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## AUG. 15 REFERENDUM

# Venezuelans mobilize to defend revolution

## Latin Americans resist U.S. intervention

By Berta Joubert-Ceci

When the people of Venezuela cast their ballots on Aug. 15 in a presidential recall referendum, they will not be alone. Thousands of supporters of the Bolivarian Revolution worldwide, and particularly in countries of the Caribbean, Central and South America, are planning multiple events in what promises to be the largest election vigil in history.

Under the slogan, "If I were Venezuelan, I would vote for Chávez," this campaign opposing the recall of President Hugo Chávez is planning events during the week preceding the election as well as massive solidarity gatherings on election day—Sunday, Aug. 15. Most of the actions will be at Venezuelan consulates and embassies where Venezuelans residing in those cities will be casting their votes.

It is expected that thousands of expatriate Venezuelans around the world will take advantage of this right to vote outside their homeland that is guaranteed under the 1999 Bolivarian constitution. One of the largest external Venezuelan communities is in Miami, Fla. Event organizers want to make sure that when those Venezuelans who oppose President Hugo Chávez vote, hoping to drive him out of office, they can see that there is wide support for Chávez internationally.

Other targets will be U.S. embassies and consulates, to expose Washington's complicity with the opposition and its role as the force behind the 2002 coup attempt in Venezuela and the later attempt to sabotage the nationalized oil company, PDVSA.

The recall referendum is a constitutional right absent from almost every other country's constitution. It can be set into motion if citizens feel that an elected official is not fulfilling the role for which he or she was elected. Those opposing the official must get the signatures of 20 percent of the registered electorate to call a referendum.

Despite many attempts, including a military coup, Venezuela's oligarchy has failed up to now to oust Chávez and roll back the gains of the revolutionary process, so it has turned to the referendum.

Oil is the most important industry in Venezuela, which is the fifth-largest oil exporter in the world. Even though a state oil company has existed for some time, the wealthy capitalists and landowners through their control of the political parties and the state were able to skim off the wealth from the country's resources, oil in particular. They ruled on behalf of their bank accounts and those of their senior partners, the mostly U.S.-based transnational corporations, selling them oil at very low prices. The U.S. imports 10 per-

**WWP CANDIDATES: 'Stand with Chávez & the Venezuelan people!' 9**

cent of its oil from Venezuela.

The masses never benefited from the country's oil income. Hunger, unemployment, illiteracy and lack of health care kept most of the people in absolute misery.

After Chávez won the 1998 presidential election, the Bolivarian Revolution that he initiated started to change that equation. The profits of PDVSA now revert to the people in services and many programs to increase their quality of life. With these programs—or "missions," as they are known in Venezuela—to provide the people with housing, health care, education and employment for the poor majority, the revolution has won the support of a loyal and combative majority. Right now, it is concentrating on a mass literacy campaign for the many millions of poor people who cannot read or write.

Thousands of people formerly excluded from society, like the Indigenous nations, now form an active part not only of society but of the country's leadership. Wayúu nation leader Noelí Pocaterra's post as second vice-president of the National Assem-

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South Koreans demonstrate in Seoul to stop deployment of troops to Iraq. See article, page 6.

PHOTO: JINBO.NET

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*This week ...*

## Frank 'Big Black' Smith dies

# Remembering the heroic Attica prison rebellion

By Ellie Dorritie

Frank "Big Black" Smith, one of the leaders of the 1971 rebellion at Attica Prison and a fervent community activist and paralegal struggling for justice in the criminal and civil-rights trials that followed, died in early August after a long battle with cancer. He was 70.

A memorial celebration will be scheduled for the fall in New York City.

Big Black was chosen by his brother prisoners as Chief of Security during the intense days of the rebellion at Attica, in which 1,500 prisoners held the state of New York in a standoff Sept. 9-13, 1971.

The standoff ended when 1,000 state troopers, sheriff's deputies and prison guards armed with automatic weapons and gas stormed the prison, under orders from New York Gov. Nelson Rockefeller. They killed 29 inmates and 10 guards held as hostages, while wounding at least 86 other people.

News outlets across the country reported official lies as if they were objective facts, proclaiming that the rebellious prisoners slit the throats of the hostages when the troopers began their assault. Only when autopsies later revealed that no throats had been cut did authorities admit that the state did the killing.

After they'd charged in shooting, troopers and guards proceeded to beat and torture those prisoners who were still alive. The wounded were left without medical care. The troopers singled out Frank "Big Black" Smith because of his leadership role.

He was released from the prison in 1973. He became a leader of the Attica Defense Committee, which defended prisoners charged with crimes during the rebellion. He also worked as a youth and drug counselor in New York City.

### Inmates won civil lawsuit

Along with attorneys, he was a key coordinator of a 26-year civil action lawsuit brought by Attica inmates.

Their efforts made possible the release of more than a million Attica-related files that state authorities claimed did not exist. In the end, prisoners won a \$12 million settlement.

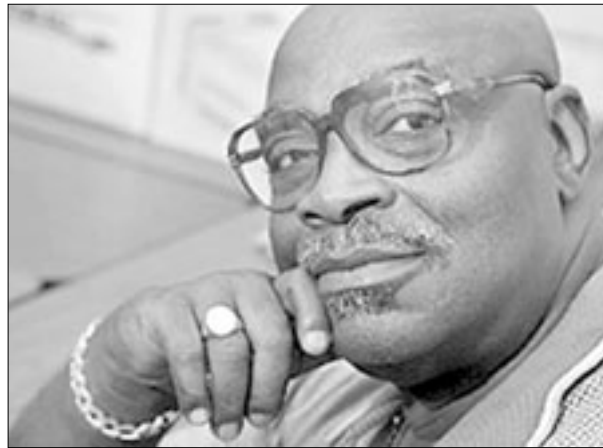
Today, with prisons in this country overflowing with over 2 million working-class youths, overwhelmingly Black, Latin@ and Native, and with conditions inside worse than ever—it's worthwhile to look back to Attica.

When the prisoners took over D Yard at Attica Prison, they provided an example of class solidarity, unity, and worker consciousness that is more relevant than ever today. They showed that the workers, including the most oppressed—those literally in chains—have the potential to shake the ruling class and fight the system.

Rockefeller—grandchild of John D. Rockefeller, the most notorious robber baron of them all, and himself a direct representative of the billionaire ruling class—ran the state prisons as forced labor camps.

During the rebellion, all the prisoners, Black, Latino, Native, white, stood united. They presented a list of 27 demands covering legal rights and repression, work, food and hygiene, and other crucial issues.

Four key demands went to the crux of the rebellion—and demonstrated the prisoners' high political consciousness. They demanded that the warden be removed. They



Frank "Big Black" Smith, one of the leaders of the 1971 rebellion at Attica Prison.

demanded that all participants in the uprising receive full amnesty. They demanded union recognition.

And they demanded safe passage out of the United States to a non-imperialist country.

Fully aware that the state authorities were enraged and preparing to crush the rebellion, the prisoners then called for an observers' committee to come to Attica.

The year before the Attica uprising broke out, a group called the Prisoners Solidarity Committee had been organized by Youth Against War and Fascism, the youth arm of Workers World Party. The PSC was formed in response to a request for help from prisoners at Auburn, N.Y. When the Auburn 6 went to trial, PSC members had demonstrated in support of them, even in blizzard conditions.

When the Attica rebellion broke out, the PSC moved quickly to raise money and rent buses so prisoners' relatives could get to the prison compound.

When the Attica brothers in D Block called for formation of the observers' committee, they requested a PSC representative be part of it. Prisoners trusted the PSC delegate, Tom Soto, to get their messages to their families and friends. PSC organizers helped give voice to the prisoners' demands. While Soto was inside with the prisoners, a PSC delegation was outside demonstrating unconditional support for the prisoners' demands.

Also in the observers' committee were representatives of the Black Panther Party, the Young Lords Party, New York State Assemblymember Arthur O. Eve, lawyer William Kunstler and others.

Prisoners are the most oppressed, most ill-treated, most brutalized segment in this racist society. But Attica proved that revolutionary people can change the world.

For five days in 1971, thanks to the brothers at Attica, workers and oppressed people got a glimpse of what could be possible, if the workers could take over in a struggle with the ruling class: working to create a humane society, unity and class solidarity, rejection of racism, and workers' control.

After living through the horror of the Attica bloodshed and its traumatic immediate aftermath during which guards tortured him for hours with cigarettes, hot shell casings, threats of castration and death, a glass-strewn gauntlet and Russian roulette, Frank Smith looked back with complete clarity. "Attica was about wants and needs," he said in an interview three decades later. "Attica was a lot about class and a lot about race." □

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### LOS ANGELES

**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.

### NEW YORK

**Fri., Aug. 13**  
 Workers World Party meeting: Hear Dianne Mathiowetz, WWP leader in Atlanta, on the significance of Cynthia McKinney's electoral victory against racist reaction. Program will also include update on the week of resistance against the Republican Convention. 7 pm. (Dinner at 6:30) At 55 W. 17 St., 5th Fl., Manhattan. For info (212) 627-2994.

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# Activists prepare for week of resistance against RNC

By Julie Fry  
New York

On Aug. 30, the Bush administration and thousands of Republicans will descend on New York City for the Republican National Convention. Tens of thousands of workers and oppressed people will be there to confront them.

President George W. Bush's vicious, reactionary program has prompted a massive response from all sectors of the progressive movement. Some of the events planned in response to the RNC include anti-war actions, immigrant-rights activities, a women's march, a youth convergence, a labor demonstration, and mobilizations of poor and oppressed communities.

The Republicans chose to hold their convention in New York in the hope that they would benefit from stirring up racist, nationalist sentiment around the issue of Sept. 11. However, instead of being greeted by flag-waving war supporters as they had hoped, the convention delegates will be confronted by New Yorkers as well as workers and oppressed people from all over the United States who have suffered under the Bush regime.

The Republicans and their wealthy supporters will be celebrating in a city where only half of African American men hold regular jobs.

Homeless shelters in the city are overflowing.

Oppressed communities continue to face brutal police repression.

The situation in New York is representative of hundreds of cities and towns across the country that face economic devastation as well as political repression.

A poll cited by the local ABC-TV affiliate on Aug. 8 noted that 83 percent of New Yorkers are opposed to the Republicans holding their convention here.

Many of the forces mobilizing against the RNC support the Democratic Party as an alternative to the brutal, anti-people agenda of Bush. However, a smaller but important sector of activists recognize that Sen. John Kerry and the Democrats are part of the same imperialist apparatus responsible for the war and attacks on people's rights in the United States.

Many of these activists joined thousands of others who demonstrated against the Democratic National Convention in Boston in July.

## War Crimes Tribunal kicks off protests

The International Action Center is organizing an Iraq War Crimes Tribunal, which will take place in New York on Aug. 26, to put the Bush administration and U.S. government on trial for war crimes against the Iraqi people.

The tribunal will give participants the opportunity to hear a detailed account of the U.S. government's crimes against Iraq. Eyewitnesses and experts from around the world are coming to testify about the human, economic and environmental devastation caused by the Bush administration's illegal war and by years of criminal sanctions enforced by both Republicans and Democrats.

The event will include reports from representatives of other tribunals that have taken place around the world. Representatives from Haiti, Korea, the Philippines, Palestine and other countries that have been devastated by U.S. imperialist aggression will also be featured.

There will also be testimony from U.S. soldiers who refuse to participate in the occupation, and from labor representatives explaining the war's devastating effect on workers.

The tribunal will give activists who plan

to participate in the rest of the anti-RNC activities a clear and thorough explanation of the Bush administration's crimes—and of the motives behind the U.S. government's longstanding aggression against the Iraqi people.

Also, the tribunal will give people an opportunity to do something that no bourgeois political party would do: hold Bush and his cronies responsible for the crimes they are committing against the people of the world.

Tribunal organizers have created a web site, [www.peoplejudgebush.org](http://www.peoplejudgebush.org), for information about the tribunal. In addition, the IAC has made its office in New York available as a resistance center to be used by activists during the RNC. The IAC plans to participate in and support many of the activities.

## Police lockdown in NYC

During the Democratic National Convention, Boston spent tens of millions of dollars on a militarized police force that used snipers and razor wire fences to keep demonstrators away from the convention.

The New York Daily News reports that New York City likewise plans to spend \$76 million on convention security. The streets around Madison Square Garden, site of the convention, will be completely locked down. Commuters are being told that train and subway service will be disrupted.

Last week, the Bush administration escalated the panic over RNC security by announcing a "terror alert" for the New York City area. It was supposedly based on new information about a plot against financial companies in and near the city. The next day, though, Homeland Security Secretary Tom Ridge admitted that most of the information on which the alert was based was three to four years old.

However, this admission came too late

to stop the mainstream media from trying to pump up fear over the possibility of a terrorist attack.

This latest "alert" is part of a long pattern of excuses put forward by the state to justify a massive police presence and denying the right to demonstrate. Similar "terror alerts" were used to try to stop massive numbers of anti-war demonstrators from marching in New York on February 15, 2003.

The police and media have also tried to demonize the protesters themselves. In July the New York Daily News ran a front-page story that accused anarchists of plotting against city subways. Although the story cited only anonymous postings on a web site as its source, it was picked up by all of the local news programs and national cable news stations like CNN.

One of the main struggles developing out of the police repression against RNC protestors concerns the major anti-war demonstration scheduled to take place on Aug. 29, called by United for Peace and Justice (UFPJ).

The group originally requested to march past the convention site and rally in Central Park. After denying permits for demonstrations to any groups for months, city officials then insisted that the Aug. 29 rally could only take place on the isolated West Side Highway. March organizers initially agreed to this; on Aug. 10, with many activists fed up with the police restrictions on their civil liberties, they announced they would demand Central Park.

On Aug. 7 national ANSWER announced a Sept. 2 demonstration "in solidarity with the Palestinian people, the Haitian people, and others who are resisting U.S. occupation. The demonstration will begin with a rally at 5 p.m. at the Israeli Mission to the United Nations, at 43rd St. and Second Ave." □

## Asian, Pacific Islanders organize

# Rally for same-sex marriage in SF

By LeiLani Dowell  
San Francisco

The Asian-Pacific Islander community held its first-ever rally in support of same-sex marriage Aug. 8 in San Francisco. The fog of San Francisco's Sunset District could not dampen the mood of participants in an action organizers called "Summer of Love 2004."

The 2000 U.S. Census states that Asians and Pacific Islanders make up 31.33 percent of the population in San Francisco.

Gary Chen of the Gay Asian Pacific Alliance told the crowd: "We as gay Asians understand the ignorance and prejudice placed upon us. ... We are here to show we have a voice, and we will continue speaking out. This is just a starting step."

Chen said the rally was organized because members believed that Asian voices were unheard around the issue. He said he was overwhelmed that so many share GAPA's vision of equality and community.

Mabel Teng, general assessor-recorder for the City of San Francisco, was the keynote speaker for the event. Born and raised in Hong Kong, Teng in 1994 became the first Chinese-American to serve on the San Francisco Board of Supervisors. She officiated in the first same-sex marriage

ceremonies in San Francisco in February of this year.

Teng told the audience that she wholeheartedly supports gay marriage because she remembers the time when Chinese were only allowed to attend one public school in San Francisco, the Commodore Stockton school, then called the Oriental School. She emphasized that there can be no equality where there is segregation and separation.

Zaji Gershon Lieberman, a 10-year-old Chinese daughter of lesbian parents, echoed Teng's sentiments. "My moms have been together for 24 years but can't get married," she said. "In the old days, they used to have laws against Chinese families. Now there's laws against gay marriage, but I know that will change."

Patricia Lin, a Taiwanese Jewish American, spoke about the next day's anniversary of the atomic bomb dropped by the United States over Nagasaki, Japan. San Francisco Board of Supervisors member Bevan Dufty said that the future of San Francisco lies in the API community and urged equality in immigration rights for lesbian-gay-bi-trans partners. Andy Wong of Community United Against Violence said the API people have always been present in the struggle for same-sex marriage.

API couples who had been married on that historic Valentine's Day weekend in



WWPHOTO: BRENDA SANDBURG

Jeanne Fong and Jennifer Lin, center, surrounded by family members at San Francisco rally Aug. 8.

San Francisco this year participated in the Aug. 8 demonstration, along with their families and friends. People held signs reading "love is gender blind" in Japanese, Chinese and English.

As much a fight-back rally as a celebration, the event commenced with the married couples tossing bouquets into the crowd, a symbol of their commitment to make same-sex marriage a con-

crete reality for all.

Sponsors of the event included the Gay Asian Pacific Alliance, Asian & Pacific Islander Wellness Center, Asian Pacific American Coalition for Equality, National Center for Lesbian Rights, and the Asian Pacific Islander Queer Women & Transgender Coalition. The event was supported by 70 other API and gay rights organizations. □



## Is U.S. heading toward stagnation?

# Jobs data reverses Wall St. optimism

By Milt Neidenberg

Oops! They've done it again. How wrong can they get?

Wall Street pundits had expected a payroll growth of 215,000 new jobs for July. Instead, the Labor Department reported 32,000 jobs, the smallest increase since last December.

The government also revised its previous estimate for May and June downward by 61,000 jobs.

The July 2 Wall Street Journal reported that its survey of 55 forecasters predicted that the "U.S. economy will enjoy steady expansion for the rest of this year, thanks in part to industrial growth taking off, with unemployment falling and the inflation rate abating."

So what happened?

Prices are rising rapidly. Oil is \$44 a barrel. Food, transportation, housing and other necessities are spiking. So is the cost of borrowing. The Federal Reserve Board raised interest rates again on Aug. 10.

The Standard & Poor's 500 stock index is off 4.3 percent for the year. It's at the lowest level since December.

The Dow Jones industrial average is down 6.1 percent for the year and at its lowest since last November.

And the NASDAQ composite index, reflecting the uncertainties in the technology sector, is down 11.3 percent. This is its lowest since August of last year.

How many billions of dollars shareholders have lost, mainly among the middle class, is unaccountable. And the markets continue to roil with uncertainty.

Federal Reserve Chair Alan Greenspan told the Senate Banking Committee on July 20 that "July seems to be somewhat better even though we are going through a soft patch. ... There is no real underlying evidence of any cumulative weakness here."

Since then the Wall Street prophets have contradicted Greenspan. The Aug. 6 Wall Street Journal worried, "The weak job numbers raised the prospect that recent economic weakness is more than just a soft

spot as Mr. Greenspan has referred to it, but a sign that something more fundamental is undermining the expansion."

They are all looking at the same tons of economic data. Some call it a momentary blip. Others see the end of a growth period. What and who are the investors to believe?

The truth is that the cumulative evidence is indisputable. Consumer spending, two-thirds of the Gross Domestic Product, is dropping at an alarming rate as wages are not keeping up with the rate of inflation. In addition, interest rate refinancing for home owners is running out of steam as the Fed continues to raise interest rates. And the huge budget deficit is turning into a fiscal drag that has made it impossible to stimulate the economy.

### An army of unemployed in the making

According to Louis Uchitelle in the Aug. 2 New York Times, a government report found that "layoffs occurred at the second fastest rate on record during the first three years of the Bush administration. ... That included the permanent dismissal of 11.4 million men and women age 20 or older. That is nearly equal to the 9 percent rate for the 1981-1983 period, which included the steepest contraction since the Great Depression."

President George W. Bush needs an average of almost 200,000 new jobs a month from now to December to avoid being the first president since Herbert Hoover, who held office during the opening years of the Great Depression, to preside over a job decline. Job growth for the first two months is now 55,000 and for the last three months was 106,000.

It is estimated that around 250,000 jobs per month would be required to keep pace with the entry of a working population into the job market. These are young people—high school and college graduates and dropouts who can't afford to go on with their education—who will have no job prospects. They will join the millions of the permanently displaced to constitute an army of the unemployed.

In another report, the Federal Reserve stated that consumer credit outstanding rose \$6.6 billion in June, to \$2,038 billion. Coupled with this, a Consumer Bankruptcy Project collected data that pointed out that bankruptcies for those in the 45 to 54 age group have increased by 58 percent from a year ago. The report focused on those in the middle income range. Bankruptcies for lower income workers are not included.

### The "lesser of two evils theory" is a no-win strategy

During a presidential campaign, the worlds of politics, economics, and markets become a maelstrom of deception, demagoguery and promises. After the disastrous employment statistics were announced, Bush told a conference of journalists of color: "Economic growth is strong and getting stronger."

Sen. John Kerry seized on the numbers with relish. He commented on those on the other side who say the economy has turned the corner, "Well it must have been a U-turn."

But is Kerry the friend of labor that he purports to be? He is surrounded by a sector of corporate and banking advisors like billionaires Warren Buffett and George Soros, and from the Clinton administration, former Secretary of the Treasury Robert Rubin, who is currently a partner in Goldman Sachs, a premier global investment bank.

Kerry has proposed raising the minimum wage from \$5.15 to a measly \$7.00 over two years. Such a small raise will only perpetuate poverty. Kerry also missed a crucial vote on extending unemployment benefits. Had he been present, his vote would have passed the extension. He has also disregarded the pension crisis facing millions of retirees and those who are close to retirement.

The Democratic candidate supports NAFTA and "free trade"—an imperialist hatchet job, which costs jobs at home and causes poverty abroad—while hypocritically appealing to employers to limit out-

sourcing of jobs. He backs the infamous Clinton welfare program that left millions of recipients without an economic safety net. Single mothers, primarily Black, Latina and other women of color, are without child care and living in shelters with no hope for decent housing for their young ones.

On the military front, while death and destruction of the Iraqi population goes on unabated and U.S. soldiers die and are wounded, there is not a dime of difference between the Bush and Kerry camp. That includes support for billions of dollars that end up as profits for Halliburton, Bechtel and fellow travelers.

Kerry has remained silent on the raids by the so-called Department of Homeland Security, the Justice Department, the FBI, on anyone they determine is foreign-born and suspicious, while their immigration services department harasses the undocumented. He has not spoken out against the repressive Patriot Act. He opposes same-sex marriage.

Kerry's chant during the Democratic National Convention that "hope and help are on the way" rings as hollow as the claim of Treasury Secretary John Snow, speaking for President Bush, that "the American economy is continuing on a path of growth and expansion and the president's tax relief continues to give momentum to that upward push."

However, there are signs that hope and help are on the way. The main sign is the Million Worker March movement. The planners, led by a number of African American labor union leaders, have called for an Oct. 17 march on Washington.

The capitalist "lesser of two evils theory" presents a no-win situation to the labor movement and its allies. The workers, the communities, the oppressed nationalities and the anti-war movement are suspicious of the capitalist chorus that shrieks out for faith in the two party system.

Other issue-oriented protest organizations are taking notice of the MWM. This class wide independent movement is getting legs. Build the MWM! □

## Victory for farm workers' rights

By Peter Gilbert  
Nashville, N.C.

Over 100 workers, organizers and community supporters packed the Nash County, N.C., Courthouse Aug. 2 to defend workers' right to meet with union organizers.

Francisco Heredia and Blake Pendergrass, two organizers with the Farm Labor Organizing Committee, faced charges of criminal trespass for meeting with immigrant workers at their labor camp.

Heredia and Pendergrass's statement attacked the local sheriff's role: "The Nash County Sheriff Department has chosen to violate farm workers' right to freely associate by knowingly arresting us on groundless charges. They maliciously colluded with an employer in his attempt to manipulate and dominate the private lives of hard-working people to maintain a racist system of repression and exploitation."

After being barred from the court for overfilling the courthouse, FLOC President Baldemar Velasquez led the workers in chants in Spanish and English.

Overwhelming community pressure forced the judge to recognize that the charges were illegal, and dismiss them.

According to the state's prosecutor, it was "not in the state's interest" to pursue the charges.

After the defendants were released, supporters and workers marched to the local Lowe's Foods grocery store and picketed, demanding the store honor their boycott of Mt. Olive Pickles. The mostly immigrant workers who pick cucumbers that become Mt. Olive Pickles called for a boycott to try to force the growers and Mt. Olive to recognize their right to form a union.

Workers in North Carolina make one-quarter to one-third what their unionized counterparts in Michigan and Ohio make for the same labor. And they live in slave-like conditions in labor camps where they are denied sanitation and adequate shelter.

Workers from these cucumber farms participated in last year's immigrant workers' freedom ride, and are expected to participate in the Million Worker March, which FLOC has endorsed. □

## Protest stops racist film

By Page Getz  
Los Angeles

The lights were out in the box office, but outside the Silent Movie Theater in West Los Angeles, the protesting organizations—including the International Action Center, Committee to Eliminate Media Offense To African People, National Black Anti-Defamation Association and the NAACP—clashed with the hostile crowd of patrons who were outraged when they found out the film showing of "Birth of a Nation" had been canceled.

The demonstration was called by CEMOTAP and the IAC.

For the second time in 10 years, the theater—the only one in the nation that shows silent films—had attempted to screen the film and then had to cancel as a result of public outcry. Many of the protesters feel "Birth of a Nation" is not just offensive to Black people, but that it is racist propaganda and not art.

Many historians attribute a surge in violence against Black people to the film. When it was first shown in 1915, even contemporaries of the filmmaker, D.W. Griffith, regarded the film as an embarrassment. It not only reinforced racist

Protest at attempt to show pro-KKK film

WW PHOTO:  
J. LA RIVA

stereotypes, it actually promoted lynching and glorified slavery.

Griffith's father was a Confederate soldier. Later in life, Griffith released another version of the film after cutting scenes that portrayed the KKK with seeming reverence. According to film critic Roger Ebert, Griffith was so immersed in racist culture that the film's offensive character had to be pointed out and explained to him.

According to the NAACP, from 1890 to 1960 more than 5,000 Black people were burned, shot or mutilated by lynch mobs—a figure widely considered to be conservative because often law enforcement failed to document lynchings.

The success of the protest is a sign that any attempt to even hint at bringing back such a period will be met with determined struggle. □



## A new movement

# Million Worker March to say: 'We need jobs—not war'

By Minnie Bruce Pratt

Organizers for the Million Worker March, to be held in Washington, D.C., on Oct. 17, are calling for an end to the war in Iraq—and an end to the war on working people in the United States.

Fliers for the MWM, now being widely distributed, bear the headline: "We Need Jobs—Not War!"

International Longshore & Warehouse Union Local 10 in San Francisco initiated the march. The members of Local 10, the home union of the 1934 general strike, have in recent years refused to unload ships to protest apartheid, police brutality and U.S. war drives.

There is a tremendous groundswell of support for the MWM, including a recent endorsement by Roger Toussaint, president of powerful Local 10 of the Transit Workers Union in New York City.

In a "president's message" to the TWU, Toussaint states the battle cry of this fighting union: "The words of Frederick Douglass ... are no less true today: 'Power concedes nothing without a demand. It never has, and it never will.'"

Sharon Black Ceci, coordinator for the Baltimore/Washington MWM region, said: "Workers from all walks of life are coming together to create not just a march, but a movement for an end to the war on workers everywhere, at home and abroad. People are joining from all communities and regions—immigrants and women, hip-hop youth and lesbian, gay, bi and trans people—from Northern California to North Carolina."

She stressed that undocumented immigrant workers are key to this struggle, since their status makes them more vulnerable to exploitation by employers and harassment by the state. She also noted that the high numbers of women, particularly women of color, now employed in lower-paying service jobs means that this Million Worker March will also be a women workers' march.

Endorsing and joining in the organizing are a wide range of organizations, including the Farm Labor Organizing Committee, the National Immigrant Solidarity Network, Women's Equity Agenda Project and the International Action Center.

Other endorsers are the Coalition of Black Trade Unionists, the South Carolina International Longshoremen's Association, California State Association of Letter Carriers and the Harlem Unemployment League, as well as locals of the North Carolina Public Service Workers Union, California Plumbers Union, United Food and Commercial Workers and National Writers Union.

### Grassroots support

The growing support for the march includes Council 92 of Region #2 of the State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME). This council, which comprises all of metropolitan Washington, Baltimore and surrounding counties, has endorsed along with many other AFSCME locals.

By doing so they are defying a letter issued by AFL-CIO President John J. Sweeney in which he discouraged locals from supporting the march. However, at

the grassroots level excitement over the march is building. Donna Dewitt, president of the South Carolina State Federation of Labor, AFL-CIO, has also endorsed.

And the 2.7 million-member National Education Association endorsed at its July convention.

Brenda Stokely, president of AFSCME District Council 1707—which represents 23,000 workers, mostly women and people of color working in home health and day care—is a co-convenor of the MWM in New York City, along with Chris Silvera, secretary-treasurer of Teamsters Joint Council 808 and president of the Black Caucus of the Teamsters.

At a July 25 anti-war protest march at the Democratic National Convention in Boston, Stokely said, "The Million Worker March is all about what Malcolm X said, 'Break the chains off of your mind' ... fight for your interests."

She continued, "Why do we have to beg the U.S., the richest country on earth, for health care when Cuba, after all the years of being embargoed, can provide free health care?"

### Oppose war at home and abroad

Larry Holmes, a national coordinator of the International Action Center and member of the ANSWER steering committee, said: "It is crucial that the anti-war movement support the Million Worker March, not only because the MWM is explicitly an anti-war march—one of its main demands is 'bring the troops home now'—but also because this bold project, initiated by some of the most dynamic and militant

leaders in the labor movement, needs the full support of all progressive forces."

The MWM organizers' statement, "Why We Are Marching," says: "Thirty-six years ago Martin Luther King Jr. summoned working people across America to a Poor Peoples' March on Washington to inaugurate 'a war on poverty at home.' He proclaimed: 'The United States government is one of the greatest purveyors of violence in the world.'

"The crisis facing working people today is even more acute. Under the cover of systematic lies and deception, wars of devastation have been launched at the expense of working people everywhere.

"In our name, a handful of the rich and powerful corporations have usurped our government. A corporate and banking oligarchy changes hats and occupies public office to wage class war on working people. ... The vast majority of working Americans are under siege."

The march's key demands include universal health care "from cradle to grave," a national living wage, guaranteed pensions, and a crackdown on the military budget for a recovery of the "trillions of dollars stolen from our labor to enrich the corporations that profit from war."

The MWM statement also calls for "an army of teachers" to combat illiteracy, an end to "the criminalization of poverty and the prison-industrial complex" through training programs, as well as amnesty for undocumented workers, and an end to "the pitting of workers against each other across national boundaries in a mad race to the bottom." □

## Freed from death row

# Aaron Patterson faces new frame-up

By Louis Paulsen  
Chicago

On Aug. 5, Chicago police and federal agents arrested Aaron Patterson—one of Chicago's best-known activists who was released from Illinois death row in January 2003—on charges of selling drugs and receiving guns from an informer known as "Fox." Two others were also charged.

"Fox" had other charges dropped and was paid \$6,000 for setting up Patterson. At his arraignment, Patterson charged that he had known "Fox" was an agent, and had been working with reporters and a film crew to make a documentary about police corruption.

Patterson was one of the victims of Jon Burge, Chicago police lieutenant and torturer who used techniques like suffocation and electric shock to extract "confessions" from African-American men. Patterson was convicted of murder in 1986 and sentenced to die on the basis of one such statement. Although Burge was fired in 1993, Cook County States Attorney Richard Devine has refused to admit responsibility for as many as 100 torture cases.

In a news conference, Devine called Patterson's arrest a "remarkable joint effort between federal and local prosecutors." But Patterson is a conscious political activist who the day after his pardon spoke to a demonstration of 2,000 against

the invasion of Iraq. (See WW, Jan. 23, 2003) Since that time he has been a tireless opponent of war, injustice and police brutality, and has run for Congress.

Patterson was arrested the day after Burge was ordered to testify in Patterson's lawsuit against the city for damages. Jo Ann Patterson, Aaron's mother said: "Aaron has been trying to correct the criminal justice system. He'd never be caught with any drugs or guns. I just see this as a whole revenge thing. They're trying to throw the lawsuit out the window."

Patterson is not the first to be hit with drug charges after exposing the Chicago police. In March of 1998, Jeremiah Mearday, who had been beaten by racist police and charged with "resisting arrest," had his charges dropped under public pressure. Two weeks later, he was framed on drug charges. He was acquitted only after a three-year battle.

Two months ago, May Molina, a leader of Families of the Wrongfully Convicted, was arrested on questionable drug charges. She died in police custody after being denied her prescription medicines.

For news on court appearances and other events, check [www.chicago.indymedia.org](http://www.chicago.indymedia.org) or contact Fred Hampton Jr. at (773) 426-3900. □



# MOVE 9, Mumia — still strong

By Minnie Bruce Pratt

On Aug. 8 the African American political prisoners known as the MOVE 9 completed 26 years of incarceration.

They were jailed with sentences of 30 to 100 years after Philadelphia police attacked their headquarters in 1978.

The Nine are Chuck Africa, Debbie Africa, Delbert Africa, Edward Africa, Janet Africa, Janine Africa, Mike Africa and Phil Africa—and Merle Africa, who died in prison in 1998 under suspicious circumstances.

MOVE, founded in the early 1970s by John Africa, emphasizes the connection among human, community and environmental health. Its work has included helping homeless and elderly people, paroled prisoners, and individuals with drug and alcohol addictions.

MOVE has also led many militant demonstrations against the racist and rampant brutality of the Philadelphia police. During the 1970s, Philadelphia was noted for the brutal reign of Mayor and former Police Commissioner Frank Rizzo. The mainstream media demonized MOVE, using rumors and biased coverage and preparing the way for the 1978 assault.

The nine were convicted for the death of a policeman during that raid, although in a history of MOVE Marjorie Karpovich points out that the presiding judge conceded he had no idea who had actually shot the officer.

In May 1985, state and local authorities again targeted the group. Police staged a

military assault on the MOVE house using tear gas, water cannons, shotguns and machine guns.

Within an hour and a half, they fired 10,000 rounds of ammunition. A helicopter dropped a bomb on the roof of the house.

The resulting fire burned down an entire city block of 60 homes.

Six adults and five children died.

Ramona Africa, the only adult survivor, was sentenced to seven years in prison.

MOVE supporter Mumia Abu-Jamal, a journalist and former Black Panther, is a political prisoner known worldwide as the "voice of the voiceless." Abu-Jamal was railroaded to Pennsylvania's death row in 1982 for the killing of a Philadelphia police officer. On July 15, the NAACP passed an emergency resolution for the overturn of his conviction and death sentence, demanding he be granted a new and fair trial.

On the anniversary of their jailing, Janine, Janet and Deb Africa, the three surviving MOVE 9 women, issued a statement: "Remember, the fight the MOVE organization is waging in the courts and prisons is for your sons and daughters too—the drugs, the beatings, the mental cruelty.... Unless you are rich, you and your children are not immune.... MOVE is committed to putting an end to these conditions, not only in the prisons, but outside the prisons as well." □



## Oppose occupation of Iraq

# S. Koreans fight to stop troop deployment

By Deirdre Griswold

Leaning on the South Korean government to send 3,000 more troops to Iraq isn't going to save the situation in that insurgent country for the Bush administration, but it certainly is alienating huge numbers of Korean people.

Pilots, mechanics, service workers and flight attendants have refused to contribute their skills to the airlifting of Korean troops to the Middle East.

On June 22, at least 20 lawmakers from three political parties, including the government party, started a rolling sit-in at the National Assembly hall calling for the president to rescind his decision.

And on July 23 the Emergency National Movement Against Troop Dispatch to Iraq, which counts on the support of 351 civic organizations, started a hunger strike—in which fully

100,000 Koreans pledged to participate.

The next day, thousands of people gathered for a march on the Blue House—the presidential building—where they planned to set up a human chain. But riot police blocked the march and several protesters were injured and/or arrested.

The protests continued. Han Sang-ryol, representative of a civic group for the reunification of Korea, said at a July 26 rally near the U.S. Embassy in Seoul, “The root of the problem of the dispatch of troops to Iraq

lies in the South Korea-U.S. alliance, by which the U.S. subjugates our nation, and therefore such an alliance should be renounced.”

On Aug. 3, police clashed with demonstrators at yet another protest near the Blue House. Fierce fighting led to more

injuries on both sides. At the same time, hundreds of students tried to march on a military airport on the southern outskirts of Seoul.

They managed to erect a banner reading “Scrap S. Korea-U.S. alliance” on top of a barricade of buses riot police had set

up to block them from entering the gate to the airport.

President Roh Moo-hyun was re-elected in April after surviving a rightist-inspired effort to unseat him through impeachment. Many of those voting for him undoubtedly thought that Roh, a liberal with a background as a labor lawyer, might use his increased political strength—his party now commanded a majority in the parliament—to resist U.S. demands. But even after the June killing of South Korean interpreter Kim Sun-il, taken hostage in Iraq by guerrillas, the government refused to reconsider its plans to deploy troops.

A similar event had led Philippine President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo to withdraw her country's small force of troops from Iraq, raising hopes that South Korea would do the same.

Rep. Kwon Young-gil of the Democratic Labor Party, a progressive party newly elected to the parliament, said the government cannot justify its troop dispatch, adding, “The U.S. has become the object of rejection and hatred in the whole territory of Iraq.”

The Aug. 3 demonstrations came after news leaked out that the first deployments were about to begin. The government had tried to keep their departure a secret, actually sending a memo to the media telling them not to report the details.

Yoomi Jeong, deputy secretary general of the Korea Truth Commission, says this shows that Roh is “ashamed of his actions.” She told Workers World: “Roh says he's sending troops to help the Iraqi people reconstruct their country. So why would he have a media blackout about when they're leaving? South Korea has no moral ground to stand on. Roh is not proud of sending these young men to be an immoral occupation force.”

“The main slogan of the South Korean movement right now is to bring the soldiers home from Iraq,” said Jeong. She says that more demonstrations are planned, including a major one on Aug. 15, the day celebrating Korea's national liberation from Japanese colonial rule. □



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# Pentagon hammers Najaf, resistance spreads

By Leslie Feinberg

There are no Weapons of Mass Destruction. No Saddam Hussein government in power. Yet the U.S. military machine is once again unleashing open warfare in Iraq. There's no room for any misunderstanding as to who it's aimed at: the Iraqi people who are trying to defend the gains of their anti-colonial revolution half a century ago.

Dark smoke has billowed up from Najaf since Aug. 5. U.S. fighter aircraft, helicopter gun ships and armed drones have pummeled the city with ordnance from the sky above, while on the ground a pounding siege by artillery, tank and heavy machine-gun fire from Marines and U.S. Cavalry units have reduced much of the old city to rubble.

Yet Iraqi insurgents, vastly outnumbered and outgunned, have battled back. And this blaze of resistance has ignited in other parts of the country as well.

Some 5,000 troops carrying out the fierce assault on Najaf include 2,000 members of the 11th Marine Expeditionary Unit, additional U.S. Cavalry units and some 1,800 collaborating Iraqi troops. An additional force of 1,000 GIs is being prepared.

This military force has targeted a vast, ancient cemetery in the heart of the old city, putatively to deprive the resistance of an operational base.

U.S. commanders confirmed Aug. 9 that Marines had formed a tight military cordon around the gold-domed Imam Ali mosque—one of the holiest shrines in Shia Islam.

The same day, in the midst of heavy fighting, Shia cleric Moqtada al-Sadr appeared publicly to demand an end to the U.S. occupation of Iraq. Speaking from inside the Imam Ali shrine, he vowed: "I am staying in Najaf and I will not leave. ... I will stay until the last drop of my blood is spilled."

The next day a U.S. fighter jet bombed an inner-city hotel only 300 yards away from the mosque, setting off a raging

inferno.

Pentagon forces have also reportedly cut off all electricity and water.

The Aug. 10 Guardian Unlimited reported on conditions faced by the 1,200 people arrested: "In Najaf's main police station officers showed off a room crowded with around 300 Mahdi army prisoners, each sitting cross-legged and facing the wall. In one corner there were several plastic water bottles filled with urine.

"Before they opened the door the sound of screaming had been coming from inside."

Najaf's Police Chief Ghalib al-Jazairy explained that some of the people who were now prisoners had recently been trained by the occupation force as police officers and were stationed in Basra and Amara—but had defected to join the militia defending Najaf from the U.S. assault.

## For public consumption

The monopolized media industry in the United States is pumping out the spin that U.S. military commanders are acting under orders from the "new Iraqi government." But it's the Allawi grouping that salutes the Pentagon brass hats, not vice versa.

The imperialist generals also claimed on the fourth day of fighting to have killed 360 insurgents in Najaf alone. But, noted the Guardian, there is no evidence to back this up.

During the Vietnam War the Pentagon routinely inflated the body count of Vietnamese killed to boast of its military prowess and demoralize military resistance.

Representatives of al-Sadr report that the number of their fighters killed was closer to 40. Of the 35 wounded, they said, most were hurt by cluster bombs. (sundaytimes.co.za)

An Aug. 9 casualty report from Hussein Hadi, deputy director of Najaf's main hospital, was much closer to that of the Mahdi spokesperson. Hadi "said that 23 people had been killed since the fighting started

last week and 98 had been injured, mostly civilians. Among the dead were five Iraqi police and four Iraqi army soldiers, he said." (Guardian Unlimited, Aug. 10)

Al-Sadr spokespeople also charged Pentagon commanders with under-reporting GI casualties—which the U.S. command put at four killed and 22 wounded in the first four days of fighting. (www.freep.com, Aug. 9)

This kind of media spin will become even more dominant after "Prime Minister" Iyad Allawi, a CIA darling, acted as a marionette for Washington when he ordered the closure of Al Jazeera's Baghdad news bureau on Aug. 7. Al Jazeera's broadcasts are a thorn in the imperialist side because they are an independent source of news about the imperialist occupation for millions of Arab viewers.

The old fig leaf for the imperialist war and occupation, Ahmad Chalabi—hand-picked by the Pentagon—has now been indicted on counterfeiting charges. His nephew Salem Chalabi, a lawyer prosecuting Saddam Hussein, is now wanted on murder charges. Both men are outside the country.

## Resistance spreads

While the U.S. forces have battered Najaf, fighting has spread.

Intense fighting has erupted in Sadr City, five miles from the heart of Baghdad. Sadr City, like Falluja, is completely in the hands of the Iraqi resistance. (New York Times, Aug. 11)

Insurgents using a rocket-propelled grenade shot down a U.S. military helicopter over the impoverished neighborhood on Aug. 8.

On Aug. 9, insurgents repeatedly hit a U.S.-protected district council hall with mortars, a barrage of bullets and rocket-propelled grenades. Four Iraqi guards were killed, and nine other people, including three U.S. soldiers, were wounded.

Even a U.S.-imposed curfew that night did not quell some outbreaks of resistance. And the next day, a roadside bomb

wounded two GIs in central Baghdad.

In the Baquba area, a suicide car bomb exploded on Aug. 9 in Balad Ruz—40 miles northeast of Baghdad—wounding the assistant governor of Diyala province and 17 others, and killing seven police. (newssindependent.co.uk, Aug. 10)

An insurgent group vowed Aug. 9 to begin targeting offices of "government" collaborators in Baghdad.

Another Marine was confirmed killed in fighting in western Iraq in the Anbar province on Aug. 9.

Two Jordanian and two Lebanese hostages were freed by insurgents on Aug. 9 after their company agreed to end its operations in Iraq.

In the southern city of Diwaniya, militia surrounded the police station and governorate.

## Resistance halts theft of oil

Insurgency also broke out in the southern port of Basra. Ninety percent of Iraq's oil is exported through Basra.

In one incident on Aug. 9, a British soldier on patrol died and five more were wounded when their Land Rovers burst into flames after being hit by RPGs.

The militia seized control of the city's main intersections.

The resistance temporarily shut down oil output in the south—almost 2 million barrels a day—sending oil prices higher on the world market. "Iraq's other export line—from the north to Turkey—is already out of operation," reported the Aug. 10 Globe and Mail.

The "Oil Ministry," a front for the imperialist theft of Iraqi wealth said the threat of attacks by the resistance remains high. (New York Times, Aug. 11)

This neocolonial plunder is generating Iraqi fury.

One local militia leader, Latif al-Khalisi, who reportedly welcomed the U.S. invasion at the onset, observed, "All the rich people in the west came and started taking money and contracts in this country." (The Guardian Unlimited, Aug. 10) □

# U.S. vets of Iraq form anti-war group

By Heather Cottin

Mike Hoffman saw too much. He was a lance corporal in a Marine Corps artillery battery during the March 2003 invasion of Iraq. Now he's a veteran and a committed opponent of the U.S. war and occupation of Iraq.

Hoffman and nine other Iraq war vets recently founded Iraq Veterans Against the War. The group, in the words of its mission statement, is "committed to saving lives and ending the violence in Iraq by an immediate withdrawal of all occupying forces."

"We started the group at the Boston convention of Veterans for Peace right before the Democratic National Convention," Hoffman told Workers World. "We got a lot of encouragement from Vietnam Veterans Against the War, and we knew we were going to be a place for people who served in Iraq and Afghanistan and thought they were alone.

"I talked to VVAW because we thought they had a big effect on the anti-war protests during their day. The Vets for Peace has grown a lot over the past year. They

have gotten a lot more active recently because they are really worked up over what is going on in Iraq.

## Grassroots response

"So now we have this web site [IVAW.net], and we are getting more contacts all the time, including soldiers who are still in Iraq. And we get referrals from Military Families Speak Out. It's a grassroots response, and it is growing quickly."

The web site features a tally of the Iraqi war dead, which it puts at 11,000 to 13,000, and a running report on the latest deadly encounters between occupying troops and Iraqis. IVAW is particularly concerned with Iraqi civilians who are the victims of the war.

One of IVAW's founders, Kelly Dougherty, served in Iraq as an MP with a National Guard Unit. "I didn't feel like I was a liberator," she said. "I felt like I was an oppressor. We burned a flatbed filled with produce in front of Iraqi people who were starving."

IVAW co-founder Jimmy Massey noted: "Marines are dehumanized from boot camp, desensitized to the killing. ...

Once you train a person with a warrior mentality ... you desensitize them to death, violence and destruction."

Massey walked away from it. He told his sergeant major: "I don't want your money anymore. I don't want your benefits. [We] killed some civilians ... and I'm gonna tell the truth."

## 'We don't hear about them'

"Talk to anyone who's been to Iraq and they've all got these problems, both physical and mental," Hoffman said. "A good friend of mine came home with stomach problems, but the Veterans Administration isn't admitting that they are war-related, and he's been given the run-around.

"More soldiers have been injured than killed, but we don't hear about them. We don't know if people are dying when they are med-evacuated from Iraq, and we don't know whether that is counted toward the total U.S. war dead.

"A Russian military expert says that the actual number of U.S. war dead is twice what the U.S. government is reporting.

"The other crisis is economic. About 40

percent of the people in my unit were married with families, and lots of them came home to no jobs. They sent their pay home, to help their families, so they had no built-up funds to see them through. They are in a real financial crisis.

"That is why we say in our mission statement: '[T]he governments that sponsored these wars are indebted to the men and women that were forced to fight them and must give their Soldiers, Marines, Sailors, and Airmen the benefits that are owed to them upon their return home.'"

But few benefits are forthcoming. The economy is in the dumps, and many veterans return to face poor job prospects, or worse. Many are mentally or physically scarred by the war, unable to function normally. And they are angry.

"We've got to bring our troops home," said Hoffman. "We've got to speak for them and tell their stories, so the public really knows what's going on."

Hoffman and others from IVAW are doing just that. They plan to testify about military resistance to the war at the Iraq War Crimes Tribunal on Aug. 26 in New York City. □



## Eyewitness Colombia

# The revolution has the face and hands of brave women

By Taina Lara

Colombian women struggle with their reality day by day. They struggle for a different reality, that of a dignified life for everyone.

In this struggle they have had to face violations of their rights as women and as human beings.

Many have been brutally assassinated by the paramilitaries—death squads—which usually dump their victims' bodies in public areas in order to create panic and terror among the population.

Forced displacement is yet another violation against human rights. During these displacements, Colombian women are obliged to abandon their homes, and are sexually abused under death threats made by the paramilitaries.

All this for standing in solidarity with their persecuted male partners, or for refusing to give up their children to be enlisted to the paramilitary AUC (United Self-Defense Forces of Colombia).

Women who publicly denounce the paramilitaries immediately become targets. This was the case for Esperanza Amaris, a member of the Popular

Feminist Organization. She was a leader of the invaded town known as Versalles, in Barrancabermeja, where she resided.

AUC members murdered Amaris a few months after she denounced their human-rights violations. This brave woman was killed because she confronted the paramilitaries, because she was truly convinced, as she let everybody know, of the right to land, the right to have a private life, and because she maintained a public identity of civility and autonomy.

In Barrancabermeja we learned of the case of a woman who was subjected to various forms of violence by the paramilitaries. Tania, a 26-year-old sex worker, had arrived from Bucaramanga a few months earlier. She, like all the other new arrivals who settle in the impoverished barrios of this town, became the focus of investigation.

This young woman was kidnapped on Oct. 2, 2003, by three paramilitaries who disguised themselves as guerrillas from the FARC (Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia). Some of these terrorists had already been denounced as part of the AUC in the southeast regions

of Colombia.

The paramilitaries interrogated her. They persecuted this woman and a friend, and later revealed themselves as "paras." The victims were forced into a store in which the woman was a victim of further violations of human rights, such as physical and mental torture and sexual violence.

### Women prisoners persecuted

During a visit to the penal complex El Buen Pastor in Bogotá, delegates of the 2004 International Caravan to Save the Lives of Colombian Workers witnessed the violation of female political prisoners' human rights.

The capacity of the pavilion in which these political prisoners are held is 36. However, some 94 women are imprisoned there. The majority of them are incarcerated due to massive and arbitrary detentions under the administration of U.S.-allied President Alvaro Uribe Velez, as part of his effort to destroy popular and social organizations.

Colombian law dictates that if a detainee has been held for more than four months and the case has not been processed, she

or he should be released. Nevertheless, when Luz Perli Cordoba Mosquera, a leader of the peasant movement and advocate for human rights, appealed for her freedom after more than four months in detention, she was denied her freedom.

Of course, this is not an isolated case. Most of the 94 women are in an identical situation.

If they are put on trial, there is no jury. And whoever "investigates" the case also serves as the judge. The "witnesses" who testify against these women are hired over and over to tell the same story for different cases.

These women are true heroes of daily life—women who confront their fears and get out into the streets armed with courage, shouting out the word freedom. These women offer their lives in the struggle for equality and Colombia's sovereignty. The fight for freedom belongs to us all; this is why the revolution has the face and hands of these brave women.

We demand an end to the indiscriminate murder of Colombian women.

*Taina Lara participated in the 2004 International Caravan to Save the Lives of Colombian Workers.*

## The cause: capitalist greed

# Fire in Paraguay kills over 400



Thousands march in Paraguay's capital, Asuncion, Aug. 8, in remembrance of the victims of supermarket fire.

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By Adrian Garcia

A devastating fire that ripped through a popular marketplace in Paraguay's capital, Asuncion, on Aug. 1 claimed the lives of over 460 people and injured scores more.

The high number of casualties was not a direct result of the fire, but has been attributed to a decision made by the owners of the Ycua Bolanos supermarket during the fire's initial phase. Shoppers who managed to escape the inferno accused owner Juan Pio Paiva of ordering his security guards to lock the doors to the establishment so as to prevent the patrons from leaving the store without paying for their items and to prevent any possible looting.

"There is no doubt that somebody closed the doors to the supermarket ... after the initiation of the fire," said Nicolas Nunez, an Argentine police investigator sent to assist in the arduous task of identifying corpses that had been burned beyond recognition.

It is believed that a gas leak provoked an explosion in the rear section of the supermarket, setting the establishment ablaze. This occurred during the busiest shopping time of the week, 11:30 a.m. Sunday morning, when the store was teeming with hundreds of shoppers.

Many families lost three to four family members in the tragic fire, leaving some children without parents.

The Paraguayan authorities have pledged to bring those responsible for the unnecessary deaths to justice. Supermarket owner Juan Pio Paiva and his son Daniel Paiva have been arrested and are being held on \$10 million bail.

The security guards who followed the orders to close the doors were also arrested, as was the coordinator of the marketplace's security operations, Eder Sanchez Martinetti. And the supermarket administrator, Humberto Fernando Casaccia Ro-

magni, finds himself under house arrest.

Under Paraguayan law the accused face from five to 15 years in prison if found guilty of negligence, and up to 25 years if it is ruled that their actions were executed with malice.

In capitalist countries, often the bosses responsible for such crimes against the workers go unpunished. If there are any resulting convictions in this case, it will be because the capitalist bosses in Paraguay and throughout the world hope to quell the outrage of the Paraguayan people.

They especially want to mask the true culprit in this tragedy: the capitalist system itself.

The decision to close the supermarket's doors, whereby hundreds of innocent victims needlessly perished, is based on the capitalist notion of placing profits before lives. This distrust and oppression of workers is a systemic function of capitalism that has brought death and destruction to countless workers throughout the years.

It is not only in oppressed countries like Paraguay that such tragedies happen. The 1911 Triangle Shirtwaist factory fire in New York City killed 146 women garment workers because the sweatshop owners had locked the exit doors. This incident sparked a fury that ignited the movement for women workers' rights.

The Imperial Food Products fire in Hamlet, N.C., on Sept. 3, 1991, cost 25 lives and injured 56 people. Most were the women workers in the chicken processing plant, who were unable to escape because management had locked exit doors, supposedly to prevent theft of chicken parts.

In the modern-day sweatshops and factories where the most oppressed and low-paid workers fight to make ends meet, such dangerous steps as locking exit doors are par for the course. They are part of the intense exploitation of these workers that are endemic to the capitalist system. □



## WWP candidates:

# 'Stand with Chávez and the Venezuelan people!'

The Workers World Party election campaign and our candidates, John Parker, Teresa Gutierrez and LeiLani Dowell, stand in solidarity with President Hugo Chávez and the millions of Venezuelans who will vote an emphatic "No!" in the recall referendum Aug. 15.

The referendum, to recall President Chávez before the end of his term in 2006, is championed by the same rich and corrupt elements that have repeatedly attempted to overturn his popularly elected government through economic sabotage, illegal lock-outs and armed plots.

In collaboration with the Bush administration, these forces staged a coup d'état in April 2002 and briefly arrested President Chávez. But hundreds of thousands of poor and oppressed Venezuelans poured into the streets, surrounded government buildings, and forced the coup makers to return Chávez unharmed.

Since coming to office in 1998 and being re-elected in 2000, President Chávez has consistently mobilized Venezuela's workers and peasants to fight in their own interests. He has stood up to U.S. imperialism at home and abroad, including opposing the brutal war and occupation of Iraq. He has moved to put oil profits to use

for people's needs and to distribute land to the poor.

His government has strengthened relations with socialist Cuba in defiance of the United States. Cuba, in turn, has stretched out its hand in solidarity, providing personnel to assist with health care, literacy and education programs.

These policies, together with Venezuela's progressive new Constitution, make up the Bolivarian Revolution.

The Venezuelan masses understand that the recall referendum is yet another plot by U.S. imperialism and Venezuela's wealthy to turn back history. The U.S. regime, whether Republican or Democrat, can't abide an independent Latin American country that is avowedly anti-imperialist, one that seeks to use its oil revenues and other resources to lift up the poor and oppressed instead of filling the bank vaults of U.S. finance capital.

The local capitalists are desperate to hold onto their ill-gotten riches. They hate the existence of a defiant people's government that represents the interests of workers and peasants, Black and Indigenous Venezuelans, women, lesbian, gay, bi and trans people—all of whom they have kept disenfranchised and impoverished for so long.

In recent months President Chávez has taken important steps to bolster the Bolivarian Revolution against these unending attacks. These steps include strengthening the popular Bolivarian Circles, moving toward establishing a people's army, creating independent people's media, and speeding land reform.

These measures, coupled with Chávez' recent declaration that "the revolution is only beginning," have U.S. imperialism panicked. Wall Street and Washington see the specter of another Cuban Revolution looming—this time in one of the world's main oil-producing countries.

But for the U.S. working class, the growth and development of the Bolivarian Revolution is nothing but good news. It can only help to empower struggling people all over the world, especially in Latin America, and strengthen the working class against the bosses here at home.

President Chávez has enormous mass support. Even prominent voices of the U.S. ruling class like the New York Times predict he will triumph in the Aug. 15 referendum.

Nevertheless, U.S. progressives must not be lulled into complacency. The opposition still dominates business, media and other key sectors in Venezuelan society,

and has tried to increase unemployment and artificially create scarcity of basic products like food.

The U.S. government is openly interfering in the referendum. Washington is financing the measure's sponsor, the anti-Chávez group Súmate, through its misnamed National Endowment for Democracy. Jimmy Carter and other pro-imperialist "election monitors" will be on hand and could attempt to influence world public opinion against Chávez and in favor of U.S. intervention.

Súmate is only the peaceful, legal façade of the reactionary opposition. The pro-U.S. forces were accused of plotting with the Autonomous Self-Defense Forces of Colombia, a far-right death squad, to murder President Chávez earlier this year. Opposition leader Carlos Andrés Priez recently called for Chávez's assassination if the referendum fails.

We call on the working-class and progressive movement in the United States to be on the alert to defend President Chávez and the gains of the Bolivarian Revolution against any U.S.-supported provocations.

Victory to President Chávez and the Venezuelan people! Long live the Bolivarian Revolution! □

## Venezuelans mobilize to defend revolution

*Continued from page 1*

bly in 2002 and 2003 attests to this change.

Chávez's opponents for a long time used difficulties with the economy as a club against his government, while sabotaging as much as they could of the industries and businesses. Now the economy is showing a recovery.

In a recent report the Central Bank of Venezuela announced that economic activity had risen 29.8 percent this year and that car sales increased by 93 percent. Unemployment decreased to 12 percent, down from 18 percent last year. Venezuela's economy grew 12 percent, the highest increase in Latin America.

These patent successes have pulled into the revolution sectors of the middle class who were previously opposed to Chávez.

### Chávez mobilizes anti-imperialist sentiment

Venezuela's role in the international community has also dramatically changed, challenging the forces of neoliberalism directly. Chávez frequently describes the revolution as anti-imperialist. At economic and political summits and international conferences, Chávez has openly encouraged other oppressed nations and peoples to also confront U.S. dictates.

Chávez repeatedly has called for the unity of Latin American and Caribbean countries to combine their material, intellectual and natural resources in order to form a powerful bloc that could challenge Washington and Wall Street's control of the region.

Recent developments in this area point out the possibilities. For example, Venezuela was just admitted to the economic bloc called Mercosur. It had been composed solely of countries in the so-

called "southern cone"—Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay and Uruguay. Venezuela occupies the northern coast of the continent.

The Venezuelan government has also been working hard to strengthen the Andean Community countries. There is a flurry of economic activity, pacts and agreements between Venezuela and other neighboring countries involving gas and oil production, particularly with Brazil, Argentina and Colombia. Other agreements are also being made with countries of Africa.

This makes the U.S. government and big business doubly nervous. On the one hand, U.S. economic hegemony is threatened. On the other, support and admiration for the Bolivarian Revolution from the peoples of Latin America and the Caribbean threatens U.S. domination. A wave of militant activism sweeping the continent strikes fear in the hearts of the Pentagon and U.S. transnational corporations.

### U.S. agencies aid Venezuelan oligarchy

Through the National Endowment for Democracy and other organizations, both covert and known, the U.S. government is funneling millions of dollars into support for the Venezuelan oligarchy. One recipient of U.S. money in Venezuela is the organization Súmate, a key player in the attempt to topple Chávez under the guise of promoting "democracy."

The Venezuelan opposition includes the business federation FEDECAMARAS, the company-union federation CTV, the old PDVSA bureaucracy, and the privately owned anti-Chávez media, who control 400 radio stations, 20 television channels and 100 newspapers. They have tried in every way to end or sabotage the revolution.

### Hundreds of thousands of Venezuelans demonstrate in Caracas Aug. 8 for Chávez.

But the intervention of the masses by the hundreds of thousands led to the failure of the 2002 coup. A lockout by the PDVSA bureaucrats aimed at sabotaging Venezuela's oil production similarly failed because the workers sided with the government. Next the opposition resorted to guarimbas (violent traffic jams) and other terrorist acts. When that didn't work, they turned to the recall referendum. Even its very beginning was riddled with fraud. They submitted petitions, gathered outside the dates stipulated by law, that included invalid signatures, and broke other rules.

U.S. government agencies have been part of the opposition's campaign every step of the way. U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for Western Hemisphere Affairs Roger Noriega stated recently: "We have invested a lot of money in this process because we have confidence in the civil society which is the pillar of democracy. We have given money through NGOs and other similar groups in Venezuela."

Even though most polls show that the results of the referendum will favor Chávez, the people and Chávez himself are not celebrating, fearing that fraud or violence could once more attempt to dismiss the real results. The opposition's violent acts have been sporadic up to now. It is telling, however, that on May 10 an article appeared in the newspaper El Nacional in Miami raising the greatest of threats. It



quoted Venezuelan ex-President Carlos Andrés Pérez, who is hiding in Miami from Venezuelan justice. "We Venezuelans have to end Chávez through violence, we have no other choice," he said.

But the Bolivarian people of Venezuela are ready for the challenge. They have been organizing block by block, neighborhood by neighborhood, making sure everyone able to vote is registered and knows the procedure. They have also been building mass organizations of self-defense to supplement the armed forces.

Bolivarians will vote NO to the recall. As one of the jingles for the NO campaign says: "NO to injustice, NO to fraud, NO to the past, NO to violence, they will NOT return, they will NOT pass, Venezuela next August 15 will be victorious. The answer is NO." □



## NO to immigrant bashing!

Working class and progressive organizations should reject the U.S. government's "war on terror," which has become an excuse for a broad-based assault on civil liberties and rights at home while pursuing imperialist war and occupation abroad.

The capitalist state cannot be trusted to protect the interests of the masses of people here. On the contrary, it exists to perpetuate an exploiting system that has divided this country and the world into haves and desperate have-nots, thereby making strife and struggle inevitable. Acting on behalf of the billionaire corporations, the imperialist state headquartered in Washington is responsible for terrible wars and atrocities all over the globe that have made hundreds of millions of people furious at the U.S. The examples are legion, but Vietnam, Chile, Palestine, El Salvador, Indonesia, Korea, Yugoslavia, Angola and of course Iraq spring to mind.

The 9/11 Commission's recommendation for an intelligence czar, and the Department of Homeland Security's color-coded alerts and constant bombarding of the population with threat warnings, will not ameliorate any of this. Beefing up the "security" apparatus—in other words, the armed forces of repression—with tens of thousands more riot police and border guards is really a confession that this capitalist government has no answers to the growing social problems facing the masses of the people.

The main targets at present of this growing police state atmosphere are immigrants—particularly, but not confined to, people coming from the Middle East and South Asia. In the panicky run-up to the Republican National Convention, "suspects" have been swept up around the country for such "crimes" as videoing public buildings. The FBI has announced a new round of dragnet-like interviews in Arab and Muslim communities nationwide. A similar program in 2001 and 2002, in which the FBI questioned more than 8,000 Muslim and Arab men, yielded not one arrest of a suspected terrorist. Civil liberties groups say this is nothing but the reemergence of racial profiling, which was discredited earlier as a weapon against African Americans and Latinos. The public is supposed to accept all this as necessary while sensational news of "terrorist threats"—none of it substantiated—is leaked regularly to the media.

Increasingly, the rollback of liberties is extended to all immigrants, especially those from oppressed countries, where economic development has been distorted first by colonial rule and then the domination of imperialist finance capital. One year ago, the persecution of immigrants led a group of unions for the first time to organize a national march for immigrant rights. The unions had come to realize that they could not combat the plague of low wages and non-existent or substandard conditions and benefits without dealing with the plight of immigrant workers. They demanded amnesty for the undocumented, a reform of immigration laws, and an end to government raids meant to intimidate the workers' efforts to organize for better conditions.

Now Tom Ridge's Department of Homeland Security has given border patrol agents sweeping new powers to deport undocumented immigrants without even allowing them to take their case to the immigration courts. The new rule applies to anyone picked up within 100 miles of the Mexican and Canadian borders without the necessary papers. All this makes a further mockery of that famous statue in New York Harbor that promises, "Give me your tired, your poor, your huddled masses yearning to breathe free, the wretched refuse of your teeming shore."

Just a few miles from that statue, thousands of New York police, supplemented by numerous federal agencies, will be deployed to protect the well-heeled delegates to the Republican National Convention at the end of August.

Outside the convention, for a week, organizations representing a broad variety of social causes will be trying to demonstrate despite heavy police intimidation. In a city where a majority of the low-paid, difficult jobs are filled by immigrant workers, the bosses are hoping that the anti-immigrant "terrorism" propaganda will minimize their input and the expression of their grievances—from opposition to the occupation of Iraq and Palestine to demands for justice and dignity here.

It is important that the rest of the movement take up the cause of immigrants at these demonstrations, show solidarity and reject the institutionalized bashing unleashed by the Bush administration in the name of its spurious "war on terror." □

## Quebec workers win union at Wal-Mart

By G. Dunkel

It looks like Wal-Mart will have to start bargaining with the union representing its workers in Jonquière, Quebec, Canada. Management's appeal to reverse this ruling, scheduled to be heard Aug. 20, is not expected to win.

Representatives of the union involved—the Quebec section of the United Food and Commercial Workers (French initials TUAC)—have said they also intend to file to represent Wal-Mart workers in Brossard before the end of the summer.

TUAC Local 503 filed for recognition in early July, and the Quebec Labor Relations Commission certified it Aug. 4. The Aug. 20 hearing will finalize the makeup of the bargaining unit. However, QLRC Adjudicator Jocelyne Houle has stated that no matter how the bargaining unit is defined, "the applicant is representative, as required by law."

Because Jonquière and the whole surrounding Saguenay area are economically depressed, it took extra courage for the workers to go up against Wal-Mart.

The local ALCAN aluminum smelter closed in February, even after the workers had seized it and run it successfully for over a month. The Atibi paper mill has shut down. Logging is in decline.

But the Saguenay area has been one of the centers of the Quebec union movement since early last century. Workers from the Saguenay and other isolated areas of Quebec knew that there were three bosses in a town—the bank, the company and the church—and if the workers weren't united in a union, they could be ground up and spit out by any of the three.

Labor law in Quebec presupposes that unions have a right to bargain over wages and working conditions. Other provisions make the tactics that

companies like Wal-Mart and McDonald's usually apply elsewhere harder to use. For example, it is illegal for management to close a location just because it is unionized.

This is why Wal-Mart Canada spokesperson Andrew Pelletier assured the Montreal Gazette that the company wouldn't close any store because a union was present.

About 95 percent of unions in Quebec get a first contract without a labor conflict. The chance of that happening in Jonquière "is a good fantasy," Louis Bolduc, UFCW national vice-president for Quebec, predicted. "I doubt it will be a deal reached without a conflict."

Marie-Josée Lemieux, the president of Local 503, agrees with Bolduc. She said she would emphasize working conditions in her negotiations with Wal-Mart.

"This is great victory for the workers in Jonquière, and for Wal-Mart workers everywhere," said Michael J. Fraser, UFCW Canada's national director, in a news release.

"Wal-Mart is on the record stating they support work-place democracy," said Fraser. "The majority of workers in Jonquière have spoken, so we expect Wal-Mart to listen and get down to negotiating a first contract without delay."

Fraser went on to say: "What's happened in Quebec can happen at any Wal-Mart store in North America. Jonquière is only the first of more to come."

Currently outside Quebec, UFCW Canada has applications pending for Wal-Mart stores in Weyburn and North Battleford, Saskatchewan, and in Terrace, British Columbia. It just lost the vote in Thompson, Manitoba.

While Quebec might have laws making the playing ground for unions a bit more level, it was really the strong determination of the workers in Jonquière that got them their union. □



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## 1920s Soviet Union:

# Rights for lesbians, transgenders, transsexuals

By Leslie Feinberg

According to historian Dan Healey, “Unlike their male counterparts, Russian women who had erotic relations with members of their own sex had less access to the public sphere and so were less able to construct for themselves a coherent subculture with the attributes of the male homosexual world. This is not to suggest that no female homosexual subculture existed in revolutionary Russia.”

Healey has made a great contribution towards digging up some of the records of the lives of lesbians, masculine females and transsexual men in revolutionary Russia during the 1920s. Much of this research can be found in his book “Sexual Desire in Revolutionary Russia.” (University of Chicago Press, 2001)

He offers this caveat: “Adequate sources about this love between lower-class women have yet to emerge, and its character must be judged through the distortions of a single ubiquitous occupation, prostitution.”

In the business of prostitution during the capitalist era, “same-sex relations could be sheltered and even tolerated, particularly in licensed brothels, and the freedom (or opportunity) to express same-sex love in this environment was evidently sought by some women as prostitutes and as clients.” Brothels, he writes, “constituted a social sphere that undoubtedly sheltered some same-sex relationships,” but “this harsh environment offered sex workers rather limited prospects for agency and self-expression.”

But the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution both abolished licensed brothels and took over privately owned hotels and other businesses. This had an impact on prostitution. “The abolition of licensed brothels,” Healey says, “turned prostitution into a very unstable and dangerous livelihood for female sex workers.”

During the 1920s, “The housing shortage and the decline in private control over sheltered urban spaces appeared to drive illicit heterosexual sex into the streets, railway stations and carriages, restaurants, bathhouses, and taxicabs.

“Russian historians have argued that more urban women and more declassed women from the former elite supposedly turned to casual or occasional heterosexual prostitution in the 1920s as urban unemployment hit them hardest.”

The Bolsheviks tried to abolish sexual exploitation, but they did not prosecute the women. “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.”

However, ending the economic need that drove people into prostitution required raising the living standard for all. The constant imperialist sabotage of the Soviet economy from within and without, and the devastation that was the legacy of the world war, made that essential economic task difficult.

### Demanded right to same-sex marriage

In both Europe and the U.S. at that time, very rigid social codes enforced what was deemed appropriate behavior and dress for males and females. In Soviet Russia, however, “masculine” females

were finding a prominent place in the early revolutionary society. They included many “out lesbians.” Masculine, cross-dressing females could be found in academic and cultural institutions as well as in the military—even high up in the Red Army command.

This acceptance sheds light on the vulgar anti-communist typecasting of Soviet women as so “mannish” that they might really be males in drag.

“If there was any sign of a lesbian subculture moving into the public realm of urban streetscapes, the workplace, or halls of study,” Healey elaborates, “it was in the ‘almost masculine’ styles cultivated by some women entering public life. Medical and lay sources confirm that, at least in towns, the woman regarded as ‘masculine’ was a fixture of early Soviet society.”

Healey says: “Their image as energetic and enterprising participants in the new society’s political, economic and military life earned the so-called ‘active’ (that is, imitative of ‘masculine’ traits) female homosexual admiration from some sexological authorities.”

In an earlier essay Healey notes, “In a 1929 discussion about ‘transvestites’ and the ‘intermediate sex’ conducted by the Expert Medical Council of the Commissariat of Health, women of the ‘masculinized type’ (cross-dressing army commanders, for example) were considered with fascination and indulgence.”

And some of these cross-dressing females demanded the right to same-sex marriage. (“Russian Queen”)

But while there was an “out” social current of masculine females who were identified with same-sex love, other female-bodied individuals sought to live as males.

Was the motivation of all these female-bodied individuals to express their masculinity and/or cross-dress driven solely by sexuality? In other words, in today’s U.S. terms, were they all “lesbians”? Or would some of them be more accurately identified as “transgender” or “transsexual”?

### Transgender and transsexual lives emerge

The Bolsheviks tried to replace mysticism and idealism with a scientific approach to all social and economic questions, including gender expression and sexuality and what in modern terms would be called “transsexuality.”

“Soviet psychiatry of the 1920s took an interest in women who convincingly occupied a male gender identity,” Healey states, “and in accordance with the evolving sexological categories of European science, labeled them ‘female homosexuals’ or occasionally, ‘transvestites.’”

Healey adds that “The reasons why some women decided to acquire manhood by changing their identity documents, assuming male variants of their names, and altering their dress, manners, and hairstyle, are hard to reconstruct.”

One of the most famous of these individuals was the soldier Evgenii Federovich, born Evgeniia. While posted with a regiment, Federovich married a woman postal employee in a provincial town in 1922. When Federovich’s birth sex was discovered, local authorities charged

the marriage was a “crime against nature.” But the Commissariat of Justice found that the marriage was “legal, because concluded by mutual consent.”

Evgenii Federovich wrote using concepts of the period in which homosexuality and intermediate sex were intertwined. Federovich argued for acceptance of “same sex love ... as a particular variation” of human sexuality and stated with conviction that once individuals of the “intermediate sex” were “no longer oppressed and smothered by their own lack of consciousness and by petty-bourgeois disrespect,” their lives would become “socially worthwhile.”

### Demand for sex reassignment

As the Bolsheviks tried to examine social questions in a scientific light, individuals came forward to press social demands on the scientific community. That included the request for medical sex reassignment.

A 23-year-old female-bodied respondent to a 1923 sex survey of students at Sverdlov University in Moscow wrote, “I

want to be a man, I impatiently await scientific discoveries of castration and grafting of male organs (glands).” The student expressed optimism that science would one day be able to achieve this desired goal.

Healey explains that this request was not exceptional or unusual.

However, “The medical techniques of gender reassignment in Soviet Russia in the 1920s were as rudimentary and broadly unsuccessful as those then available in the West.”

Despite this limitation, individuals began seeking out “clinical psychiatrists and biologists engaged in the emergent study of the mechanisms of sex differentiation” to request sex reassignment.

### ‘Passing’ in the countryside?

It’s not clear from the following description by Healey whether he is talking about the pre- or post-revolutionary epochs, or both. “Outside of Russia’s great cities, some ‘female homosexuals’ turned to more traditional methods of appropriating the privileges of masculinity, effecting self-transformations with clothing and gesture that allowed them to ‘pass’ as men.”

Healey ascribes sexuality as a primary reason why some would live as another sex. “Some used their acquired masculin-

ity as a pathway to sexual relations with other women,” he writes. “These total transformations typified the survival of the ‘passing woman’ in Russian culture.”

Sexuality may, or may not, have been a driving factor for some individuals, but it doesn’t explain the entire phenomenon. Many of these individuals must certainly have lived without a sexual partner for fear of being “outed.” Therefore, going “underground” with an identity would not have easily facilitated finding sexual partners.

And it was no secret in any village or rural area that there were jobs—and greater anonymity—in the cities.

At the time, of course, homosexuality was inextricably linked to the “intermediate sex.” However, in actuality, a feminine homosexual female would have found it difficult to live as a male. Comfort with masculine gender expression and body type certainly also played an important role.

It would also be of great interest to know whether these individuals were “in the closet” or whether some found social acceptance—unspoken or not—among the peasantry. While peasants had been chained to the land under medieval conditions in the tsarist era and force-fed superstition and prejudice as a class, they were keen observers of variance in nature. And Healey himself notes that the sexual patterns and practices of the mass of Russians was marked by pagan survivals. The pre-class beliefs about the sexes, gender expression and sexuality still held some sway amongst the peasantry.

Healey found the research of a lexicographer who, gathering material in the 1830s and 1850s in central Russia, discovered numerous terms for masculine females, and none of them were insults. And the researcher found that female-bodied peasants were defined as “resembling a man in their appearance, movements, voice, et cetera,” “by structure, by body formation,” or because they might “even approach the condition of a ‘hermaphrodite-woman.’”

This fact from Healey’s study of the peasantry is very illuminating: “Rural and lower-class Russians possessed an array of terms to describe individuals who appeared or behaved like members of the opposite sex. They associated this gender marginality with hermaphroditism observed in domesticated animals, linking social qualities with the familiar phenomenon of physical sexual indeterminacy.”

*Next: 1930s—Political reversals*

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EDITORIAL:

## Cultivando en los campos del Capitalismo

El 31 de julio la Organización Mundial del Comercio anunció un plan para la eliminación gradual de los subsidios de productos agrícolas entre los países ricos. El efecto descrito de la acción es el de aliviar las condiciones de agricultores en países en vías de desarrollo que no pueden competir contra las cosechas subvencionadas de maíz, algodón, arroz, soya y trigo producidas por agricultores de los Estados Unidos y Europa. El New York Times describió este cambio en las reglas del comercio mundial como “ayudando a la gente más pobre del mundo”.

Pero la OMC, una organización que establece los estándares para las negociaciones de comercio internacional y la expansión en el marco del capitalismo, no es una agencia caritativa.

Las naciones participantes en la OMC, tanto las desarrolladas como las que están en vías de desarrollo, lidian durante la toma de decisiones en esta competencia implacable de un sistema económico de explotación.

Tan reciente como en septiembre del 2003, la administración de Bush se oponía inflexiblemente a rendirse por las subvenciones agrícolas, lo que condujo a un fracaso de las negociaciones de la OMC en Cancún. Sin duda, esta línea de mano dura tenía algo que ver con el hecho de que miles de millones de dólares en subvenciones estaban destinados, no a los pequeños agricultores empobrecidos en los Estados Unidos, sino a las agroindustrias gigantescas. Aproximadamente \$1,7 billones (miles de millones) en subvenciones iban solo para los productores industriales gigantes como la Cargill.

Mientras las grandes empresas eran subvencionadas, pequeñas familias agricultoras en los Estados Unidos estaban declarándose en quiebra. Particularmente devastados fueron los pequeños agricultores negros del Sur de los EE.UU., quienes habían sufrido por décadas la discriminación del Departamento de Agricultura (USDA por las siglas en inglés) que sistemáticamente les negaban o postergaban los préstamos. A pesar del fallo histórico de 1999 a favor de un grupo de pequeños agricultores negros que demandaron el USDA donde se había determinado la existencia de “indiferencia y discriminación descarada” contra agricultores negros en los programas de préstamos del departamento, a la mayoría todavía se le está siendo negada el pago del dictamen. Al seguir luchando, tanto en las cortes como ocupando las oficinas del USDA, muchos están perdiendo sus fincas al estar imposibilitados de cumplir con sus préstamos. De esta manera su tierra puede ser fácilmente usurpada por las grandes empresas agrícolas.

Pero ellos tienen el mismo espíritu de lucha que los campesinos y pobres agricultores en otras partes del mundo, cuyas tácticas militantes han forzado a sus gobiernos a presionar a las naciones ricas para lograr un alivio a su situación.

En Bolivia, los campesinos, mayormente del pueblo indígena, han bloqueado carreteras principales a través del país, paralizando el transporte en estados enteros, en protesta contra las políticas de libre comercio. Dos mil mujeres agricultoras en Brasil, ocuparon restaurantes y rodearon supermercados para expresar su coraje contra el control corporativo de la cadena alimenticia. Semejantes sublevaciones han ocurrido en muchos otros países, incluyendo a Argentina, India y Corea del Sur, donde algunos agricultores se han suicidado para atraer atención a su situación desesperada.

Miles de cultivadores de algodón del Oeste de África, impactados por la caída de precios alrededor del mundo, salieron en huelga para demandar justicia económica de sus gobiernos. Benín, Burkina Faso, Mali y Chad jugaron un papel destacado en la rebelión de países en vías de desarrollo en Cancún.

Ahora los Estados Unidos y Europa dicen que están dispuestos a acabar con las subvenciones a las grandes empresas agrícolas. Pero hasta la agencia de ayuda Oxfam dice, “Esto no va a cambiar nada en absoluto (la situación) de los africanos (en zonas) rurales quienes se están hundiendo en la miseria”.

De hecho, las negociaciones en la OMC se llevan a cabo para lubricar la maquinaria de libre comercio, para que los motores que cosechan las ganancias sigan funcionando. Para los agricultores que laboran para alimentar a los trabajadores del mundo, no habrá alivio duradero bajo el capitalismo. Y para los agricultores negros de los Estados Unidos, y los agricultores de algodón del Oeste de África, compitiendo entre sí bajo este sistema, no habrá justicia hasta que haya reparaciones plenas por la vida, trabajo y tierra robados a ellos. □

## Cien mil personas marchan en Khartoum:

# ¿Será Sudán el próximo Irak?

Por John Parker

El petróleo y los decepcionantes resultados para el imperialismo estadounidense en Irak han hecho que el continente africano se destaque.

Todo se está poniendo en lugar para lograr los objetivos del imperialismo estadounidense en Sudán. Ya la administración de Bush ha forzado sanciones y ha organizado tropas en la región bajo la cubierta de las Naciones Unidas.

Washington está usando la tragedia en el Sudán Occidental para justificar sus acciones. Las fuentes informativas de la ONU estiman que por lo menos 30.000 personas han perecido y más de un millón han sido desplazados por el conflicto.

Más de 100.000 personas marcharon en Khartoum, la capital de Sudán el 4 de agosto para protestar contra cualquier intervención extranjera. Los manifestantes dijeron que estaban listos para pelear contra los invasores, según reportó la cadena noticiosa inglesa BBC.

Como lo dijera el periódico Guardian en un artículo del 2 de agosto, muchas personas han fallado en notar la motivación principal para este renovado interés: “La ausencia de sospecha en el movimiento contra la guerra sobre la posibilidad de enviar tropas a Sudán es especialmente chocante en vista del hecho de que Darfur tiene petróleo.”

“Por dos años, los activistas han gritado que ‘no debe derramarse sangre por petróleo’ en Irak, pero parece que no se han fijado en que hay grandes reservas intactas tanto en el sur de Sudán como en el sur de Darfur.”

“Mientras los oleoductos continúan siendo destruidos en Irak, el occidente no solo tiene un motivo claro para establecer control sobre las fuentes alternativas de energía, sino que oficialmente también ha adoptado la política de que nuestros ejércitos deben ser usados precisamente para esto. Es extraño que la concesión de petróleo en el sur de Darfur está actualmente en manos de la Compañía Nacional de Petróleo de China. China es la inversionista más grande que tiene Sudán.”

En agosto de 1998, el presidente Clinton bombardeó Sudán, uno de los países más pobres en el mundo, usando evidencias falsas para acusar a Sudán de fabricar armamentos químicos. Después del bombardeo, en el 1998, una misión investigadora que incluyó al ex Fiscal General de los Estados Unidos, Ramsey Clark viajó a Sudán y reportó sobre las evidencias exponiendo así el terror ocasionado por los Estados Unidos contra Sudán.

El reporte hizo notar que la planta farmacéutica Al-Shifa había producido más del 50% de las medicinas en Sudán. Estas incluían el 90% de las medicinas más necesitadas. El bombardeo ocasionó el sufrimiento y muerte de decenas de miles de inocentes, muchos de ellos niños, privándoles de medicinas básicas contra la malaria, tuberculosis, y otras enfermedades fáciles de tratar.

El bombardeo fue la continuación de una política desestabilizante contra Sudán que se intensificó bajo el mandato del primer George Bush luego que el gobierno sudanés rehusara dar su apoyo a la guerra contra Irak en 1991. Washington consideró a Sudán como una nación vil y la administración de Bush forzó a la ONU para que implementara sanciones. El año antes de que Sudán rehusó unirse a la guerra del imperial-

ismo estadounidense contra Irak, Bush había calificado a Sudán como un buen modelo para la “democracia”.

El periódico Sunday Telegraph del 1 de agosto reportó que la base de la Marina estadounidense en el Campo Lemonier en Djibouti está llevando a cabo operaciones especiales antiterroristas en Sudán y en el Cuerno de África.

El gobierno sudanés ha intentado acomodar a los Estados Unidos permitiéndole la entrada de pequeñas cuadrillas de soldados estadounidenses como parte de visitas oficiales. Esto pasó el mes pasado durante el viaje del Secretario de Estado Colin Powell. A pesar de estos pasos conciliatorios, Sudán está ahora bajo la amenaza de una invasión internacional. En realidad la invasión ya ha comenzado.

El Sunday Telegraph reportó que un equipo de cinco soldados de las Fuerzas Especiales se separaron del grupo de Powell para ir en una misión de una semana a las Montañas de Kurush. La vigilancia aérea de los Estados Unidos dice que Al-Qaeda está operando en esa región.

El imperialismo francés, con su larga historia de colonialismo en Chad, está igualmente intensificando sus amenazas contra Sudán. La BBC reportó el 31 de julio que el ejército francés con cerca de 1.000 soldados en Chad se estaba moviendo hacia la frontera sudanesa. El embajador francés, Jean-Pierre Bercot dijo a la BBC desde la capital de Chad, N’Djamena, que 200 soldados franceses serían desplegados en la frontera este de Chad con Sudán.

La resolución redactada por los Estados Unidos que adoptó el Consejo de Seguridad el 30 de julio exige que Sudán de fin a las batallas en la región de Darfur. Aunque el gobierno sudanés ha tenido negociaciones con los partidos en guerra y castigó severamente a los combatientes las acciones punitivas de la resolución está en efecto.

La resolución requiere que el Secretario General de la ONU Kofi Annan publique un reporte en 30 días sobre los avances logrados en cada una de esas áreas. La resolución fue adoptada por el Consejo de Seguridad de la ONU solo después que los EE.UU. abandonaran la palabra “sanciones” y en vez agregaran “medidas” económicas y diplomáticas.

Como fue reportado por la emisora británica, BBC, el 31 de julio, el embajador de Sudan a la ONU, Elfatih Erwa, y el embajador a la Unión Africana, Osman al-Said, dijeron en distintas ocasiones que Khartoum iba a cumplir.

“No nos sentimos muy contentos con la resolución, pero sí la vamos a implementar —no tenemos otra opción”, dijo el señor al-Said a reporteros en la capital de Etiopía, Addis Abeba, a principios de esta semana”.

El escenario está listo para la repetición de un acto de pillaje por parte de los imperialistas estadounidenses bajo el pretexto de operaciones “humanitarias” y apoyado por los poderes imperialistas de Europa— siempre y cuando el movimiento progresista aquí reconozca la intervención por lo que realmente es y con tiempo suficiente para resistirla aquí en los EE.UU.

John Parker, quien acompañó al ex fiscal general de los EE.UU., Ramsey Clark en su misión a Sudan en 1998, es el candidato presidencial del Partido Mundo Obrero (Workers World Party).

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