable to keeping the airline afloat. Their pensions and other unpaid benefits have won them the right to succeed the current trustee.

The trustee is the person or group of persons appointed by the bankruptcy court to take charge of UAL's affairs. Once the UAL unions demand to take over the trusteeship, they can immediately restore their equity in the accrued pensions and other benefits that have been taken away. They can end the lucrative contracts of senior management like Tilton, Brace, McDonald and the board of directors, who receive huge salaries, guaranteed stock options and huge bonuses that have depleted the airline's resources.

When UAL filed for bankruptcy, the company could no longer claim ownership. It had to surrender the title and legally became a debtor, granted possession by the bankruptcy court. UAL had to get permission from the trustee to disperse those obscene benefits. The UAL management can't sign checks, disperse funds or make any decisions affecting the UAL unions without the authority and approval of a trustee.

Two of the UAL unions sit on the bankruptcy court's Creditors Committee, a decision-making board. But they are a minority, outvoted on important issues affecting their members. Once the UAL unions become the trustees, they would be the de facto owners of the company.

As representatives of over 100,000 airline workers, they are capable of running the corporation during this crisis. It is only under workers' control that UAL can be saved.

The company has reneged on its promise that it would soon be free of bankruptcy. It's now in worse shape despite all the sacrifices, the concessions and downsizing won from the UAL unions.

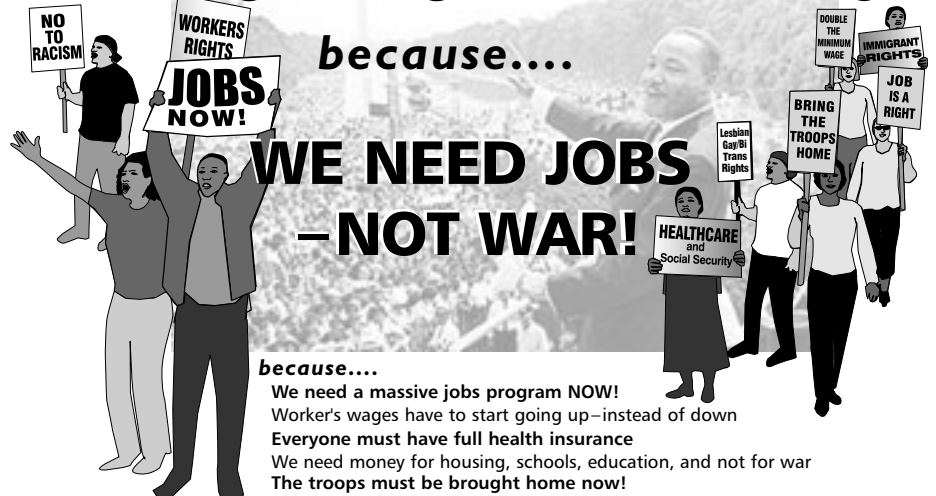
Employee ownership is a tall order but it is a challenge to the company's illegal practices. This may sound novel to the unions, but so did the idea of organizing unions hundreds of years ago, and so did occupying plants in the 1930s. For a short time, it goes beyond the established labor-management relationship that is the framework of capitalist exploitation.

This perspective needs the support of the Million Worker March and the entire labor movement. Pension rights are the line in the sand. □

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Analysis of the Democratic Convention

How a millionaire war hawk got nominated

By Deirdre Griswold

Based on a talk at a July 30 Workers World Party forum in New York.

Surprise, surprise. John Kerry was named the Democratic Party nominee for president last night.

You're not surprised? You should be.

Polls showed that 90 percent of the delegates who elected him are against the war in Iraq and want the troops brought home. But Kerry is for continuing the occupation and sending 40,000 more troops over there.

Most of the delegates want the government to do something quickly about the disappearance of decent-paying full-time jobs with benefits that is impoverishing millions of workers in this country. But Kerry's economic program is nothing more than Reagan's old "trickle down" fraud, giving more tax breaks to businesses with the vague hope that they'll turn the money into jobs.

Most of the Democratic delegates rep-

resent constituencies of working and middle-class people and hate the corporate connections of George W. Bush and Dick Cheney. But they chose a millionaire from an old New England ruling family, one who's married to a billionaire, making John and Teresa Heinz Kerry the richest couple ever to expect to live in the White House.

So what happened?

At the convention there were of course the political elite of the party, many who have held positions in former administrations, as well as those from the national and local party apparatus. Bill Clinton and Hillary Rodham Clinton spoke there, as did Jimmy Carter, Madeleine Albright, Al Gore, Tom Daschle, Gen. John Shalikashvili—head of the Joint Chiefs of Staff during the Clinton administration and now a director of the Boeing company—as well as Sen. Joseph Biden from Delaware, the Dupont state.

But there were also people who represent mass organizations like labor unions, women's groups, and so on. John Sweeney, head of the AFL-CIO, was there along with many other union leaders. There were rank and file and elected officials representing many communities of oppressed nationalities.

Many of the rank-and-file delegates belonged to organizations that try to pressure the government to get reforms and improvements for the masses on various social issues.

When it comes to politics, however, they surrender their independence—and that of their constituents—to become a transmission belt to the masses for the representatives of big capital, who only go there once in a while, to kiss babies and slap backs.

What happened to democracy?

Each delegate had a vote. This party calls itself the Democratic Party. Democracy—isn't that where there is freedom of debate and the majority rules? Didn't the Democratic Party make a big issue of vote tampering in Florida that cost Al Gore the election? Don't they berate Republicans for not being democratic?

But this convention was totally stacked and scripted—by a master of illusion, Steven Spielberg—to force the delegates to vote for a pro-war candidate without even having a debate on the subject.

Couldn't they have refused?

In the early days of the two big capitalist parties, there were sometimes boisterous debates at nominating conventions. Vince Copeland in his book "Market Elections: How democracy serves the rich," tells of the Democratic Convention of 1896, when opponents of Wall Street's choice spilled out into the streets of Chicago and succeeded in changing the scripted outcome. Some over-anxious newspapers of the day even called it a "Red Revolution"—which it wasn't by a long shot. But that convention did show some life, unlike the canned outcomes of today.

So what happened? Did each delegate have a gun to their head?

In a sense, yes. The gun was Bush.

For months and months, the line has been "anyone but Bush." Dire warnings have come from Democrats—especially the social democratic reformers in the party's ranks—that every progressive gain of the last half century will be endangered

if Bush wins a second term. Some go farther than that and predict a fascist coup.

The Democrats have called Bush's endless rhetoric about terrorism "the politics of fear." But this is also the politics of fear. It is telling the working class and progressive movements that they have no strength on their own, that they must fall behind a section of the billionaire ruling class or be crushed.

Outside the convention the Boston streets were full of heavily armed police of various kinds. Even delegates felt intimidated by the force that was supposedly there to protect them.

Progressive opponents of Kerry in the primary, like Al Sharpton and Dennis Kucinich, had agreed not to oppose his program. As expected, Sharpton gave probably the most militant and eloquent speech to the convention. In all his rousing words, he didn't have much to say about Kerry, just this reluctant appeal: "The only choice we have to preserve our freedoms at this point in history is to elect John Kerry."

Millions of dollars were spent by the state, not to protect the delegates from some shadowy menace, but to create an atmosphere of intimidation and fear. And it worked—for those in the system. For those opposing the system, like the thousands who demonstrated and marched to the Fleet Center on Sunday, or the smaller protest on Thursday, mostly by young people, it didn't.

Hard cop, soft cop: This is the same old scam that has been worked successfully for years.

That's why the ruling class is so happy with their two-party system. The Democrats and Republicans are not twin parties; they appeal to different social strata. But at the end of the day, they are both loyal to capitalism at home and imperialist expansion abroad.

And that's why no one was surprised that Kerry was nominated—even though everyone knew he didn't address the most important issues and didn't share the views of the vast majority of the delegates.

Rank and file Democrats not happy

However, this time there is much greater unhappiness among rank-and-file Democrats over having to toe the line. They are concerned about two huge areas: workers' economic conditions and the war and repression.

The Washington Post of July 30 observed that: "Like other speakers during the four nights of the convention, Kerry only briefly touched on Iraq, the issue that has shaped and dominated this presidential campaign, divided the Democratic Party and at times bedeviled his own candidacy. At a time when many Americans are looking for an exit strategy and may wonder whether Kerry has a plan for Iraq that is different from Bush's, he offered only the assurance that he knows how to get it right.

"All week the convention program was shaped with a single aim, to project Kerry and the Democratic Party as committed to the nation's security."

This was the thrust of the speech by John Edwards, Kerry's running mate, who promised to "strengthen and modernize our military," to "double our Special Forces, and invest in the new equipment

and technologies so that our military remains the best equipped and best trained in the world."

Of course, even with its "old" technology, the Pentagon can outshoot and outbomb the rest of the world combined. But its military-industrial complex friends are always looking for new, lucrative contracts.

London Telegraph reporter David Rennie wrote from Boston on July 29: "Rand Beers, the national security adviser to the Kerry campaign, opened a high-level briefing with a warning: 'In many ways, the goals of the two administrations are in fact not all that different.'"

Beers had been on Bush's National Security Council until March 2003, when he resigned over the unilateralism of the war.

Another top adviser to the Kerry campaign is Richard Holbrooke, a key player in the Clinton State Department during the war on Yugoslavia. During the Carter administration, Holbrooke in 1977 okayed U.S. arms to Indonesia, which were then used to kill 200,000 people in East Timor. The rumor is that Holbrooke will be Kerry's secretary of state.

Dan Feldman, another adviser putting together Kerry's foreign policy, told an interviewer it would have a lot of similarities to that of Brent Scowcroft, George Bush senior's national security adviser, who helped craft the first Gulf War and impose murderous sanctions on Iraq.

Bankers shape economic policy

GovExec.com reported on a panel discussion in Boston by people expected to shape Kerry's economic policy. "[O]n the stage were such Clinton alumni as Gene Sperling, former National Economic Council director; Roger Altman, former Treasury deputy and a Kerry friend [and investment banker—D.G.]; Robert Shapiro, a former Commerce undersecretary; and Steven Rattner, managing principal of the New York investment firm Quadrangle Group. All are likely to be on some transition leader's list to fill out John Kerry's administration if he wins in November."

Where are the union leaders who have put hundreds of millions of dollars into the Kerry campaign? Where are the others from progressive organizations fighting for the economic rights of seniors, of the unemployed and underemployed, of those crushed by debt, of the evicted and the homeless?

The last time a labor leader was added to the cabinet was when Richard Nixon appointed Peter J. Brennan, president of the New York Building and Construction Trades Council, to be secretary of labor. It was a humiliating tradeoff. In exchange for a few crumbs to labor, racist, right wing "hardhats" were used to attack youthful demonstrators opposed to the Vietnam War.

But it's a different working class and a different union movement today. The bosses have stabbed the more privileged, more loyal and less militant workers in the back, downsizing and outsourcing them while "Wal-Martizing" their jobs. This has brought an influx of more women, immigrants and people of color into the workforce, and many don't accept organized labor's shrinking role in the United States.

Andrew Stern, head of the 1.6-million-

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Empty words result in empty action

In 2000, thousands of African American voters were prevented from voting in Florida by Gov. Jeb Bush's administration. This outrage paved the way for George Bush to steal the White House.

Michael Moore's movie "Fahrenheit 9/11" accurately depicts member after member of the Black Congressional Caucus begging for the support of a single U.S. senator to support their call for a debate on this disenfranchisement. If just one senator had stepped forward, then an open and frank discussion of this scandal could have been held.

Did John Kerry "report for duty"? Did he stand up and tell the African American community and the country that "help is on the way"? Heck no! He sat there in stone cold racist silence, just like the rest of this "millionaires' club."

What about John Edwards? He said that we need to talk about discrimination and racism "everywhere." But I guess everywhere means everywhere except the floor of the U.S. Senate.

These hacks boast of "courage under fire" and "leaving no one behind"! But when push came to shove, when the path of real courage lay right before their feet, when a whole community was being denied a fundamental right, these guys took another way, the way of racist cowardice, and stood silent.

These two Johns do not merit any worker's vote!

Chris Fry
Long Island, N.Y.

WAR CRIMES TRIBUNAL ON IRAQ

The case against Bush

member Service Employees union, was one of the notables at the convention. He represents low-paid service workers, and has called for a broad-based organizing drive to take on Wal-Mart. His union has given the Kerry campaign \$65 million, but it clearly hasn't gotten much in return. An article in the Washington Post on July 26, opening day of the convention, quoted Stern as saying a Kerry victory in the election would stifle needed reforms underway in both the Democratic Party and the AFL-CIO.

Stern's comments, which he quickly moderated under great pressure, were but a pale reflection of the more outspoken demands that labor "speak with its own voice" being raised by the organizers of the Million Worker March, set for October in Washington. It will not be an "elect Kerry" demonstration. Its organizers, from the Longshore Workers on the West Coast to Teamsters and food service workers in the East, are instead projecting a show of independent workers' power.

Workers World Party is proud to have our own candidates running in this campaign. John Parker, Teresa Gutierrez and LeiLani Dowell are not gagged and bound by any ties to the big business parties. They will tell it like it is and encourage all progressive forces to step up their struggles, because these are not just perilous times, they are times of great opportunity for the vast, multinational working class and all its allies to move onto the offensive against this corrupt, class-divided and war-driven imperialist system.

And they will talk about socialism, because there is an alternative to a system that despoils the world just so a small class can make immense profits. □

By Heather Cottin

Ramsey Clark, the former U.S. attorney general, has charged that President George W. Bush, Vice President Richard B. Cheney, Secretary of Defense Donald H. Rumsfeld and Attorney General John David Ashcroft are guilty of "crimes against peace and humanity and war crimes."

Clark added that the U.S. government under George W. Bush was "assuming powers of an imperial executive unaccountable to law."

Clark's statement was read to thousands who gathered to protest the Democratic National Convention on Boston Common July 25.

Ramsey Clark's charges will form the basis for the Iraq War Crimes Tribunal set for August 26 from 3:00 p.m. to 9:30 p.m. at the Martin Luther King Jr. Auditorium, located at 65th St. and Amsterdam Ave. in New York City.

Dozens of leading anti-war activists from India, Japan, South Korea, Spain, Belgium, Germany, Italy and other countries, as well as from the U.S., will be traveling to the tribunal to give testimony against the Bush administration.

"It is important," said John Catalinotto, an organizer for the tribunal, "that people coming to protest the Republican National Convention understand the international character of the anti-war movement and hear the findings of the international war crimes tribunals on Iraq."

The event will be a first in the series of protests against the Republican National Convention in the city.

The two big-business parties both promise to expand the number of U.S. troops occupying Iraq. But opposition to this brutal occupation is growing too.

Check out PeopleJudgeBush.org

Ramsey Clark is writing the indictment that will charge the Bush administration with causing the death and maiming of tens of thousands of Iraqis and hundreds of U.S. GIs, and providing false and deceptive rationales for war.

The gravest charge is that the U.S. government is guilty of crimes against peace—a crime prohibited by the United Nations Charter, the Nuremberg Principles, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

Clark states that the U.S. is responsible for "authorizing, ordering and condoning assassinations, summary executions, kidnappings, secret and other illegal detentions of individuals, torture and physical and psychological coercion of prisoners."

The tribunal will investigate the "ordering and condoning [of] direct attacks on civilians, [and] civilian facilities." They will charge that the U.S. has threatened "the independence and sovereignty of Iraq by belligerently changing its government by force and assaulting Iraq in a war of aggression."

The International Action Center, organ-

izing for the tribunal, has created a new web site. PeopleJudgeBush.org will collect history, statistics, testimony and pictures, and give people a concrete way to vote against the illegal war in Iraq. The website will provide information and photographs of the depredations of the war censored by the U.S. media.

The web site solicits testimony by e-mail of "photos, eyewitness accounts, research and ideas that can be used as evidence to build a case against the perpetrators of U.S. war crimes against Iraq."

It lists the crimes that expert witnesses with testify about—including war profiteering and privatizing of national resources, cultural genocide and the systematic looting of Iraq's art, archives and cultural institutions.

Testimonies will describe the use of prohibited weapons, including cluster bombs and depleted uranium. The tribunal will expose and oppose the theft of trillions of dollars from domestic social services so that the U.S. can pursue its policy of "Endless War" that has already targeted Haiti, Iran, Palestine, the Philippines, North Korea and Cuba.

The PeopleJudgeBush.org website concludes, "We have a responsibility to hold this administration accountable for the past and continuing horrors of the war and occupation... The people of the world know that it is those in the highest echelons of the U.S. government who are responsible for the atrocities, torture, deaths and war crimes in Iraq." □

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Capitalismo lleno de contradicciones

Continúa de Pagina 12

en el movimiento sindical sobre el programa económico de John Kerry. Stern hizo una crítica sustancial a Kerry y al Partido Demócrata.

Por supuesto, Stern está en una posición contradictoria. Por un lado, "La SEIU ha invertido aproximadamente \$65 millones en recursos del sindicato para elegir a Kerry", comenta el artículo.

Por otro lado, Stern hizo su crítica precisamente durante la Convención Nacional del Partido Demócrata, cuando el Partido Demócrata está ejerciendo una presión tremenda conjuntamente con el

liderazgo de la AFL-CIO por la unidad en apoyo a la campaña de Kerry. Esto demuestra que es posible que Stern esté moviéndose hacia una dirección de acción independiente. Escribió el Post, "Él dijo que está convencido por su experiencia en el movimiento por los derechos civiles que 'se requiere presión' para poder llevar a cabo un cambio de verdad".

Stern dice que Kerry y el Partido Demócrata han rehusado hablar sobre lo que él se refiere como "la economía Wal-Mart".

Stern tiene razón en esta evaluación del candidato presidencial Demócrata. Kerry

ha tomado el movimiento sindical por sentado y ha orientado su campaña a las capas más altas de la clase media.

Y Kerry se ha alineado con las fuerzas de Clinton. Durante los años de la administración de Clinton, la implementación del TLC, la abolición de la asistencia social 'welfare' y la destrucción de otros programas sociales lesionó los intereses de l@s trabajador@s. Las uniones perdieron muchas campañas de sindicalización mientras las empresas se volvieron más agresivas y hostiles durante esa administración Demócrata.

El programa económico de Kerry es de

subvencionar a las empresas privadas para que den concesiones en materia de cuidado de la salud y en subcontratación a empresas no sindicalizadas. Es la misma vieja teoría que tantas veces ha fallado al movimiento sindical.

Pero ahora el movimiento está comenzando desde abajo, entre l@s trabajador@s y las nacionalidades oprimidas, para forjar un movimiento de resistencia independiente contra la explotación capitalista y las guerras interminables.

Este acontecimiento abre la puerta para que nuevas y creativas luchas salgan a la superficie. □

MUNDO OBRERO

Despite continuous attacks

Bolivarian Revolution provides free food

By Chuck Anderson

Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez recently announced the start of a new free food program to provide food for the poor over the next several months. This new program will render emergency assistance to homeless children and adults as well as pregnant women and seniors.

Chavez promised that one thousand centers to serve prepared food will be inaugurated during the last week in July. Each center will serve up to 100 adults and street children who Chavez calls "children of the fatherland."

Altogether, 4,000 food houses will be built to service 600,000 people in extreme poverty by November. Besides the 1,000 houses in July, the plan is to have 700 more houses open in September, 1,000 in October and 500 in November.

Chavez said the program will draw from the existing Mercal food security program, which comprises government-run supermarkets with basic food supplies at fixed discount prices. All the food will be cooked and served by the workers in these supermarkets.

In a country dependent on an oil economy and undergoing what is being called

a Bolivarian Revolution, President Chavez is making great strides to provide food, education and medical care for the oppressed. How many other presidents or prime ministers in other countries have acted in favor of the oppressed masses? Very few.

Chavez' popularly elected government is under constant threat and attack by the U.S. government. U.S. imperialism and the rich Venezuelan oligarchy seek to undermine social and economic reform programs that are aimed at lifting up the majority of the Venezuelan population.

Just two years ago, the same reactionary forces backed by the United States kidnapped the democratically elected Chavez. Now they are now trying to use a referendum to oust him from the presidency. Some have called for his assassination if the referendum is defeated.

In an act of international solidarity, the revolutionary government of socialist Cuba has agreed to send 12,000 doctors and 17,000 teachers as volunteers to assist neighboring Venezuela. In return, the Venezuelan government agreed to sell oil at discount prices to Cuba. □

Haitians protest World Bank boondoggle

By G. Dunkel

"We are determined to maintain our course because we are convinced that the final victory goes to people who struggle." Those were the words of an anonymous speaker at a birthday mass for exiled Haitian President Jean-Bertrand Aristide, held July 15 at the church of Saint Joseph in Port au Prince, according to Haiti Progress newspaper. (July 27)

Aristide, who won re-election in 2000 with overwhelming support from Haiti's poor, was deposed in a U.S./French-backed coup on Feb. 29. He maintains that U.S. Marines removed him from the country against his will.

When the mass was over, more than 5,000 people took to the streets to demand the liberation of members of Aristide's Fanmi Lavalas party, including Prime Minister Yvon Neptune, Minister of the Interior Jocelerme Prevert and singer Annette "Sò Anne" Auguste, who were thrown into the National Penitentiary without hearings or formal charges.

A group of women banging empty pots and pans joined the march to demand an end to the hunger stalking their families thanks to rocketing prices and scarce jobs.

Fanmi Lavalas had held a sit-in in front of the French embassy on July 14, Bastille Day. The holiday commemorates the fall of a notorious prison at the start of the

French Revolution in 1789.

Claudy Sidney, a spokesperson for the group, explained that the policies of the French government in Haiti are working against the interests of the Haitian people and democracy.

Lesly Fadeau, another spokesperson, also raised the violation of human rights in Haiti that occurred after the U.S. kidnapping of Aristide and the creation of a de facto government.

Similar demonstrations were held in Cap-Haïtien, Haiti's second largest city, on July 13-14.

Just a week later, the U.S.-selected prime minister of Haiti, Gérard LaTortue, was "rewarded" for those repressive policies by the World Bank in Washington with \$1.2 billion in loans and grants pledged over the next two years.

The deal was secured at a conference that included the International Monetary Fund, USAID, Inter-American Bank for Development, the European Union and others.

Haiti's external debt totals more than \$1.2 billion, almost five times the value of its annual exports. The new loan package would double that debt.

LaTortue claimed the money would ensure "the creation of 44,000 jobs; the collection and disposal of 50 percent of garbage in urban areas; the upgrading of 500 slum dwellings; and the doubling of electricity service, to 12 hours per day, in

Port-au-Prince." (Washington Post, July 20)

The whole thrust of this World Bank program is to create the infrastructure—such as roads and electricity—to allow the transnational corporations and their local subcontractors to more efficiently exploit Haiti's extremely low-paid workers.

Tèt Kole Ti Peyizan Ayisyen, the Union of Haitian Peasants, held a meeting July 23 in Port-de-Paix, a small city in northwest Haiti. This is the poorest part of the poorest country in the Western Hemisphere. The meeting denounced the World Bank program as a "neoliberal assault" on the people of Haiti.

The peasant's union pointed out that only 15 percent of the money in the plan was designated to go to agriculture and that it was very likely much of that money would evaporate before it arrived, as in the past.

July 23 was the 17th anniversary of the Jean Rabel massacre, when the big landowners killed 137 peasants demanding justice and land in northwest Haiti.

July 28th, the anniversary of the first U.S. military occupation in 1916, saw another 5,000 people march from the poor neighborhoods of Port-au-Prince to the presidential palace. A heavy police cordon turned them back when they tried to march on the National Penitentiary.

The people of Haiti have indeed set their course—to struggle until the occupation is ended, their president is returned, and social justice is established. □

GUANTANAMO

Torture: a U.S. export

By Minnie Bruce Pratt

On Aug. 1 Pentagon tribunals began for over 600 prisoners seized by the U.S. at the beginning of its war on Afghanistan in 2001, and held since then without charge at its military base in Guantanamo, Cuba. The detainees have not been allowed to speak to a lawyer or contact their families. They have had no access to documents about their cases.

Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld designated them "enemy combatants," a new category that allows the U.S. to defy the Geneva Conventions for treatment of prisoners of war.

The Combatant Status Review Tribunal is a hearing during which a panel of military officers decides if a prisoner is an "enemy combatant." The U.S. State Department, in a July 30 press release, declares this to be a "fact-based administrative proceeding," and states that the panel is composed of "three neutral officers." The hearings are closed to the press and the public.

Defense lawyers from the Center for Constitutional Rights, who have never met their clients, declare the tribunals to be a mockery of justice, as well as an attempt to evade a June ruling from the U.S. Supreme Court granting legal rights to detainees. Up until the Supreme Court ruling, the prisoners could have been tried and put to death without charges, jury, or right of appeal.

Jeffrey Fogel, legal director of the CCR, said: "The government is making every effort...to comply as minimally as possible..." (Chicago Sun-Times, Aug. 1)

A Dec. 26, 2002, Washington Post story detailed brutal interrogation of the

prisoners at Guantanamo under the supervision of the CIA. According to the Post, detainees "are sometimes kept standing or kneeling for hours, in black hoods or spray-painted goggles."

Torture in Guantanamo—and Iraq

Other torture techniques included sleep deprivation and beatings while the detainees were blindfolded and bound.

If the dreadful details sound familiar and bring back the images of U.S. soldiers torturing Iraqi prisoners, that's because there is a clear link between these terrors. In early September 2003 a team from the prison in Guantanamo went to Abu Ghraib prison to instruct the U.S. military there on interrogation "procedures."

But the Pentagon, once again, is putting out the "bad apple" theory in order to deny its systematic use of torture. A report issued on July 22 by the Army inspector general, Lt. Gen. Paul T. Mikolashek, attributes horrific abuse of prisoners in Iraq and Afghanistan to "unauthorized actions taken by a few individuals, coupled with the failure of a few leaders." (New York Times, July 23)

In fact, the U.S. brass set up its School of the Americas in Ft. Benning, Ga., to train generations of torturers. Death squads and paramilitaries from that training have wreaked death and destruction against peasant and Indigenous organizers, trade unionists, and political activists for decades in Colombia, Honduras, Guatemala, Nicaragua, Colombia, Peru—all across Central and Latin America.

Now the Pentagon is exporting torture again—as a weapon in the current U.S. imperialist war. □

Indigenous communities with Venezuela's Chavez

By Adrian Garcia

As reactionary forces in Venezuela threaten to topple the popularly elected and progressive Hugo Chavez government under the guise of the Aug. 15 referendum, Indigenous groups have declared support for President Chavez—and for socialist Cuba.

On July 24, during the Second Continental Summit of Indigenous Peoples and Nationalities, in Quito, Ecuador, a resolution was passed proclaiming solidarity with the embattled governments of Venezuela and Cuba.

The Continental Summit of Indigenous Peoples and Nationalities is part of the Social Forum of the Americas, which is a regional version of the World Social Forum. Representatives of Indigenous communities from 20 countries took part in this historic event.

The resolution praised Venezuela for taking concrete actions in the promotion

and protection of Indigenous people's rights. Nicia Maldonado, President of the Confederation of Indigenous People of Venezuela, expressed appreciation for the resolution. Maldonado said, "For the first time Indigenous peoples [of Venezuela] are playing an active role in decision-making in the country," adding that "President Chavez is our guarantee" for the continued participation of Indigenous people. (venezuelaanalysis.com)

Within Venezuela's 1999 constitution there is an entire section that Venezuelan Indigenous representatives drafted themselves. One of the progressive provisions permits Indigenous communities to propose their own models of governance they believe is most beneficial.

"I learned to identify myself with my people rather than just as a Venezuelan," commented Izeanobia Mercano of the Cumangato People of Sucre, Venezuela, one of the Indigenous delegations present at the Quito summit.

Eyewitness Cuba

Socialist revolution emphasizes 'pueblo'

Following are excerpts from a talk given by Arturo Perez-Saad at a July 30 Workers World party meeting in New York.

This was my first trip to Cuba and I went with the Venceremos Brigade. In their 35-year history, the brigade has never applied for a travel permit because as Martin Luther King Jr. said, there are "just laws and unjust laws," and we believe the travel ban imposed on the U.S. people for travel to Cuba to be an unjust law.

The socialist system and mentality that goes along with it in Cuba is completely different from our current capitalist one here and cannot be compared. There is a sense of a strong community in Cuba, which I will call "pueblo", where an individual's roots vastly expand and extend from their home to the outer limits of their neighborhood, town, municipality and country.

For me, "pueblo" has a deeper significance as a Puerto Rican. You see Puerto Rico and Cuba have the same colonial history until 1959, when Cuba succeeded with their revolution. The Puerto Rican Nationalist movement led by Pedro Albizu Campos was suppressed at the initiative of the U.S. government in the 1940s and 1950s.

Unlike capitalist society where the propaganda machine exist to instill fears about our neighbors, other nationalities, etc., the Cuban foundation is to achieve equality for all.

Another building block of the Cuban revolution is their ability to identify problems before they happen and implement procedures to benefit their society. An example is in their educational system, where the Cuban government noticed that there was an unequally distributed balance in education with students in city schools scoring much higher in all subjects than those in the rural schools.

They began to implement a program called the "Universalization of Education" to elevate the rural and farm area education to the same level as the kids in the city. They are using the TV set, not like it is used here for entertainment, but to facilitate learning.

There is one teacher per 20 children. The Cuban government's goal is to lower

that number to 15 children for every teacher.

In comparison, George W. Bush passed a program here titled "No Child Left Behind Act" and what are the results? It has left not only children behind, but also teachers. The ratio of students per teacher has increased in many instances to over 40 students per one instructor. In actuality one reason this act failed is because the federal government has under-funded it by \$7.5 billion. This lack of funding is primarily due to the quagmire situation with the wars and occupations in Iraq, Afghanistan and Palestine.

To compound the discrepancy, in the United States children are taught memorization and regurgitation. When I asked a Cuban teacher about that he said, "We found that memorization does not work to fulfill educational needs of children, therefore we teach reason and logic from the beginning."

It is required by law that each child finish ninth grade. After that it is each individual's prerogative to continue her or his education. There are, however, over 107 state programs to get youth back into schools. Even those in jail are given the opportunity to educate themselves in the prison system and are re-introduced to society.

In one camp where we were doing solidarity work, there was an ex-prisoner working with us and the kids. Nothing in his behavior alluded to his past since Cuban laws elevate each human to function for the benefit of "pueblo" through their various programs aiding instead of oppressing them.

Another building block is solidarity work the Cubans do with other countries. In conjunction with the Venceremos Brigade, IFCO-Pastors for Peace and the African Awareness Association—all solidarity groups from the United States—there were 246 people from the European Community in Cuba.

Out of the eight groups expected from Puerto Rico, only one made it. The representative of that group said that the other groups were grounded due to the new travel restrictions, since they had booked their travel through commercial air carriers, and that "it is doubly hard for Puerto Ricans to challenge the law." The one group was able to make it to Cuba because they foresaw this problem and sought alternative means to reach their destination.

Worlds apart—health care in Cuba and U.S.

Another building block can be found in the public health sector. There is one medical clinic for every 120 to 150 families. A family is composed of about five people. These clinics are in the neighborhood or "pueblo," not just in the city center. There are reports that in some sectors of U.S. society there is one doctor for every 12,000 people. In Cuba, since the clinic is in the neighborhood they are able to monitor more effectively any ailments and be on alert in prevention of any epidemic.

The Cuban clinics are composed of two nurses and one doctor, who in the morning hold appointments in the clinics and in the afternoon conduct house visits. In relation to pre-natal care, pregnant women have weekly check-ups prior to giving birth. Once she has given birth, for the first month she sees both the neighborhood doctor and the pediatrician once a week. Regarding maternity leave for working women, they receive 18 weeks with 100 percent of their salary and 34 weeks with 60 percent of their salary. This is a basic

right in Cuba and it does not cost a dime to receive this type of treatment.

About 25 of the brigadistas fell ill during our stay in Cuba with various forms of stomach ailments. Some of us were even hospitalized. Thanks to the Cuban clinic, I did not have to be hospitalized. I was not asked for an insurance card, nor was I asked to fill out a waiver on patient rights, nor was I asked to pay—because all health care is free.

I recently went to the doctor here [in New York]. I had to call to see if my health insurance was accepted, fill out reams of forms, provide a co-pay and purchase my medicine at a drug store that would honor my medical insurance.

In Cuba, I received modern medical treatment with available drugs such as Tylenol to lower my fever, and an injection which hurt due to the steel being a different gauge and quality than here. Due to the U.S. blockade they were unable to use the high-grade fine needles but instead they relied on alternative medicine such as herbal tea and Chinese massage, which were administered to me. Within 30 minutes my health had bounced back and I did not have to take the ambulance that was called for me to take to the polyclinic. A polyclinic is a small hospital that is tied to the small neighborhood clinics.

A fifth building block is the role of mass organization in Cuba. The children, on a voluntary basis, can join the "Pioneros" (Pioneers), which is a student-run organization that works with the school administration and teachers in all facets of learning and leadership. There are also mass organizations for junior high, high school and college students.

The most self-sacrificing, dedicated, class-conscious leaders in these organizations and in the trade unions, women's organization and neighborhood committees are recruited into the Young Communist League and then, by age 30, into the Communist Party. Enrollment in the Party is limited now to about 12 percent of the population.

The requirements are that you must have a job and be a solid citizen, meaning that you are not an abusive person, alcoholic, drug addict, etc.

Free Cuban 5 and Puerto Rican freedom fighters!

The U.S. Government is implanting the "Commission for Assistance to a Free Cuba." In the 450-page report (www.state.gov/documents/organization/32334.pdf), you will find what the U.S. ruling class wants to reintroduce in Cuba.

They want to roll back to the days of the U.S.- sponsored Batista regime. Chapter Two of this report is titled "Meeting basic human needs in the areas of health, education, housing and human services. This is a nice-sounding heading to hide an attempt to undermine the successes of the working-class revolution. It calls for stripping away all of these basic rights including the right to shelter, food and water, and privatizing all of them.

How has the U.S. government begun to implement this? It has increased funding to Miami-based terrorist organizations from \$7 million to \$63 million in an attempt to make this "transition" a reality by using U.S. citizens' tax money for acts of terrorism.

We here in the United States must assist in the education of our communities regarding socialist Cuba. Take the case of the Cuban five, who were unjustly jailed in the United States for infiltrating terrorist organizations in Miami to protect Cuba from their attacks. Antonio Guerrero, Gerardo Hernández, Ramón Labañino, Fernando González and René González presented their three volumes of findings to the U.S. Government and three months later they were arrested. Oscar Lopez Rivera, Haydee Beltran, Carlos Alberto Torres, and Antonio Camacho Negron are their Puerto Rican counterparts still being unjustly held in U.S. prisons.

I encourage everyone here to go and visit Cuba to see for yourselves the other alternative. □

in solidarity

The declaration of support for Venezuela and Cuba was accompanied with a repudiation of neoliberal policies that hurt working and Indigenous people of the Americas and the world. Condemnations were leveled at capitalist organs of oppression such as the World Bank, International Monetary Fund and World Trade Organization.

Hugo Chavez and Cuban President Fidel Castro have both vehemently challenged the way these institutions move against the poorest sectors of the developing countries they profess to assist, with severe austerity programs that serve corporations and banks.

As the Indigenous communities throughout the Americas stand in solidarity with Venezuela's Chavez as that country faces U.S.- backed imperialist threats, so too all working and oppressed peoples worldwide should assist in defending the gains of the Bolivarian Revolution. □

'Long live July 26!'

The Cuban 5 are political prisoners unjustly incarcerated in the U.S. for the "crime" of fighting the terrorist plots by the White House-supported right-wing in Miami aiming to overthrow the Cuban Revolution. The following message was written on the occasion of the 51st anniversary of the attack of the Moncada barracks lead by Fidel Castro and other revolutionaries.

Dear brothers and sisters:

This July 26th is a very special day:

Special because today more than ever before, the Bush Administration is determined to destroy the Cuban Revolution, our people and even our history.

Special because we count on the solidarity of extraordinary and brave human beings like yourselves in this battle.

Special because we represent the hope of a new and more just world for humanity.

Special because the five of us share the honor of being by your side in this struggle.

And special because we all are determined to fight and win, and, no matter what, we shall overcome! United we are invincible!!

Long live July 26th!

Long live the friendship between the U.S. and Cuban people!

Thanks so much for your solidarity and support!

Onward to victory!

René González
Antonio Guerrero
Fernando González
Gerardo Hernández
Ramón Labañino Salazar
"The Cuban Five"

Free the Cuban 5



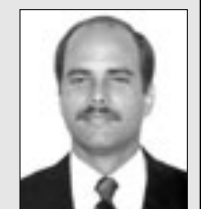
René González



Antonio Guerrero



Gerardo Hernández



Ramón Labañino



Fernando González



Farming in the fields of capitalism

On July 31 the World Trade Organization announced a plan for the gradual elimination of farm subsidies within rich nations. The stated effect of the action is to ease conditions for farmers in developing countries who cannot compete against subsidized crops of corn, cotton, rice, soybeans and wheat produced by farmers in the U.S. and Europe. The New York Times described this change in global trade rules as “helping the world’s poorest people.”

But the WTO, an organization that sets the standards for international trade negotiations and expansion within the framework of capitalism, is not a charitable agency.

The nations participating in the WTO, both developed and developing, fight out every decision in the cutthroat competition of an exploitative economic system.

As recently as September 2003, the Bush administration adamantly opposed giving way on farm subsidies, leading to a dramatic breakdown of the WTO trade talks in Cancun. Doubtless this hard line had something to do with the fact that billions of dollars in subsidies were going, not to individual impoverished U.S. farmers, but to mammoth agribusiness. About \$1.7 billion in cotton subsidies alone went to giant cotton producers like Cargill.

While big business was subsidized, farm families in the U.S. were going bankrupt. Particularly devastated were small Black farmers in the South, suffering from decades of discrimination by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, which systematically denied or delayed loans. Despite a landmark 1999 class action against the USDA, which showed “indifference and blatant discrimination” against Black farmers in the department’s loan programs, most of them have still been denied their settlements. Continuing to fight, both in the courts and by occupying USDA offices, many are going under and defaulting on their loans. This way their land can easily be snapped up by big farm business.

But theirs is the same fighting spirit as peasants and poor farmers in other parts of the world, whose militant tactics have forced their governments to bring pressure on the rich nations for relief.

In Bolivia, farmers, mostly Indigenous people, have blocked major roads throughout the country, stopping transportation in whole states, in protest against free-trade policies. Two thousand women farmers in Brazil occupied restaurants and surrounded supermarkets in outrage over the corporate control of the food chain. Similar uprisings have taken place in many countries, including Argentina, India and South Korea, where some farmers have committed suicide to draw attention to their desperate situation.

Thousands of West African cotton farmers, hit by falling world prices, went on strike to demand economic justice from their governments. Benin, Burkina Faso, Mali and Chad were central in the revolt of developing countries in Cancun.

Now the U.S. and Europe say they are willing to give up subsidies to their farm businesses. But even the relief agency Oxfam says, “This will change absolutely nothing for rural Africans who are sinking into poverty.”

In fact, the negotiations at the WTO are done to grease the wheels of free trade, so the engines of profit-making can continue to operate. For the farmers who are toiling to feed the workers of the world, there will be no lasting relief under capitalism. And for the Black farmers of the U.S., and the cotton farmers of West Africa, pitted against each other by this system, there will be no true justice until there are full reparations for the lives, labor and land stolen from them. □

Iraq’s occupation regime crumbling

By John Catalinotto

The corporate media here portray the Iyad Alawi regime in Iraq as growing in strength and more stable every day. This is in stark contrast to the reality of regular deadly bombings and clashes between resistance fighters and U.S. troops or Iraqi police.

Resistance forces and dissident reporters paint a more accurate picture. Occupation troops, Iraqi collaborators of all types, foreign workers and technicians are all regular targets of the resistance. Foreign countries remove their troops and companies close down operations in Iraq. Major cities remain outside both government and U.S. control.

Oil pipelines are bombed daily. Electricity is on only four hours a day in Baghdad.

Authorities had to postpone a national conference set to begin July 31 until mid-August. This was to bring together 1,000 delegates from across Iraq to appoint a body to oversee the elections planned for early 2005. It was the second postponement. United Nations representatives had earlier raised concerns that the elections themselves might have to be postponed.

On Aug. 3, Cahit Soysal, the chairperson of the Istanbul-based International Truckers Association, announced that Turkish trucks would no longer bring food, drinking water, special aircraft fuel and other supplies across the Turkish border to U.S. forces in Iraq. This will stop about 200 of the 2,000 Turkish trucks delivering goods in Iraq.

Earlier a resistance unit had executed a captured Turkish truck driver. Two more drivers are being held.

Foreign companies—particularly transport firms—say kidnappings have driven up the cost of doing business. Adel Abou Hawili, shipping manager for a Kuwaiti company, said kidnappings have forced transport costs up “50 to 65 percent” and made it harder to find drivers to work in Iraq. (Associated Press, July 26)

The July 29 India Times put it even more directly: “The ongoing hostage crisis in Iraq has hit India-Iraq trade. Feeder ships on the Iraq-Middle East sector, which used to carry a lot of Indian cargo, have almost stopped their services.”

‘Iraq about to implode’

Robert Fisk, known for his incisive and non-Pentagon-approved reporting from Iraq, wrote in the Aug. 1 Independent:

“Doesn’t [British Prime Minister Tony]

Blair realise that Iraq is about to implode? Doesn’t Bush realise this? The American-appointed ‘government’ controls only parts of Baghdad—and even there its ministers and civil servants are car-bombed and assassinated. Baquba, Samara, Kut, Mahmoudiya, Hilla, Fallujah, Ramadi, all are outside government authority. Iyad Allawi, the ‘Prime Minister,’ is little more than mayor of Baghdad.”

He added: “I drive down to Najaf. Highway 8 is one of the worst in Iraq. Westerners are murdered there. It is littered with burnt-out police vehicles and American trucks. Every police post for 70 miles has been abandoned.”

While not sharing Fisk’s overall view, the Labor-dominated Foreign Affairs Committee in the British House of Commons also found Iraq’s deteriorating security to be a looming disaster. The committee’s report suggested the problem was “insufficient troops.”

Unable to win control back of most of the country, the United States instead intervened by arresting Dr. Muthana Harith Al-Dhari, editor of the Iraqi newspaper Al-Basaer, on Aug. 2. Al-Dhari had just given a live television interview.

Sabah Ahmad, a manager at Al-Basaer, said he would ask media unions inside and outside Iraq to call on the United States to free Al-Dhari. “It appears that he was arrested for saying something in a broadcast interview that the U.S. occupation authorities did not like,” Ahmad told Al-Jazeera.

The last time the U.S. forces took this sort of action, closing down Muktada Al-Sadr’s newspaper and arresting its editor, in late March, Al-Sadr’s Mahdi army rose up in a half-dozen majority-Shiite cities in Iraq’s South.

NATO to join the occupation

The only news that pleased official Washington was that NATO decided July 30 that it would send an advance team to Iraq to prepare to send units to train Iraqi security forces.

The decision came after a dispute over who would command the training units. Washington wanted its forces in control. The French representative disagreed. They postponed a decision to September.

The dispute showed the continuing contradictions within the imperialist NATO alliance. Neither U.S. imperialism nor its European allies want the Iraqi resistance forces to win.

On the other hand, Washington is still refusing to give up control of the political, economic and military command in Iraq. □

Cruel and unusual punishment

Continued from page 3

defended my people from attack. In my culture, our first responsibility is always survival. There is no other choice, when faced with destruction, but to turn and defend ourselves, our women and our children. That is what I did when the agents invaded the private property of the people I and others were there to protect. Yet, I remain in prison awaiting another appeal, another parole hearing ... and so it goes.

The so-called patriots of today ignore constitutional protections, the very ideas this country was founded upon. Under the guise of threats to “national security,” the U.S. government has rounded up “terrorists” and detained them, never to try them or, if they do, to conduct sham trials.

This reminds me of the stories I heard as a child about the hanging of 39 Dakota warriors on December 26, 1862, in Mankato, Minn. The hanging followed trials which condemned over 300 combatants

in the 1862 Dakota Conflict, and stands as the largest mass execution in American history. The mere participation of the warriors in a battle justified the death sentence. So, where a prisoner admitted firing shots, he was immediately pronounced guilty without any consideration.

President Lincoln might have signed the death warrants of all 300 defendants. He stopped at 38 after an aide told him that history would look upon him unfavorably if he signed all of the death warrants. A youth the guards simply grabbed along the way to the gallows became the 39th victim. The mass execution occurred in the opening years of the American-Sioux treaty conflict that would not end until the Seventh Cavalry completed its massacre at Wounded Knee, S.D., on December 29, 1890.

What I have learned in the past 28 years is that innocence is the weakest defense when your government has decided to tar-

get a person and/or squash dissent. Innocence has a single voice that can only say over and over again, “I didn’t do it.” Guilt has a thousand voices, all of them lies. And, unless an innocent lies and admits guilt—so the government can claim victory—the innocent remains imprisoned. Punishment for a crime a person did not commit is the cruelest punishment of all.

In the end, maybe you think injustice can’t happen to you, only to someone else, the Other. Maybe you can sweep the streets of all undesirables, of everyone who is an Other. But, one day, you may be declared the Other yourself. What then?

Justice is not a flexible tool. Unless we all do our part to ensure that justice is applied equally to all human beings, we are a party to its abuse. We must stand together to protect the rights of others. No child should go hungry, no woman denied protection from abuse, no person refused health care or an education, no prisoner held for political reasons. But, as long as any constitutional rights are allowed to become meaningless, YOU are at risk. The sad thing is that most people outside the prison walls don’t even know it.

Mitakuye Oyasin.
In the spirit of Crazy Horse,
Leonard Peltier

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Soviet Union in 1920s: Scientific, not utopian

By Leslie Feinberg

During the 1920s, in the first decade of the Russian Revolution, signs that the struggle to build socialism could make enormous social gains in sexual freedom—even in a huge mostly agricultural country barely freed from feudalism, then ravaged by imperialist war and torn asunder by civil war—were apparent.

The Russian Revolution breathed new life into the international sexual reform movement, the German Homosexual Emancipation Movement, and the revolutionary struggle as a whole in Germany and around the world.

It was a historic breakthrough when the Soviet Criminal Code was established in 1922 and amended in 1926, and homosexuality was not included as an offense. The code also applied to other republics, including the Ukrainian Republics. Only sex with youths under the age of 16, male and female prostitution and pandering were listed. Soviet law did not criminalize the person being prostituted, but those who exploited them.

For example, author Dan Healey states, “The revolutionary regime repeatedly declared that women who sold their bodies were victims of economic exploitation, not to be criminalized, and campaigns to discourage them from taking up sex work were launched.” The growth of prostitution had of course been spurred by the chaos and dislocation of people accompanying war.

Historian Laura Engelstein summarizes, “Soviet sexologists in the 1920s participated in the international movement for sexual reform and criminologists deplored the use of penal sanctions to censor private sexual conduct.” (“Soviet Policy”)

In 1923, the Soviet minister of health traveled to the German Institute for Sexual Science and reportedly expressed there his pride that his government had abolished the tsarist penalties against same-sex love. He stated that “no unhappy consequences of any kind whatsoever have resulted from the elimination of the offending paragraph, nor has the wish that the penalty in question be reintroduced been raised in any quarter.”

Also in 1923, Dr. Grigori Batkis, director of the Moscow Institute of Soviet Hygiene, published a pamphlet titled “The Sexual Revolution in Russia.” It stated, “Soviet legislation bases itself on the following principle: it declares the absolute non-interference of the state and society into sexual matters, as long as nobody is injured, and no one’s interests are encroached upon.”

And the pamphlet spelled this out clearly, “Concerning homosexuality, sodomy, and various other forms of sexual gratification, which are set down in European legislation as offenses against public morality—Soviet legislation treats these the same as so-called ‘natural’ intercourse.”

In Germany, the vicious Prussian Paragraph 175 was the law of the land in 1923. That same year in the U.S., where anti-“sodomy” laws aimed to padlock closet doors, the FBI had labeled anarchist Emma Goldman “most dangerous woman in America” because of her vocal support for gay rights and other forms of social equality. (gaysouthafrica.org)

In Britain the “Buggery” Act of 1533 had proscribed death by hanging—the death penalty not formally removed until 1861. But the 1885 Criminal Law Amendment

Act criminalized any form for male homosexual expression that offended a jury—“gross indecency”—with up to two years with or without hard labor. Oscar Wilde, a feminine homosexual, was convicted under this law in 1895. It took 82 more years to repeal this repressive measure. (lawyerscollective.org)

Ups and downs

On Jan. 15, 1921, a raid took place in Petrograd that may have been sparked by official fears of a large private gathering of soldiers and sailors. It turned out those gathered were carrying out a wedding ceremony.

Some 95 soldiers, sailors and civilians were arrested in the only such raid known during that period on a party of male homosexuals and cross-dressers in Petrograd.

Healey explains, “A lone Justice Commissariat lawyer argued that this raid was justified despite the decriminalization of sodomy, for public displays of ‘homosexual tastes’ endangered suggestible personalities. He proposed prosecuting such overt demonstrations of these tastes ...”

When the Bolsheviks struck down the tsarist anti-gay laws, that political act challenged the prejudices that were deeply embedded from centuries of class rule. But it could not change everyone’s attitudes in the population overnight. From that standpoint, however, Healey’s findings are very significant: No such charges based on cross-dressing or public displays of homosexuality have come to light. “Few other jurists advocated such a criminalizing approach, and most explained the absence of a sodomy ban as a feature of the sexual revolution.” (“Russian Queen”)

The eminent psychiatrist V.M. Bekhterev wrote about those arrested as “sexual deviants.” It’s worth recalling that he began his career of professor of psychiatry at the Academy of Military Medicine under the tsar—the same military that had adopted legislation in 1706 and 1716 mandating the death penalty as punishment for male same-sex love between soldiers.

While feminine males were generally not as socially accepted as masculine females, Healey notes, “Soviet sources of the 1920s continue to mention the use of female nicknames and occasional indulgence in cross-dressing, although these practices were evidently reserved for private events and spaces.”

The great Russian novel “Wings,” by Mikhail Kuzmin, about same-sex love between men, was re-published and brought out in Berlin in 1923 by a literary house owned by the Soviet government. (Simon Karlinsky’s essay in “Hidden from History”)

Modern anti-communist historians have denounced the early Soviet workers’ state based on reports that the Bolsheviks used charges that male clerics were having sex with boy children during public trials of church officials.

While not underestimating the impact of political backwardness about same-sex relations in the trials of clerics from the church hierarchy, more study must be done to find out how much of these measures resulted from outrage at sexual abuse—much like the outrage over exposures of the rapes of boy and girl children in the modern Catholic Church scandal.

More thorough primary research about

these trials is needed. Any attempt to gloss over instances of backwardness only sets back the struggle to build socialism in the long run.

However, simplistic, anti-communist arguments do far greater damage.

‘Survivals of primitive custom’

While the October 1917 Revolution in Russia—the heart of the tsarist oppressor nation—eradicated the laws against homosexuality, Soviet governments in the Caucasus and Central Asia, where homosexuality was reportedly widespread, did enact laws against some forms of same-sex expression in the 1920s.

In 1928 the People’s Commissariat of Justice of the Russian Socialist Federated Soviet Republic replied to a request from Magnus Hirschfeld’s Scientific-Humanitarian Committee in Germany, which wrote to ask the state of homosexuals in the Soviet Union.

The response stated in part that “pederasty”—sexual abuse of boy children by adult men—was punished “[i]n particular republics where pederasty is especially common.” (“Sexual Desire”)

The Bolshevik’s struggle against sexual exploitation of children is a matter of public record.

However, there is also backwardness in this attitude towards the Republics in Central Asia and the Caucasus that cannot be examined outside of the context of the “national question” and the centuries of entrenched “Great Russian” chauvinism towards these formerly oppressed nationalities.

These vast new republics of the Soviet Union had different customs, languages, and economies than Russia had—and diverse attitudes towards the sexes, gender expression and sexuality. Some of these societies, closer to the legacy of their communal pasts, appeared to retain more widespread acceptance of same-sex love and trans expression, even where class divisions had formed.

Historian Laura Engelstein writes that in the early 1900s in tsarist Russia, jurist V.D. Nabokov had noted that laws of homosexuality “had changed over time and still varied across cultural traditions; there was no single, absolute standard common even to the Christian world upon which to base consistent legal norms.”

She concludes that “Nabokov must have been aware of the testimony of judges from the Muslim areas of the Russian empire, who explained the impossibility of enforcing the [tsarist] antisodomy laws among peoples who did not disapprove of homosexual behavior.” (“Sex and the Search for Modernity in Fin-de-Siècle Russia”)

Under the leadership of Vladimir Lenin, the early Bolsheviks unlocked the cell door of the tsarist “prison house of nations” by forming a voluntary Soviet Union of Russia with the formerly oppressed nations that had been coerced under tsarist rule. Lenin steered his party to support the right of self-determination, including the right to separate from Russia, of nations that had been forcibly held in bondage by the imperial state. At the same time, the Bolsheviks organized unity and class solidarity of the workers and peasants in the oppressed and oppressing nations to fight the propertied classes that exploited their labor.

Even the seizure of state power and the setting up a government that defended the right of self-determination, however, did



1913 photo of “bachi”—cross-dressed, feminine boy dancers—in Samarkand, second-largest city in Uzbekistan.

not end racism, national chauvinism or anti-Semitism among “Great Russians” with a single blow. The effort to eradicate every vestige of national oppression and the attitudes it engendered was a process, and an uneven one.

And there had been as yet no thorough historical materialist view of sexuality. The painstaking task of examining questions of society and culture in order to weed out bigotry and superstition that had resulted from centuries of ruling-class ideology was severely impeded by the relentless imperialist onslaught.

The Soviet Union had no Homosexual Emancipation Movement like the one that had arisen in Germany and had gathered and archived vast cross-cultural, cross-historical information about the sexes, gender expression and sexuality.

Sexual exploitation

Laws were enacted against sodomy and the keeping of “bachi”—cross-dressed, feminine boy dancers kept as prostitutes—in the Soviet Republics of Azerbaijan in 1923, Uzbekistan in 1926 and Turkmenistan in 1927.

The 1928 Uzbek Soviet Socialist Republic criminal code, for example, grouped eight laws against male same-sex relations with others adopted against “survivals of primitive custom.”

The role of Russian national chauvinism and backward attitudes towards same-sex love and what today would be called “transgender” needs to be thoroughly examined. The greatest contributions, of course, will be made by revolutionary researchers from those nationalities, who can disentangle historical forms of gender expression and sexuality in their historical context—both ancient and enduring—from forms of commercial exploitation that arose with the development of class relations.

The struggle against sexual exploitation was an important focus of these Soviet laws.

Healey gives the most thoughtful account of this aspect of the laws’ intent. “Just as revolutionary jurists had rejected the criminalization of female prostitutes in the Russian republic, in Uzbek and Turkmen law the male prostitute himself was not banned, but virtually every other aspect of the masculine sex trade was prohibited.” (“Desire”)

Healey elaborates, “The men who kept youthful male prostitutes were regarded by Bolshevik legal drafters as class aliens, capitalists making deals with families to maintain male children and youths, ‘educating’ their charges, and exploiting them sexually while providing public entertainment. In their first Soviet criminal code of 1927, Bolshevik jurists in the Turkmen SSR adopted similar but less elaborate language, primarily directed against those who committed offenses involving bachi who were minors.”

And, “In Uzbekistan, the sexual harassment of men was made a crime, in language that mirrored the Russian republic’s pathbreaking 1923 statute protecting women from the same offense.”

Next: Soviet 1920s: Lesbians, transgenders and transsexuals

Lesbian ♦ gay ♦ bi
and trans
PRIDE
SERIES
PART
11

IPROLETARIOS Y OPRIMIDOS DE TODOS LOS PAÍSES, UNÍOS!

MUNDO OBRERO

Capitalismo lleno de contradicciones y crisis:

Se acercan días tormentosos para el movimiento sindical

Por Milt Neidenberg

¿Va a calmar la aprehensión de Wall Street, Washington y la América corporativa los comentarios alentadores de Alan Greenspan, presidente de la Junta de la Reserva Federal (JRF), luego de la decisión de la junta de subir la tasa de interés al 1,25 por ciento?

El reciente testimonio bianual de Greenspan al Congreso describió cómo la expansión de la economía está siendo “auto sustentada” y se ha vuelto “amplia en su base”, mientras que “la reciente debilidad en los gastos de los consumidores... debe ser de corta duración”. (Wall Street Journal, 21 de julio)

Sin embargo, los mercados de valores están tensos. Recientemente el Promedio Industrial Dow Jones cayó debajo del nivel de 10.000. Los índices Standard and Poor 500 y la bolsa electrónica NASDAQ perdieron terreno. Todos están peligrosamente cerca de los niveles más bajos del año, una señal que los mercados están pasando por una vía dificultosa.

Durante una discusión de una sesión del Comité sobre la Banca del Senado, le pidieron a Greenspan hacer un comentario sobre una declaración él había hecho sobre una tasa de interés “neutral” que ni provoca inflación ni frena la economía. Greenspan respondió, “Ud. puede saber si está por encima o por debajo, pero hasta que llegue, no se puede decir por seguro. ... Cuando estemos en el punto neutral, lo vamos a saber”.

Greenspan necesita un curso de Marxismo básico. En realidad no hay tal fenómeno como una tasa de interés “neutral” que ni provoca inflación ni frena la economía. Una tasa de interés “neutral” implica estabilidad, equilibrio y la capacidad del Banco Federal de la Reserva de afinar con precisión la economía. Nada puede estar más lejos de la verdad.

No hay ni siquiera una manera para medir los trillones y trillones (millones y millones de millones) valor del dinero de papel en distintas formas—en efectivo, bonos, notas promisorias, etc.—que se está utilizando a diario en el intercambio de artículos de consumo alrededor del mundo.

Capitalismo: todo menos estable

Las tasas de interés son una forma de capital prestado endémico de un sistema capitalista activado por el endeudamiento. Estas tasas de interés determinan el precio del dinero que se presta, y fluctúan constantemente.

Los capitalistas tienen que tomar prestado en medio de la guerra global, competitiva, brutal, y caótica para encontrar compradores para sus productos nacional e internacionalmente. La anarquía en la producción lo rige todo.

Bajo el sistema del capitalismo de monopolio, la inflación de precios es un síntoma de inestabilidad. Y la manipulación de la moneda—lo que la JRF está haciendo al subir las tasas de interés— es un síntoma de la inestabilidad inherente en el sistema capitalista en su totalidad.

Cuando sube el costo de los préstamos, los precios de los artículos de consumo también suben, creando ganancias para los gigantescos bancos y los monopolios corporativos. La inflación generalizada crece directamente resultado del aumento desenfrenado en los precios de los productos de los monopolios y de los gastos militares.

Esto es precisamente lo que está ocurriendo actualmente, al subir el déficit comercial de los EEUU a nivel nunca antes visto.

La JRF habla por los bancos más grandes y por la América corporativa. Es el banco central y el funcionario clave de la política monetaria que manipula las tasas de interés para servir a sus amos capitalistas. Estos amos no quieren escuchar palabras imprecisas ni tonterías de parte del presidente de la JRF. Tampoco quieren los millones de inversionistas que intercambian trillones de dólares en las varias bolsas y mercados de acciones, bonos, monedas y artículos de consumo.

Sólo puede hacer sentirles más nerviosos que la JRF

no sepa cómo responder a este período inflacionario. Según un titular en el New York Times del 21 de julio, “Greenspan Dice Tasas Pueden Subir Rápidamente”. Cuán alto van a subir, nadie sabe.

Esto es una mala noticia para los trabajadores y en particular los oprimidos—negr@s, latin@as, l@s no sindicalizad@s y l@s indocumentad@s.

El artículo de la portada del New York Times del 18 de julio explicó esto con el título: “Salarios en EE.UU. no Igualan Alza en Precios”. El artículo explica que “(los) ingresos por hora de trabajadores de producción—trabajadores no gerenciales que van desde enfermer@s y maestr@s hasta emplead@s de restaurantes de comida ligera y trabajador@s de fábricas de ensambladura cayeron 1,1 por ciento en junio después de calcular la inflación. ... luego de una reducción de un promedio de 13 minutos en la semana de trabajo, el declive en la paga por hora el mes pasado redujo profundamente los salarios de l@s trabajador@s”.

Con aumentos en el costo de la leche, el alquiler de viviendas, transportación, medicina y otras necesidades, y mientras que sigue aumentando el endeudamiento por las tarjetas de crédito, las condiciones de l@s trabajador@s y l@s oprimid@s están llegando a ser críticas.

Capitalistas ladrones amontonan ganancias

Hasta Greenspan mismo observó en su testimonio ante el Congreso que “(las) ganancias corporativas han sido tan altas que las empresas podrían ofrecer salarios más altos sin tener que subir los precios a los consumidores”.

Las corporaciones no financieras nombradas en el índice de acciones Standard and Poor 500 controlan \$550 billones (mil millones) en efectivo y seguridades de corto plazo. “Las empresas estadounidenses tienen más efectivo en mano hoy que lo que han tenido desde la Segunda Guerra Mundial”, escribió un analista financiero. (New York Times, 22 de julio)

La General Motors reportó ganancias en el segundo trimestre de \$1,3 billones, 49 por ciento más que en el año pasado. La corporación hizo un pago de \$7 por acción a sus principales accionistas.

La General Electric confirmó que tenía \$138,3 billones en efectivo y seguridades comercializables como bonos del Tesoro (Treasury bills), así como acciones que pueden ser convertidas en efectivo fácilmente.

La decisión de Microsoft de pagar \$32 billones en bonos y dividendos a sus accionistas de más altos ingresos es el pago más grande en la historia corporativa ayudado por la reducción en impuestos de Bush.

Los jefes de estas corporaciones y los miembros en sus juntas directivas se han vuelto banqueros, amontonando cantidades incontables de efectivo en finanzas evasivas y otros fondos especulativos que están totalmente fuera de los controles gubernamentales. Están compitiendo con bancos como Citigroup, J.P. Morgan Chase y otras instituciones financieras que invierten y especulan en las bolsas de valores.

Durante el último año, las empresas GM, Ford, y GE han recibido la mayoría de sus ganancias de los departamentos financieros de sus imperios industriales.

La producción excesiva, debido al incremento sin precedente en la productividad, el aumento de velocidad en la producción y la alta tecnología, ha saturado los mercados mundiales. Un 25 por ciento de la capacidad industrial de los EE.UU. está inactivo. Los magnates industriales están siendo forzados a unir sus empresas o a suspender nuevas inversiones en las plantas y en otros medios de producción.

Estas corporaciones están en gran peligro. El marxismo se refiere a esta forma concentrada de comprar y vender bonos, acciones y otros instrumentos de capital financiero, “capital ficticio”. Durante crisis y otros trastornos como guerras imperialistas y recesiones, el capital ficticio pierde su valor a una velocidad catastrófica.

Los parásitos de las altas finanzas están ignorando estos peligros. Están succionando el valor líquido de las

corporaciones por medio de salarios ejecutivos obscenos, bonos y opciones de acciones exageradas mientras reducen la fuerza laboral y los salarios, pensiones y seguros de salud.

No tienen la menor intención de volver a emplear a l@s trabajador@s despedid@s o de emplear otr@s nuev@s.

Explotación capitalista se intensifica

La innovación tecnológica, la reestructuración, la subcontratación, el uso de prisoner@s como mano de obra barata y la contratación de talleres de súper explotación no sindicalizados aquí e internacionalmente ha forzado el despido de trabajador@s mejor pagad@s de la manufactura hacia trabajos con menores salarios o simplemente a la calle. Afectad@s particularmente son personas miembr@s de nacionalidades oprimidas, l@s no sindicalizad@s y l@s indocumentad@s. Ya no pueden comprar ni las cosas básicas que producen, especialmente en un período inflacionario.

En un artículo del New York Times del 22 de julio, Stephen S. Roach, economista en jefe de la empresa gigantesca de Wall Street, Morgan Stanley, confirma con hechos y estadísticas que los trabajos se han movido hacia el lado más bajo del espectro. “Por industria, ocurre que las fuentes de empleos más grandes son restaurantes, agencias de empleos temporales, y servicios para edificios... la contratación también se ha acelerado en tiendas de ropas, servicios de mensajeros, hoteles, bodegas, negocios de transporte de mercancía, hospitales, agencias de trabajo social y lavanderías... hay declives profundos en las cifras de trabajadores de producción que laboran principalmente en fábricas de manufactura”.

La composición de la fuerza laboral ha cambiado fundamentalmente a trabajador@s con menos salarios, en las industrias de servicio representada por muchas nacionalidades y son en su mayoría abrumadora inmigrantes. Muchas son mujeres.

La cuestión crítica de hoy

Esto requiere una reestructuración dramática de la AFL-CIO con sus 13 millones de miembr@s y una nueva estrategia de lucha.

Cambios están comenzando a ocurrir.

La reciente fusión de los 180.000 miembr@s de UNITE, el sindicato de trabajadores de la industria de la aguja, y de l@s emplead@s industriales y técnic@s, con los 260.000 miembr@s del sindicato de empleados de hoteles y restaurantes (HERE) para formar UNITE HERE señala una dirección correcta.

Trabajando conjuntamente con el sindicato de trabajadores de las industrias de servicio (SEIU por las siglas en inglés), el sindicato más grande de la AFL-CIO con más de 1,6 millones de miembr@s, han formado una alianza que se llama la Sociedad de la Nueva Unidad (NUP por las siglas en inglés). Esa alianza también incluye el Sindicato Internacional de Trabajadores de Norteamérica (Laborers International Union of North America) y la Hermandad Unida de Carpinteros, que ya no pertenece al AFL-CIO.

Andy Stern, presidente del SEIU, es el vocero más locuaz del NUP. Stern ha llamado a una amplia campaña para sindicalizar a l@s emplead@s de Wal-Mart.

A la misma vez, el llamado a una Marcha de un Millón de Obreros (MMO) en Washington, para el 17 de octubre, está extendiéndose e involucrando a sectores de trabajador@s, comunidades y del movimiento anti-guerra.

¿Pueden los cambios comenzando en la AFL-CIO y la MMO encontrar terreno común? Esta es la cuestión crítica de hoy.

¿Ensoberdecirá la demagogia chillona de los partidos capitalistas y sus candidatos presidenciales, George W. Bush y John Kerry el diálogo entre estas corrientes progresistas?

Una entrevista con Andy Stern en el Washington Post del 26 de julio indica que se están originando diferencias

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