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Iraqi resistance shows the world

U.S. empire doomed to fail

By John Catalinotto

Sept. 14—A car bomb blasted a Baghdad police headquarters today, killing dozens of Iraqis lined up to apply for jobs on the force. In Buqouba, gunfire killed 11 officers. And in an early-morning attack where oil pipelines cross the Tigris River near Beiji, 155 miles north of Baghdad, fiery oil spills lit the waters as power went out.

While these reports indicate the general turmoil caused by the U.S.-led occupation, another more eloquently depicted the disaster facing the murderous Pentagon war machine.

On Sept. 12, the Iraqi resistance forces lobbed mortar shells into a Baghdad neighborhood, destroying a U.S. Bradley Fighting Vehicle. Dozens of Iraqi youngsters danced in glee around the destroyed killing machine. Two U.S. helicopters then fired shells at the young people, killing 15. Among the dead were a 12-year-old girl and an al-Arabiya television journalist, Mazen al-Tumeizi.

U.S. jets continued bombing Falluja, the first city liberated by the resistance.

The picture this all painted was that of the U.S. military as an alien force striking from the outside. No loyal Iraqi forces lead the way into battle with insurgents. All civilians cheer the destruction of the occupying army.

Even in the Baghdad car bombing, where civilians were killed along with those lining up for collaborator's jobs as cops, surviving civilians blamed the occupation. "Angry crowds of young men pumped their fists in the air and denounced President Bush and Iraqi Prime Minister Iyad Allawi, saying they had failed to protect Iraqis. 'Bush is a dog,' they chanted." (AP, Sept. 14)

These reports showed that despite new Pentagon bombings and killings, the U.S. invasion and occupation has been defeated. It was much the same way that the Tet Offensive in 1968, a nationwide uprising, showed that the U.S. attempt to rule Vietnam had failed. The only questions left were how many more guerrillas and GIs would die before the U.S. rulers pulled out for good.

It took many more bombings, a failed invasion of Cambodia

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and another five years before the troops finally left Vietnam, and another two years for the war to end.

Now in Iraq the Pentagon has started to step up military attacks on the resistance. This too seems headed for failure.

Bathsheba Crocker is an analyst with the U.S. Center for Strategic and International Studies, which is considered a "conservative" think tank. "The security situation is chaotic and it seems to be deteriorating," she said of Iraq. She added that the insurgents' attacks in the capital were "probably very deliberate. No security in Baghdad means there is no security in the country.

"It signifies that the insurgency is growing in sophistication and organization. It is more capable of carrying out all these major and synchronized attacks," she concluded.

The Sept. 14 New York Times had the following analysis: "But as the Americans and their allies raise the pressure on the insurgents, they are rapidly finding themselves in the classic dilemma faced by governments battling guerrilla movements: ease up, and the insurgency may grow; crack down, and risk losing the support of the population."

Iraqis, like Harith al-Dhari, the chairperson of the Association of Muslim Scholars, think the latest U.S. aggressiveness is doomed to fail. "When you push the Iraqi people, and you harm the Iraqi people, you will just cause them to fight back harder," Dhari stated. "The idea that force will be enough to calm the Iraqis is a false dream." □

FROM REPUBLICAN CONVENTION TO MWM — See page 4

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Black farmers demand justice—once again

By Monica Moorehead

“Land is the basis of all independence. Land is the basis of freedom, justice and equality.”—Malcolm X

The struggle of Black farmers to win a semblance of social justice from the U.S. government has not gone away. In fact, it is very much alive.

Five years ago, thousands of African American farmers sued the United States Department of Agriculture, charging decades-long racist discrimination. Another class-action lawsuit, by many of the same farmers against this same USDA and for similar reasons, was filed Sept. 9. Many of these farmers are based in the Black Belt, the land comprising fertile, rich soil in the South.

This latest lawsuit seeks \$20.5 billion in damages, and class-action status for upwards of 25,000 Black farmers who grew or tried to grow crops between 1997 and 2004. The lawsuit exposes how the USDA retaliated against many of the farmers who won money from the 1999 lawsuit. The USDA denied them new loans and subsidies, from the time that lawsuit was settled until now.

The Black Farmers and Agriculturalist Association and 11 other plaintiffs filed the lawsuit in Washington, D.C., on behalf of these farmers.

In August, the Environmental Working Group and the National Black Farmers Association released a report denouncing the 1999 settlement because the courts have dismissed the overwhelming majority of these farmers' claims of being systematically denied federal loans to farm.

In other words, the farmers charge the U.S. government with racism.

This report states that out of an estimated 96,000 Black farmers who sought restitution under the 1999 class-action lawsuit, more than 72,000 saw their claims rejected in arbitration. Another 7,800 claims were dropped for failing to meet “filing deadlines.”

Many of the farmers have gone on record saying they were not made aware of any USDA deadlines for filing claims.

When the 1999 lawsuit was approved, a judge proclaimed that it would be the largest civil-rights lawsuit in U.S. history, and that \$2 billion would be shared by the 96,000 farmers. As of today, less than \$815 million has been paid to just a little over 13,000 farmers.

Minus lawyers' fees and other costs, these farmers have received on average about \$50,000 or less—a mere drop in the bucket.

“The last thing in the world the African American should be denied is the right to farm—that is the reason we were brought here [slavery—MM]. ... Farming should be an entitlement to Black folk. Our great-grandfathers and great-grandmothers paid for that opportunity,” said Thomas Burrell, president of the Black Farmers and Agriculturalist Association. (Associated Press, Sept. 9)

Black farmers staged many sit-ins at local USDA offices in the South in 2001-2002 to bring media attention to their plight.

Fighting extinction

These farmers' struggle is rooted in the legacy of U.S. slavery and Jim Crow racism.

The Emancipation Proclamation of 1863 did not deliver the promise of 40 acres and a mule to the former slaves,



Black farmers and their families rally outside of USDA on Aug. 22.

PHOTO: INDYMEDIA

but the short-lived radical Reconstruction period did breathe some life into Black farming.

There was an increase in land ownership. African Americans owned 3 million acres by 1875, 8 million in 1890 and 12 million in 1900.

By 1910, African American farmers owned an estimated 15 million acres, with 175,000 farms fully owned, 43,000 partially owned and 670,000 sharecropped. (foodfirst.org)

Black ownership of the land continued to thrive even under semi-enslaved conditions after the Great Compromise of 1877. This act instructed Northern troops to leave former slaves unprotected from former slave masters, which undermined the struggle for full social equality for Black people in the South.

Sharecropping was the U.S. version of feudalism. Black farmers were treated like serfs or tenants. In essence, the white landowners leased them a small plot of land to grow food. A smaller portion of this food was for subsistence for themselves and their families. The larger portion of the crops went to the white landowners, who sold the food on the market to make a profit.

According to foodfirst.org: “In 1920, 925,000 farmers (14 percent of all farms) were African American. By 1950, Black land ownership had declined to 12 million acres, and in 1969 it was down to 5.5 million acres, a drop of 54 percent in just 20 years.

“Between 1982 and 1992, the number of Black farmers in the United States dropped by 43 percent, from 33,250 to 18,816.14. A 1990 House Committee report said Black farmers were on the verge of extinction.

“At that time, African Americans made up roughly 1 percent of the nation's farmers and were disappearing at a rate almost five times greater than whites. The African American farm owners who still survive are bucking a dismal trend.

“In 1999, less than 18,000 African American farmers, out of a total 1.9 million U.S. farmers, owned less than 1 million acres. It was then predicted that by the year 2000, there would be no Black-owned land in America.”

The answer is solidarity

Historically, white farmers have been pitted against farmers of color by succumbing to a more privileged sta-

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WW CALENDAR

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| <p>NEW YORK</p> <p>Sat., Sept. 18
Rally for socialist candidates John Parker, Teresa Gutierrez and Leilani Dowell. 2 p.m. at P.S. 41, 116 W. 11 St., Manhattan. For info (212) 627-2994.</p> <p>HARTFORD, CONN.</p> <p>Wed., Sept 22
Meet WWP candidates John Parker, Teresa Gutierrez, Leilani Dowell. 7 p.m. Grace Episcopal Church, 55 New Park Ave. For info (860) 728-0599</p> <p>BOSTON</p> <p>Thurs., Sept. 23
WWP Candidates Forum. Hear Parker, Gutierrez and Dowell.</p> | <p>6:30 p.m. At 284 Armory St. For info (617) 983-3836.</p> <p>PROVIDENCE, R.I.</p> <p>Fri., Sept. 24
Hear Parker, Gutierrez and Dowell. For info (401) 726-2922.</p> <p>VERMONT
Sponsored by Liberty Union Party. Hear John Parker, Teresa Gutierrez.</p> <p>Sat., Sept. 25
7 p.m. At the River Garden Main & High Streets intersection, Brattleboro.</p> <p>Sun., Sept. 26
7 p.m. At Socialist Labor Hall, Barre.</p> |
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Workers World

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'Spirit of America' invades Worcester, Mass.

Youth protesters: 'Union jobs, not poverty draft!'

By Bryan G. Pfeifer
Worcester, Mass.

The city of Worcester welcomed the Army with open arms when it arrived to recruit youths and students en masse through its "Sprit of America" road show spectacle Sept. 10-11. The show glorifies imperialist plunder, from Native people in North America to the current occupation of Iraq, using patriotic multi-media theater techniques.

About 400 soldiers—members of the U.S. Army's "elite" ceremonial units, the 3rd Infantry Regiment and the U.S. Army Band—participated in the two-hour show, twice a day. Thousands of people came from throughout the Northeast.

Many attendees were elementary- and high-school-aged students who had been given free tickets and a day off school Sept. 10 by Worcester's school administration. Some news reports estimated that as many as 10,000 students attended the morning show.

According to Worcester School Committee member Joseph C. O'Brien, the administration has denied requests for students to attend an anti-war teach-in and an educational event celebrating the day same-sex marriage became legal in Massachusetts. In an open letter to the Worcester School Committee, O'Brien wrote: "So, let's get this straight. If you want to go on a trip to learn about peaceful alternatives to war run by academics, or if you want to take part in activities centered around a historic day in the community's struggle for Civil Rights, you can't go. But if you want to go to a pro-military rally run by the Department of Defense, take the whole school day. This is simply wrong."

Before and after being subjected to the "Spirit of America's" jingoist, racist, super-aggressive, heterosexist, misogynist and patriarchal show, students were preyed upon by Army Junior Reserve Officer

Training Corps officers attempting to recruit them. Officers obtained students' contact information and took pictures of them.

But progressive and revolutionary students and their allies fought back. Armed with counter-recruiting literature, banners and placards declaring, "War is not entertainment," "Bring the troops home now" and other slogans, dozens of protesters stood their ground despite intimidation by Army personnel and chauvinists.

"I don't think it's acceptable to have students take a field trip and miss class time to watch, essentially, a recruitment spectacle," said student organizer Chris Caesar.

Alex Gould, member of the youth/student organization FIST—Fight Imperialism Stand Together—and Food and Commercial Workers Local 328 in Providence, R.I., agreed. "This macabre extravaganza recruitment tour should settle the issue for our generation once and for all—that the system of imperialism has nothing to offer the youth, even in the United States."

War on youth/students

A working-class city with a long history of union and other progressive struggles, Worcester is the third-biggest city in New England, with a population of 172,000 of whom 30 percent are oppressed people and 35 percent are under the age of 24, according to the U.S. Census Bureau.

Instead of building jobs-creation and other social-service programs for youths and students affected by de-industrialization and the scientific-technological revolution, the city's ruling class, like others across the country, is sacrificing them to the poverty draft.

According to the United States Army Junior ROTC website, JROTC is "a continuing success story." Of course it doesn't specify for whom.

JROTC came into being with the pas-

sage of the National Defense Act of 1916. Under the act's provisions, high schools were loaned federal military equipment and assigned active-duty military personnel as instructors.

From six units in 1916, JROTC has expanded to 1,555 schools today, the largest of the "armed forces" reserve units. JROTC exists in every state in the United States—and in countries with a U.S. military presence, including Guam, Germany and South Korea.

Currently, some 300,000 high school students aged 13-18 are taught by 3,900 active duty Army retirees.

In 1992, after the Los Angeles rebellion when the racist police who beat Black motorist Rodney King were acquitted of all charges, President George H.W. Bush responded by pushing an initiative to double the number of JROTC programs from 1,500 to 3,000. Now, in the absence of a draft, President George W. Bush is continuing the expansion. In 2002 he oversaw the passage of the Defense Authorization Bill, which removed the 1992 federal limit of 3,500 JROTC programs.

The Congressional Budget Office expects the number of JROTC units to surpass 3,500 by next year.

Nationally oppressed students are a particular target of recruiters, according to a 1999 report titled "Junior Reserve Officers' Training Corps: Contributions to America's Communities," published by the Center for Strategic and International Studies, an imperialist think tank.

In the academic year 1995-1996, African American students made up approximately 15 percent of the U.S. high school population. But African American JROTC enrollment rose from 25 percent in 1994-95 to 33 percent in 1996-97. The increase continues.

Similar statistics reveal the same pat-

tern for Latin@ and other oppressed students. And although the report claims percentages of white recruiting have stabilized or are decreasing, the Pentagon also preys on disaffected white youths in working-class communities like Worcester.

The Army is stepping up more sophisticated marketing such as using hip-hop music, multi-media techniques and free-giveaway gimmicks to recruit. "The hip-hop market has a vast fan base," said Col. Thomas Nickerson, the Army's national advertising director, in an October 2003 Newsweek interview.

But, as proven at the protests against the Democratic and Republican conventions and elsewhere, there's also a big, growing movement of multi-national youths and students fighting back.

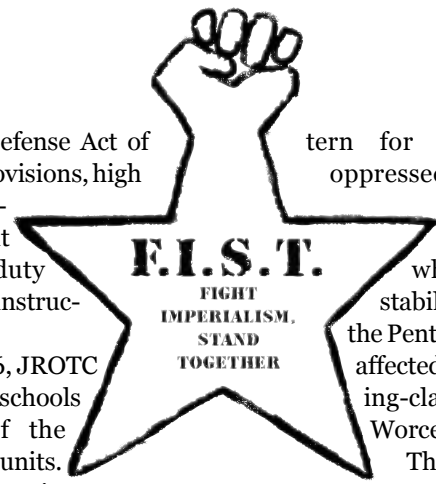
Gould concluded: "We've got to help other young people see through the lies now and organize against this recruitment because if the war makers don't snare enough of us with this they're coming after us with the draft next. Now's the time to fight back! Union yes, war no!"

Youths and students will have a few major opportunities to fight back in the coming weeks.

The "Spirit of America" will roll through Washington, D.C.'s MCI Center, 601 F Street, NW, Sept. 17-18 (www.mccenter.com) and Albany, New York's Pepsi Arena, 51 South Pearl Street Albany, Sept. 24-25 (www.pepsiarena.com).

The Million Worker March will also have a youth/student contingent. See: www.millionworkermarch.org.

For more information and resources on counter-recruiting and the G.I. resistance movement see: www.join-snafu.org and www.nodraftnoway.org. □



Times Square

Anti-war message rings out

By Dustin Langley
New York

Anti-war activists brought their message—"No more lives for George Bush's lies!"—to Times Square in midtown Manhattan at the height of rush hour on Sept. 10.

The action was organized by New York ANSWER, the International Action Center and SNAFU, a support organization for GI resistance, after the Defense Department reported that 1,000 GIs had been killed during the Pentagon war against Iraq. Demonstrators carried placards with photos of both U.S. and Iraqi casualties of what they charged is a war for empire.

A number of passersby stopped and joined the picket line. Three of the activists who took part in the event had been arrested the week before during the Republican National Convention protests.

For more information on upcoming anti-war actions contact the IAC: (212) 633-6646.

Langley is a GI resistance counselor for SNAFU.

WW PHOTO: DEIRDRE GRISWOLD



From Republican Convention to Million Worker March: The struggle continues

By Fred Goldstein
New York

The following is based on a talk delivered at a Sept. 10 Workers World Party forum.

During the last week of August hundreds of thousands of people took to the streets to demonstrate against the Republican National Convention here. They did so in the face of an unprecedented campaign of preemptive psychological warfare of intimidation and threats by the entire capitalist establishment. And we of Workers World Party pay special tribute to the many thousands who braved all the threats and went beyond the pre-convention demonstration on Aug. 29, and engaged in various types of resistance and civil disobedience during the RNC itself.

Two thousand people, mostly young, of all political persuasions, were arrested. They may not have come to confront the cops. But the cops confronted them and they refused to leave the streets. We salute them and stand in solidarity with their struggle, including our own comrades and friends who were arrested.

The establishment announced its repressive campaign months in advance in order to forestall these protests. One way to understand the ferocity and unity with which the ruling class prepared and carried out this mass repression is to see it in the context of the deepening quagmire in Iraq and Afghanistan and the damage by the resistance there to the reputation of U.S. imperialism as the all-powerful imperialist colossus.

While the establishment wanted to stop a Seattle-type development in New York City, the more haunting historical precedent for them was the Chicago Democratic Convention of 1968. That is what they were thinking about.

Thousands and thousands of youth came to Chicago in 1968 because of their hatred of the Vietnam War and to make their voices heard because they thought that they could end the war by promoting Eugene McCarthy as the Democratic pres-

idential candidate. They were met by a wall of police and a rebellion was ignited. All the capitalist media was there, as they are at all the conventions, and the youth chanted: "The whole world is watching."

And, indeed, the whole world was watching, as U.S. imperialism was not only losing the war in Vietnam, but was losing control over the youth and the anti-war struggle.

In the months before the 2004 Republican National Convention it became clear that Washington and the Pentagon were becoming bogged down in another imperialist quagmire—Iraq. And the Bush administration was reviled, not only for the occupation, but for its overall reactionary policy.

Washington was losing control of the cities in Iraq and it was desperately determined to maintain control over the streets of New York City during the RNC. Should the hated Bush trigger a Chicago-type rebellion it would be a signal of instability at home for the whole world to see, just like in 1968. Of course that was a different period, but nevertheless, the stakes for the ruling class were the same.

Repression: The perfect storm

The federal government, the state government and the New York City government all united in an effort allied with Wall Street to break up any momentum toward such a rebellion early on.

To understand the situation, you have to know the mayor of New York. Michael Bloomberg has \$4 billion dollars and he made it by supplying financial information to Wall Street and the ruling class about every single capitalist financial trading process that takes place in every market across the globe. He's on the most intimate terms with the highest echelons of the ruling class.

And New York City Police Commissioner Ray Kelly is not just an ordinary cop. He was the head of global security for Bear Stearns, one of the largest brokerage houses.

And, of course, Bush himself is a creature of the billionaires.

It was a perfect merger, with perfect unity of purpose. There was not one voice of dissent among the capitalist class or any of its principle organs. They were all for crushing any resistance before it started and once it got started they supported the repression—including unprovoked mass arrests, throwing nets around people, setting up mass detentions facilities, helicopter surveillance and the massive police assault forces on the streets.

You might say that this was a classical demonstration of capitalist democracy. Capitalist democracy, as Marxists know, and as Lenin pointed out many times, is

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Please order as many of these t-shirts as you can. Encourage your union local or community, student or interfaith organization to place their orders together. A minimum OF (3) t-shirts are required to be placed for each order. Go the Million Worker March Web site or send your check or money order to Million Worker March Committee, ILWU Local 10; 400 Northpoint, SF, CA 94133.

accompanied by ferocious repression. The Black community in this country knows this; the Latino, Asian, Native and Middle Eastern communities know this.

The two big capitalist parties are going to hold the elections on Nov. 2. They are going to tout their "democracy" at work. Meanwhile they have just finished crushing in a most undemocratic way the right of the people to come out on the streets to protest militantly against a brutal imperialist war and the oppression of the people at home. That's capitalist democracy—it's "democratic" as long as you stay within the framework of what the ruling class considers its vital interests.

The ruling class decided that under conditions of an imperialist occupation in crisis, declining economic conditions of the people, a growing hatred of the administration, protection of their vaunted president—chief executive of the boss class—and the need to show stability at home, it was in their vital interests to maintain iron control of the streets of New York City. So democracy went out the window and police repression moved to front and center stage—including preventive detention, arbitrary round-ups, violation of privacy, etc.

So when Bush or Kerry say that "We're waging war for democracy" let's remind everyone about this.

A new movement emerges

This strengthening of the capitalist state in New York City was part of the general gearing up of the ruling class for future battles. They are afraid of New York City because it is a bastion of the labor movement, with annual, huge Labor Day marches. It is the political capital of the Black community; it has two million people who come out to Caribbean Day, massive Puerto Rican Day parades, a huge Dominican community. The city's population is a majority people of color.

The threats of repression during the RNC were not just against demonstrators but to the city as a whole and to all the urban centers with vast concentrations of workers and oppressed peoples—Chicago, Los Angeles, Atlanta, Houston, Pittsburgh, Birmingham and so on.

But their repressive measures and their tactics of intimidation can and will be pushed back once the awakening struggles of the workers, youth and the movement against the war begin to merge with the class struggle.

And it is just such a prospect which is before us with the emergence of the movement for the Million Worker March being organized for Oct. 17. There is a beautiful poster, which is not only beautiful because of its striking and colorful appearance, but because it is a declaration of class independence of the labor movement. It makes demands against the war, against racism, for education instead of incarceration, as well as for wages, pensions, health care, and so on. It declares its intention to give the rich a wake-up call.

And it does not appeal to John Kerry or make vague references to "opposing the Bush agenda" which has become the subterfuge for social democrats who want to rally the movement behind the Democrats. Instead it proclaims that they, as labor unionists, as workers, are "organizing in our own name."

As anyone can see this is a highly progressive step forward and we would support such a demonstration under any circumstances. But it also helps to see what is at stake in this mobilization if we try to put the Million Worker March into the

historical perspective of the struggle in the labor movement.

'Which side are you on?'

For many decades the heavy hand of business unionism, emanating from the top leadership of organized labor, has had a regressive and reactionary effect on the unions and, as a result, on the struggle of the working class as a whole.

The struggle within the labor movement as it developed with the accelerated development of capitalism after the Civil War in the United States was over which political course labor should take.

The first was the conservative, confining trade union philosophy, based on two important pillars.

One: that labor should limit its political activity to rewarding its "friends" in the capitalist political establishment at election time. That was to be the extent of the political organizing of the labor movement.

And two, that the unions should stick to fighting for wages, benefits and working conditions and leave all the social questions to the ruling class.

As against this position, the position of communists, socialists and all other class-conscious unionists was for the class independence of the labor movement, politically. That the workers should organize as a class and have their own political program and representatives.

Eugene Debs, who ran for president on the Socialist Party ticket twice, once while in jail, and who denounced WWI as a war between the ruling classes in which the bodies of the working classes were used as fodder, exemplified this approach (although even such a towering figure as Debs failed to grasp the vital importance of the struggle against racism).

The working class must assert itself as an independent force, as a class. And certainly the labor movement has the right and the responsibility to declare its political independence, in whatever form that takes, for the purposes of waging the class struggle. This independence should allow the labor movement to intervene in all political, social and economic matters that affect—not only the union movement—but the working class and the oppressed as a whole, whether on matters of social security, health care, education or imperialist war.

Workers organized in unions have a right to take up these vital questions. When they do this they reject being a mere economic category in capitalist society—"labor." Their interests are affected by everything that goes on inside and outside the workplace—from the halls of Congress and the White House to city hall. They begin to see themselves as the fundamental economic class, based on its role as producer of all wealth, capable of leading society out of the capitalist morass.

Above all the labor movement must fight on behalf of the communities and the working class as a whole outside the labor movement and for the most downtrodden stratum who so desperately need so many social services and who are harshly deprived day in and day out.

First step is decisive

Where does the Million Worker March stand from the standpoint of labor history? The Million Worker March, when considered in light of the historic struggle over the mission and role of the labor movement in U.S. capitalist society, is taking a bold and daring initiative in trying to break through decades and decades of

MWM builds steam

By Steven Ceci

The Million Worker March is picking up steam.

In New York City, AFSCME District Council 37, one of the public employee union's biggest councils, has endorsed the Million Worker March. AFSCME organizers are planning buses.

Also in New York, the 1199-Service Employees Joint Delegates Assembly passed a resolution in support of the march. Over 1,000 delegates were present.

Around the country, volunteers distributed fliers and sold T-shirts at Labor Day activities.

In Philadelphia, 4,000 flyers were distributed to an eager and enthusiastic crowd. In Atlanta, T-shirts were sold at a local Labor Day picnic. Nine hundred fliers were snapped up at a festival in Kensington, Md. □

confining, conservatizing, class collaborationist, business trade unionism.

The struggle to tame the labor movement—after its great breakthrough in the 1930s and the organizing in the mass production industries, gaining the right to organize and many other rights for the workers and the poor as a whole, including pensions, welfare, etc.—began before and during World War II and reached its peak during the McCarthy witch-hunt period.

Communists, socialists and progressive, militant class-conscious workers and labor unionists were the organizing engines behind the progress of the working class. And as long as they were rooted in the unions, the possibility—the potential—of class solidarity, socially conscious unionism, class struggle and political independence remained a threat to the ruling class.

The post World War II witch-hunt and the promotion of conservative union leaders loyal to U.S. imperialism and cooperative in ceding to the capitalist political establishment unchallenged political domination, was simultaneously directed against the Soviet Union, the entire socialist camp, and the labor movement in the U.S.

Communists and progressives were rooted out of union after union.

And later on during the 1960s, when as an expression of the rise of the Black liberation struggle in the U.S. militant African American organizers took the initiative in the unions to organize—especially in the auto industry—they were rooted out with the collaboration of the labor leadership.

So the Million Worker March movement, which is catching on and getting support within increasingly broader sections of the labor, at least in word and hopefully in deed, is the first serious attempt in decades from inside the labor movement to cast off the political shackles of traditional, conservative “business unionism” and chart a course of independence.

It has been made possible by the changed character of the working class under the impact of the scientific-technological revolution brought about by capitalism. The working class is more Black, more Latin@, more Asian and incorporates more millions of immigrant workers and more women. The working class is lower-paid, worked harder, and is more and more under pressure from capital.

It is no accident that a number of crucial leaders at the core of the movement for the Million Worker March are veterans of the Black liberation struggle of the 1960s. They have emerged to continue their struggle for justice within the framework of the labor union movement, and they have also brought the precious social consciousness of the earlier movement with them.

And today the condition of the working class has so declined and been so transformed that the MWM call to unionists to broaden their political, social and economic horizons by mobilizing on a class-wide basis, by mobilizing against the war, by calling on youth, students, community activists and all who are harmed by the system to join them in motion—this call is getting a wide response.

For decades radicals have been calling for the union movement to adopt a more progressive posture in politics and in all social questions, not just on paper but in action. Now a movement of genuine working-class leaders has arisen from inside the labor movement.

It is said that even a 10,000-mile journey begins with a single step. It is important to see the road that the Million Worker March is setting out upon. They are taking a vital first step on the road to class independence. This effort has enemies on all sides and in all quarters of the ruling class, which will do whatever it can to crush this movement, derail it, coopt it if necessary or marginalize it.

The success of this movement is important to the future of the struggle in the U.S. These leaders have taken up the challenge and our Party, and all progressives and revolutionaries, must lend their unstinting support to this spark of resistance and help fan the flames of struggle. □

ON THE PICKET LINE

BY SUE DAVIS

‘Troops home now!’

On Aug. 31, the 1,400 delegates of the 700,000-member Communications Workers union voted nearly unanimously at their annual convention in Anaheim, Calif., for a resolution that demands U.S. troops be brought “home safely now.”

The original resolution, however, didn’t contain that clause. After an amendment to end the U.S. military occupation in Iraq was raised from the floor, more than 50 delegates lined up to speak in favor of it. No one spoke against it.

At the Postal Workers union’s annual convention at the end of August, delegates passed a resolution calling for “an end to the U.S. occupation of Iraq, the implementation of a plan to turn over sovereignty to the people of Iraq as soon as possible, and the return of U.S. troops to their homes and families.”

The Mail Handlers and the Washington State Federation of Labor adopted similar resolutions at the end of August. Also, U.S. Labor Against the War reports that the Asian Pacific American Labor Alliance, the Labor Council for Latin American Advancement, the Coalition of Labor Union Women and Pride At Work—all allied organizations of the AFL-CIO—all voted within the last month to condemn the war and demand an immediate return of U.S. troops. Over the course of the past year dozens of labor councils, regional labor bodies, local unions and other labor organizations have taken similar action.

New overtime rules blocked, for now

Under great pressure from the AFL-CIO, the House of Representatives voted Sept. 10 to thwart the Bush administration from implementing radically revised rules for overtime. Feeling that pressure, even some Republicans voted against the proposed new rules, which would make approximately 6 million workers ineligible to collect overtime. The rules undermine the Fair Labor Standards Act, won by militant struggle in 1938.

But the struggle is far from over. The Bush administration is determined to line the bosses’ pockets by stealing what rightfully belongs to the workers. And Sen. John Kerry is not speaking out or making this important issue a priority. What can prevent such a crime—and embolden workers everywhere to fight for their rights—is a strong turnout at the Million Worker March on Oct. 17.

AFL-CIO immigrant worker project

The AFL-CIO voted during its August executive council meeting to set up an Immigrant Worker Project to meet the special needs of immigrant workers. Its newly appointed director, Ana Avendano-Denier, noted that this

is the first time the federation has made a concerted commitment to address those issues.

Avendano-Denier, who said she intends to work closely with other groups including the National Council of La Raza, the National Immigration Law Center and the National Immigration Forum, said the ultimate goal is to “improve the lives of immigrants.” One program under development is to help find a low-cost way for immigrant workers to send money home to their families. Avendano-Denier said that immigrant workers send an estimated \$32 billion a year to families in their homelands.

Janitors begin contract talks

One of the big issues on the negotiating table for the 28,000 janitors, elevator operators and maintenance workers at more than 1,000 office buildings in New York City is health-care coverage. The real-estate industry is demanding that the workers, represented by Service Employees Local 32BJ, begin paying some of the cost of their health

insurance. The workers say no.

In addition, the health fund covering the workers is nearly bankrupt because health-care costs have risen nearly 50 percent over the last three years. The union is threatening to go on strike Oct. 1 unless the real-estate industry closes the fund’s \$175 million operating deficit. Whatever settlement is reached will also affect the 27,000 unionized building-service workers at thousands of city apartment buildings. Stay tuned.

US Airways pilots refuse pay cuts

The pilots at US Airways have refused to accept \$295 million in annual wage and benefits cuts that the company says are needed to forestall bankruptcy. The leader of a militant group within the Air Line Pilots Association told the Sept. 8 New York Times that the cuts US Airways wants have “gone from need to greed.” US Airways wants a giveback agreement from the pilots before approaching the other unions. □

Black farmers demand justice—once again

Continued from page 2

tus. White farmers have not been victimized by the banks’ racist loan policies as have Black farmers and other farmers of color in disproportionate numbers. The banks and the U.S. government rely on racism to divide the farmers in order to keep the profits flowing into their coffers.

Consider these startling statistics—91.4 percent of 1997 farm loans went to white farmers, 2.3 percent to Black farmers, 4.2 percent to Latino farmers, and 1.2 percent to Native Americans. (Farmers Home Administration)

Getting a loan from a bank is the only way a farmer can buy expensive earth-moving equipment, seed and much more that is needed in order to plant and sustain crops.

In 2003, the revolutionary Cuban government signed an agreement to buy crops from some of the Black farmers in the United States with the assistance of

the NAACP. The Cubans did this to expose the fact that crops grown by Black farmers were being excluded from the worldwide capitalist market.

The emergence of imperialist agribusiness on a global scale has helped to impoverish peasants and farm workers around the world, and to accelerate the demise of the livelihood of hundreds of thousands of farmers of all nationalities in the United States due to capitalist restructuring. White farmers’ privileged position is fading more and more as foreclosures and seizures of farmers’ land by agribusiness intensifies.

It would be in the interests of white farmers to show concrete support for this current lawsuit against the USDA initiated by Black farmers. It is this kind of anti-racist class solidarity that would shake the very foundations of the agribusiness bosses and the U.S. government. □

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Bush & Kerry—evil & lesser-of-two-evils

What's the antidote to election-year quagmire?

By Greg Butterfield

With the U.S. presidential election less than two months away, both the Democratic and Republican candidates are running to the right, and alienating the left wings of their own respective parties in the process.

On Sept. 9, the Rev. Jesse Jackson lashed out at Sen. John Kerry, the Democratic nominee, in a CNN interview. Jackson has campaigned on Kerry's behalf, trying to galvanize support among African Americans and labor unions. But he said the Kerry campaign was frustrating his efforts at every step.

In particular, Jackson was angry that Kerry boycotted a West Virginia "Invest in America" jobs rally organized by labor and civil-rights groups. Jackson spoke at the rally, which drew 30,000 people. Kerry, campaigning just 30 miles away, didn't show up.

Jackson criticized Kerry for "distancing himself from his base"—those in the African American community, women's and lesbian/gay/bi/trans movements, labor unions, etc., who traditionally vote for Democratic candidates. He said Kerry's ballyhooed "shakeup" of his nearly all-white campaign staff was inadequate. "It can't be just a vanilla shake," Jackson stated.

There are signs that Kerry's campaign is in trouble, from falling poll numbers to a pro-Bush turn in the corporate media, despite enormous popular anger at Bush and his program of "endless war."

Kerry has doggedly sold himself to Big Business as the best candidate to successfully carry out the occupation of Iraq. But recent events have undercut this appeal. As the Iraqi resistance grows ever wider and fiercer, there is less of a basis for Kerry's plan to "internationalize" the occupation.

At the same time, his belligerent, pro-war stance is increasingly alienating anti-Bush, anti-war progressives—like the 500,000 who marched in New York Aug. 29 against the Republican National Convention.

Meanwhile, the Log Cabin Republicans announced they would not endorse President George W. Bush's re-election

campaign because of his push for a constitutional amendment banning same-sex marriage. The gay Republican group's board voted 22-2 to withhold its endorsement—the first time it has done so. (Washington Blade, Sept. 10)

The decision followed the Republican National Convention's adoption of a viciously anti-gay party platform that attacked other forms of "legal recognition and the accompanying benefits" for same-sex couples in addition to marriage. Top Republicans had earlier promised to remove the language.

"It is impossible to overstate the depth of anger and disappointment caused by the president's support for an anti-family Constitutional amendment," said Log Cabin political director Chris Barron. "This amendment would not only ban gay marriage, it would also jeopardize civil unions and domestic partnerships."

A different kind of election campaign

Workers in the United States have grown accustomed to demoralizing elections where they can count on being ignored, put down or stabbed in the back by the candidates who supposedly represent them.

To see how differently an election struggle can be waged, just look at the successful campaign to stop the recall of Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez on Aug. 15.

President Chavez won enormous popular support as the leader of the Bolivarian revolutionary process. He established an international policy independent of the U.S., including friendly relations with socialist Cuba and opposition to the Iraq war. His government diverted the country's oil profits away from Western banks and put them into projects to benefit the impoverished workers and peasants.

While Bush seeks to write the right of same-sex marriage out of the U.S. Constitution, the Bolivarian Constitution, adopted under Chavez's leadership, enshrines the rights of lesbian, gay, bi and trans people, as well as Afro-Venezuelans, Indigenous people and women.

On paper, the Venezuelan oligarchy seemed to hold all the cards in its bid to run President Chavez out of office. Just like in



the United States, the wealthy ruling class has a virtual monopoly on the mass media. And they had the complete backing of U.S. imperialism—including generous funding and guidance from Washington's National Endowment for Democracy.

But Chavez and his supporters mobilized workers and peasants in a struggle against the recall. Teams went door-to-door and village-to-village consolidating mass support for President Chavez. Huge demonstrations were held. Neighborhood Bolivarian Circles prepared for militant action in the event of fraud or a coup d'état. People's organization helped get voters to the polls and made sure no one blocked them from voting because of their class, race or gender.

The recall attempt was decisively defeated.

Imagine the impact of such a struggle here against the Bush regime.

ABB = despair

Billionaire Senator Kerry is unlikely to galvanize that kind of movement behind him. Not only is his program devoid of progressive content—Kerry recently declared himself the "true candidate of conservative values"—but he has done everything possible to distance himself from any and all protest movements against Bush.

Kerry even appointed Stan Greenberg, an advisor to the Venezuelan right wing in the recall against President Chavez, to his campaign staff!

While millions of working-class people have been taught to view the Democratic Party as their representative, it is actually a creature of rapacious U.S. capitalism.

It originated as the party of the Southern Slavocracy before the Civil War. In the Twentieth Century, the Democrats morphed into the "soft cop" that could be used to co-opt and derail independent movements of the workers and oppressed by offering a few crumbs in exchange for class peace. But like the Republican Party, it is tied to the wealthy ruling class by a

million threads and serves its interests.

Kerry is exposing the Democratic Party's true face to the masses.

He dissed Latinos by coming out against driver's licenses for immigrants. He opposes same-sex marriage rights. He supports the Patriot Act, and missed a crucial vote on extending unemployment insurance, sending it to defeat. He's taken belligerent positions against Palestine, Cuba, Venezuela and North Korea, to name a few.

Kerry was one of the 100 senators who refused to hear the Congressional Black Caucus's protest over Bush's disenfranchisement of African American voters in Florida in 2000.

Official statistics released in August showed that the ranks of the poor and uninsured swelled again in 2003. Yet rather than offering an emergency program to provide jobs, income, housing and health care, Kerry instead chose to engage in a hypocritical debate with Bush over his military record during the criminal U.S. war in Vietnam.

And while the Bush junta carries out war crimes against the heroic Iraqi resistance, Kerry had the nerve to slap his supporters in the face—again—saying he would have voted to invade Iraq even knowing there were no "weapons of mass destruction."

As the 1,000th U.S. GI died in Iraq in early September, Kerry promised to bring the troops home before the end of his first term—that is, in four long years!

A raft of articles have appeared since the RNC by progressives in the "Anybody But Bush" current, bemoaning Kerry's loss of momentum and highlighting the rotten qualities of his campaign, on websites and publications like ZNet, Common Dreams, The Black Commentator and more.

Though some of these articles contain useful dirt on Kerry, all of them are permeated with a feeling of despair, summed up by columnist Lorenzo Kippler's appeal: "Vote for Kerry ... Don't consider your decision to be a choice between the lesser

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of two evils.' Instead, think of a Kerry vote as a return to the status quo ante—a small step back from the Apocalypse.”

All out for Million Worker March!

What's missing from the “Anybody But Bush” perspective is the most important thing—the struggle. It is devoid of the idea that workers, oppressed people, women, LGBT people, immigrants, youths and students, and rank-and-file GIs could be mobilized to fight independently in their own interests.

But all is not doom and gloom. Far from it. There is something new in the air that is wholly in the spirit of the Venezuelan struggle.

It's called the Million Worker March.

This movement, whose inaugural event is set for Oct. 17 in Washington, D.C., was initiated by Black-led Local 10 of the International Longshore & Warehouse Union in San Francisco and championed by African American leaders of AFSCME and Teamsters councils in New York City.

It has struck a chord with rank-and-file unionists of all nationalities with its call to “organize in our own name” for jobs, wages, health care, and to bring the troops home now—not in four years. The idea has caught on, spreading through the country like wildfire. More union locals, district councils, community and anti-war organizations are coming aboard every day.

The MWM is an important step in the direction of independent, class-struggle politics by a sector of the labor movement. That it comes during such a difficult election year only highlights the powerful discontent that exists under the thin surface of U.S. electoral politics.

Also spreading this fight-back message is the Workers World Party election campaign by three militant workers and people of color: John Parker for president, Teresa Gutierrez for vice president and LeiLani Dowell for Congress.

After a rally in New York City Sept. 18, these socialist candidates will tour the country, talking about the need to build an independent movement, why workers should have their own party, and mobilizing for the MWM.

The struggle won't be over when the votes are cast Nov. 2. Developments like the Million Worker March and the Parker-Gutierrez-Dowell campaign ensure that forces will be in motion to confront whoever is in the White House next year to demand jobs, equality and an end to the war.

Butterfield is co-campaign manager for the WWP Presidential Campaign Committee.

WWP on ballot in R.I.

The Workers World Party Presidential Campaign Committee announced Sept. 15 that presidential and vice-presidential candidates John Parker and Teresa Gutierrez will be on the ballot in Rhode Island in November.

Kathy Durkin of the national campaign office praised WWP members and friends who “worked hard to get the required number of signatures of validated registered voters under Rhode Island's stringent ballot access regulations.”

A full report will appear in next week's WW. □

Support the real people's candidates

This fall Workers World Party candidates John Parker, Teresa Gutierrez and LeiLani Dowell will carry the message of independent, working-class struggle and socialism across the country, from New York, six New England cities, Philadelphia and Baltimore on the East Coast, to Buffalo, Detroit and Chicago in the Midwest, to San Francisco, Los Angeles and San Diego in the West, to Richmond, Birmingham, Houston and other cities in the South.

DENVER

Workers, students welcome socialist candidates

By Minnie Bruce Pratt

As Bush and Kerry compete over who is the best friend to Big Business, the Workers World Party election campaign is crisscrossing the United States with its message of solidarity with workers and oppressed people.

Presidential candidate John Parker and vice-presidential candidate Teresa Gutierrez spent four whirlwind days in Denver Sept. 6-9. There they found working people excited about the campaign as a way to connect the elections to the living struggle.

They also found more confirmation of how serious the economic crisis is in the U.S., and how racism here is rampant.

The candidates met with a wide spectrum of people, from junior high students to city workers.

Parker conferred with a group of Black workers who are being systematically laid off or demoted from city jobs. They are in an intense, ongoing struggle against the city administration's racism and discrimination.

Muslim community activist Shakir Aleem arranged that meeting and also set up a visit by the candidates to a junior high school. They met with Latino and African American students labeled “troubled” by the oppressive school system. But these young people listened and asked questions with attentive concentration, showing that the “trouble” is with a system that marginalizes and targets them.

In Denver, police brutality is on the rise, with a Black or Latino/a person, usually a young man, beaten or killed on average once a month.

In another visit initiated by local African American organizer Larry Hales, the candidates got a warm welcome from students and activists at the Auraria Higher Education Center, part of an educational complex with the Community College of Denver, Metropolitan State

College and the University of Colorado.

Later the candidates were guests on a local Denver TV program. And in Boulder they appeared on a public radio political program, where an unusually high number of listeners called in with questions about the relationship between socialism and capitalism. One listener dialed up just to say that she was a grandmother who loved the candidates' message and wanted to send a donation to the campaign.

Gutierrez commented after the trip that homelessness was clearly visible in Denver, with both people of color and white people living on the streets.

She also noted the rise of racist attacks against immigrants and other people of color there. Recently, Mexican and Chicano workers exiting a local movie theater after a film sympathetic to immigrants were met with a blizzard of racist propaganda shoved under their car windshields.

The Mexican community promptly organized an outpouring of protest against the material distributed by the National Alliance, a white supremacist group. The progressive, anti-racist film, “A Day Without a Mexican,” shows what the devastating economic impact would be on California without the wealth created by immigrant Mexican workers.

Those attending the candidates' meetings voiced their desire to build the struggle against the war and for economic justice. Workers were keenly interested in the upcoming Million Worker March on Oct. 17 in Washington, D.C., and plans are in the works for the formation of a MWM committee in Denver.

The Workers World Party election campaign is attracting people who want to struggle, and giving working people in the U.S. a tool for moving forward. The candidates are giving dynamic arguments why neither Kerry nor Bush is the solution—and socialism is. □

PARKER-GUTIERREZ-DOWELL

Coming to a city near you!

Workers World Party candidates John Parker, Teresa Gutierrez and LeiLani Dowell may be speaking in your community this fall.

Following a campaign kickoff rally in New York City at 2 p.m. on Sept. 18, at P.S. 41, 116 West 11th St., the candidates will swing through **New England: Hartford, Conn., Sept. 22; Boston, Sept. 23; Providence, R.I., Sept. 24; Brattleboro, Vt., Sept. 25; Barre, Vt., Sept. 26; and Hudson, N.Y., Sept. 27.**

There will be candidate appearances in **upstate New York** and the **Midwest**, including **Cleveland** Oct. 5, in conjunction with the vice-presidential debates at Case Western Reserve University.

Congressional candidate LeiLani Dowell, running on the Peace & Freedom Party ticket in the Eighth Congressional District, will speak in **San Francisco** Oct. 1 on the struggle against the U.S. invasion and coup in Haiti.

All the candidates will appear in **Los Angeles** at a Workers World Party forum Oct. 9, and will go on to **San Francisco** Oct. 12 and **San Diego** Oct. 15. They will join the march for immigrants' rights in **Los Angeles** Oct. 16 before flying to **Washington, D.C.**, for the **Million Worker March** Oct. 17.

Beginning Oct. 18, a **Southern tour** will take them to **Richmond, Va.**, followed by **Raleigh, N.C.**, Oct. 19, Winthrop College in **Rock Hill, S.C.**, Oct. 20, **Charlotte, N.C.**, Oct. 21 and **Atlanta** Oct. 23.

More dates will be announced soon for **Chicago, Detroit, Houston, Philadelphia, Baltimore** and other cities.

For updates, visit the campaign Website at www.vote4workers.org or call the campaign office in New York at (212) 627-2994 or Los Angeles at (323) 936-1416.

—M.B.P.



LeiLani Dowell
Peace & Freedom Party
candidate in the 8th
Congressional District,
in San Francisco.

Teresa Gutierrez
for vice president

John Parker
for president

We rely on the contributions of progressives, activists and workers, like you, to help us spread the word. We especially need your help at this time to pay for the candidates' travel expenses on the national tour. Please make a generous donation, payable to the Workers World Party Presidential Campaign Committee.

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Three union leaders killed, but

Truth Commission exposes Colombian gov't cover-up

By Berta Joubert-Ceci

On Sept. 7 the Colombian newspaper *El Tiempo* printed an article titled, "The Prosecutor's office ordered the capture of three military officers for the deaths of three union leaders in Arauca." Since it's general knowledge in the international labor movement that Colombia is the most dangerous place for union leaders, this should not be a surprising article. On the contrary, it should be the logical consequence of investigations into the assassinations and human-rights abuses perpetrated against these unionists. But it's not the norm in Colombia, where almost 98 percent of rights abuses are not only unpunished, but not investigated at all.

"Bogotá says army killed union chiefs," an article printed in the Sept. 8 *New York Times*, pointed out in the second paragraph: "The attorney general's announcement came days after Secretary of State Colin L. Powell warned the Colombian government that it must curtail rights abuses or risk losing aid"—a reminder of who the real bosses of Colombia are.

What happened?

According to the previous "official" version of events given by the Colombian government, Military Forces Commander Carlos Alberto Ospina said that in Saravena, Arauca, union leaders Jorge Prieto, Leonel Goyeneche and Héctor Alirio Martínez shot at army troops with a 9mm weapon and were in possession of dynamite. General Luis Fabio García, commander of the army's 2nd Division further stated that "these three people died in combat with the soldiers when they were taken by surprise while meeting with the guerrillas of the ELN (National Liberation Army)." Defense Minister Jorge Alberto Uribe also justified the killing.

But what really happened was a chilling episode repeated far too often in that beleaguered country. The following

description of the events comes from the independent Truth Commission on the execution of the Araucan unionists:

On the morning of Aug. 5, troops of the Reveis Pizarro group of the 18th Army Brigade in Saravena broke into the house of union leader Jorge Prieto, forcing him and his compa?era out of the house barefoot, without a chance to properly dress. Eyewitnesses reported that Prieto, Leonel Goyeneche and peasant leader Héctor Alirio Martínez were taken out of their homes with hands up, forced to kneel down, and then shot execution-style.

Prieto was president of the National Association of Hospital and Clinic Workers (ANTHOC) in Arauca. Goyeneche was treasurer of the CUT Workers Unitary Central in Arauca. Alirio Martínez was a former president of the Departmental Association of Peasant Consumers (ADUC). All three were very active in the community and eloquent in their denunciations of the human-rights abuses, economic policies and program of Democratic Security of President Alvaro Uribe, which have devastated the poor and working-class population of Colombia.

According to Gloria Flórez, president of the Association for the Promotion of a Social Alternative (MINGA), the three were supposedly under the protection of the Colombian government by request of the Inter-American Commission for Human Rights of the OAS.

In the same military raid, the president of CUT-Arauca, Samuel Morales Flores, and the leader of the Teachers Association, Maria Raquel Castro, were detained and imprisoned.

Truth Commission fights back

The diligence and intervention of several groups, both national and international, and the mobilization of the people in Arauca were the deciding factors that

brought about Powell's "threat" to the Colombian government and the reversal of the government's accusations.

Two days after the killings, a Truth Commission of representatives of human rights NGOs and other social organizations went to Arauca. Among them were the Committee in Solidarity with Political Prisoners; Current Humanity; the Process of Black Communities; Justice and Peace; José Alvear Restrepo Lawyers Collective; the Network of Communities in Resistance and Rupture-RECORRE; the European Network in Fraternity with Colombia; National Agrarian Coordination; the Human Rights Committee of the Workers Union-USO; and the International Peace Brigades.

This Truth Commission forced the government to send a prosecutor and a pathologist from Bogotá, the nation's capital, to join several forensic medicine specialists in Saravena. However, true to the contempt of the government towards the people, the prosecutor's office initiated the exhumation of the bodies without the consent or notice to the deceased men's relatives and lawyers.

The Truth Commission also conducted numerous interviews with witnesses. The commission members thus became witnesses themselves—to the courage and determination of the Araucan peasants and workers, who bravely gave testimonies and united during this process of mourning, with a fierce resolve to continue the struggle.

Arauca, situated in the northeast of the country, is on the border of Venezuela, Colombia's second-biggest trading partner. This region is now the "war laboratory" of President Uribe, constituting the most militarized part of the nation.

Last June, this writer was part of the International Caravan to Save the Lives of Colombian Workers that traveled to this region. Driving between the cities of

Arauca and Pueblo Nuevo, a relatively short distance, we encountered 14 military roadblocks where drivers had to stop, everybody's name was taken, the car was searched and sometimes items were confiscated. Driving just a dozen kilometers could take hours.

An agricultural and cattle-ranching region, Arauca has great biodiversity. But the discovery of oil has brought devastation for the masses. Transnational corporations' exploration and exploitation of the "Motherland's blood"—as the Indigenous U'wa people call the oil—has virtually made this part of the country an outright U.S. colony.

The CaZo Limón oil pipeline runs through this area, feeding oil company coffers to the detriment of the Araucan masses. The emblem sewn into the sleeves of soldiers from the Colombian Army brigade of Arauca shows an oil well.

The U.S. maintains the army's 18th Brigade—the one responsible for the murders of the three Araucan leaders.

Since Washington's junior partner Uribe took office, there has been a major increase in human-rights violations, including arbitrary mass detentions, seizures without due process, tortures and executions. The paramilitary death squads have been more active and aggressive, permanently patrolling the streets in some areas, like the Tame municipality in the Araucan region. Last May 20, 11 peasants from were massacred in Tame by these goons.

Many of the violent actions committed against social-justice and trade union activists occur close to police or military facilities. They look the other way, showing the close relationship between these forces and the paramilitaries. Eyewitnesses who come forward run the risk of becoming targets themselves.

These violent conditions have displaced close to four million Indigenous people and peasants in Colombia. □

THREE TRIBUTES TO THE CUBAN REVOLUTION

Cuba's red star shines at Olympics

Once again, the Olympics were a triumph for socialist Cuba. Its achievements in the Athens summer games are undeniable proof of the enormous vitality of the Cuban people and the humane social system that has unchained them. From a small population with minimal resources, under siege from the world's number-one military-industrial monster, they have harvested monumental successes in so many ways.

The Cubans won 27 medals. This was surpassed only by much bigger countries with many more years of developing Olympic-bound athletes: the United States, Russia, (still feeding on the Soviet sports program), China, Australia, Germany, Japan, France, Italy, Korea (south and north entered one team) and Great Britain.

Then came Cuba—number 11, which contrasts with Cuba's population ranking of 69 among participating nations.

As the athletes circled the arena in the opening ceremonies, it was a proud moment for the Cuban team of 158, ranking number 12 in the number of women and men they brought to Athens.

At the 1948 Olympics, Cuba received a medal for the first time. At the 1964 Olympics, five years after the Cuban revolution triumphed, Cuba won a single medal. Reflecting spectacular progress in health care and education, and growth in commodity production, Cuba won four medals in 1968, eight in 1972, 13 in 1976, and 20 in 1980, the year of the U.S. Olympics boycott.

Cuba boycotted the Olympics in 1984 to protest the U.S.-sponsored war in Afghanistan. The Soviet Union attended in 1988, but spunky Cuba refused. At the 1992 Olympics Cuba had a number-five ranking, and in 1996 and 2000 a nine ranking.

In every case, Cuba outclassed bigger, richer capitalist countries, and countries large and small in the iron net of imperialist exploitation.

At the conclusion of the Athens games, President Fidel Castro, in congratulating the Cuban athletes, attacked rich countries for recruiting athletes from outside their own borders to beef up their teams. He was referring to the thousands of young people from poor countries, now in Cuban sports schools, who will eventually go back home to compete in future Olympics.

Mobilizing against natural disasters

The Cuban people and leaders have shown resilience and creativity and demonstrated the value of collective action when faced by crises unmatched in countries large and small, rich and poor. The merciless blows inflicted by recent hurricanes, for example, were met with the greatest possible organization and concern for human life and welfare, both in preparation, restoration and reconstruction.

Susan Hurlich, a guest of Cuba, reports on the preparation phase and how centers are prepared for evacuees. Boarding-school students go back home. Irrigation systems are taken apart and stored. Ripe crops are harvested. Farm animals are moved to higher ground. In the cities, drains are cleared, debris removed from the streets. Tree branches are trimmed.

Hurlich says, "It's a complex, multi-faceted, many-handed process, and it's done quickly." Damage and losses are huge, but Cubans say hurricanes fill up dams and bring water to drought-ridden areas. "The rivers of Cuba are found in the clouds." (canadiannetworkoncuba.ca)

A Sept. 9 report to the NY Transfer News Collective described wind power triggers

that turn off city power, traffic lights and large antennas when the wind reaches 60km per hour. Grounded power cables are less of a threat because of the automatic power shut-off. The Transfer News reporter says: "The civil defense is run by [retired military personnel who fought in Angola] ... who make tactical and logistical moves like it was a war ... moving masses of people to secure places.

"How much time did the system take to put Pinar back in shape? One month and everything was electrified? ... I wish you could see all the inventions made by the electricians and techies to start pumping water or restoring power to a hospital, like attaching small airplane engines to electric-driven big water pumps, building wood ovens to make bread or iron-fix flat tires or a static bicycle used to move small water pumps."

Cuba's solidarity with Haiti

Cuban doctors have been caring for gunshot victims in Haiti since the U.S.-sponsored coup that ousted democratically elected President Jean-Bertrand Aristide. In Port-au-Prince the only functioning hospital is the improvised one set

Continued on page 10

Fact-finding delegation reports:

Worsening conditions plague coup-ravaged Haiti

By LeiLani Dowell
Port-au-Prince, Haiti

On May 18th, a 21-year-old truck driver was on a shopping trip for his mother, when the bus he was on was stopped at a police checkpoint in Portail St. Joseph in Haiti. Police let all the women off the bus and arrested all the men, without warrant and without charge.

The next day this man, who asked that his name not be revealed, saw a judge, who sent him to see a prosecutor. The prosecutor told him he would send his case to another judge to decide whether to hold trial or release him. He has not heard from anyone since, and as of Sept. 4 was still locked up in the National Penitentiary at Port-au-Prince. He says he still doesn't know why he's in prison.

This is just one of countless stories delegates on a four-day fact-finding delegation in Haiti heard about the deteriorating human rights situation in that country.

From Sept. 3-6, delegates from both coasts of the United States met with political prisoners, internal exiles, women's groups and labor leaders, who all told of a worsening of conditions since the Feb. 29 U.S. "coup-knapping" of democratically-elected President Jean-Bertrand Aristide.

The Caribbean nation is now occupied by a United Nations "peacekeeping" force

dominated by the U.S. and France.

Josué Renaud of the New England Coalition for Human Rights in Haiti, a member of the delegation, told Workers World: "We are very concerned about the situation of these political prisoners, including Sò Anne, Neptune and Evert, arrested without warrants, under false charges. The government needs to release them immediately."

Kim Ives of Haiti Progrès and the Haiti Support Network said, "Our visit helped reveal the depth and breadth of repression in Haiti today. The mainstream press, if they mention Haiti's political prisoners at all, focus just on two: constitutional Prime Minister Yvon Neptune and Lavalas activist Sò Anne. Our delegation revealed that there are scores of prisoners in the National Penitentiary alone, not to mention the other prisons around the country.

"We also uncovered that the problem of internal exile is much more prevalent than generally known. We learned that violence ranging from targeted killings to government-incited gang wars is driving thousands from their homes."

Also participating in the delegation were Haitian journalist Robert Benjamin, Catholic activist Kathy Boylan, radio program hosts Karine Jean-Pierre and Joseph Chery, former U.S. Attorney General Ramsey Clark, Steel Workers

Local 8751 President Steve Gillis, filmmaker Katherine Kean, Haitian unionist Ray Laforest and former U.S. Army Capt. Lawrence Rockwood.

Regime brings torture, prison, exile

According to the Office of International Lawyers in Haiti, the period following the most recent coup has seen more beatings inside and outside of the prisons, summary executions, internal exiles and rapes—which according to one representative is "an instrument of choice for the present administration."

The past three weeks have seen an extreme intensification of violence throughout Haiti, with most of the country living in fear. Members of the Commission of New Victims 2004 told the delegation that Evans Paul, leader of the Democratic Convergence, an opposition group funded by the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), is financing gang wars. In the areas of Delmas 2 and Delmas 4, approximately 50 people have been killed, with another 200 families forced into hiding.

The delegation met with approximately 35 political prisoners, including Annette "Sò Anne" Auguste, well-known Haitian singer and Lavalas activist; Prime Minister Yvon Neptune; and Minister of

the Interior Jocelerme Evert. While each prisoner's narrative varied, many shared similar stories of being arrested without warrants, held for months without any hearing, or of judges ordering release and the order being ignored by prison officials.

Among those interviewed were union officials, former mayors, civil engineers, and others. Many reported horrible conditions in the prisons, with beatings, burnings, and rapes occurring in some precincts. Several prisoners stated that U.S. officials were present during their arrests. Most prisoners have some affiliation with the Aristide's Fanmi Lavalas Party or live in areas known to be Lavalas strongholds.

Almost all prisoners are asked for money to bribe their way out of prison, to the tune of \$5,000 and up. While many of those arrested without warrants and without cause either refuse the bribe or cannot afford it, the few true murderers that are arrested easily bribe themselves out.

The delegation also met with representatives of the Coordination of Women Victims in Haiti, a group that provides what limited support it can to survivors of rape in the country. They told the delegation that rapes have increased since the coup, that women are now reluctant to seek justice in fear of their lives, and those

Continued on page 11

Hurricane Ivan roars through Caribbean

Tempest uncovers class relations

By Pat Chin

Ivan, the "sixth-strongest hurricane in recorded history in the Atlantic Basin," according to the Weather Channel, roared into the Caribbean region, striking the island-nation of Grenada directly with such catastrophic force that 90 percent of all houses were flattened. The extremely powerful hurricane then churned west to pummel Jamaica, the wealthy British-controlled Cayman Islands and Cuba.

Ivan pounded Grenada on Sept. 7, leaving a trail of death and destruction while achieving the unflattering distinction of being the worst hurricane to hit the Caribbean in a decade. It came less than a month after Hurricane Charley brushed Jamaica, left a trail of destruction in Cuba and devastated south Florida. "What's so unusual about this year's hurricane season," said Mike Battes of the Weather Channel, "is that we're seeing a relatively large number of major hurricanes in a short period of time."

Thirty-nine people were reportedly killed in Grenada, an eastern-Caribbean country underdeveloped from centuries of slavery and British colonialism and, following independence in 1974, economic domination by the United States. In 1983, President Ronald Reagan, a rabid anti-communist, ordered the invasion of Grenada to break solidarity between the Grenadian and Cuban Revolutions—and to show the world that Washington had gotten over its defeat in Vietnam and could militarily subdue another country. The fact that Grenada is only twice the size of Washington, D.C., did not stop the imperialist war hawks from crowing over their "victory."

Hurricane Ivan also destroyed businesses, including hotels in an economy where tourism is the main source of foreign exchange. Power has been severely disrupted. The city's emergency operations center has been leveled. So were schools, the main hospital and prison.

Prime Minister Keith Mitchell, whose official residence was also flattened by ferocious winds, reported that nutmeg, the country's main export product, had "taken a tremendous hit." (BBC News, Sept. 12) Even before Ivan struck, Grenada's official unemployment rate stood at 12.5 percent.

The massive hurricane—which eventually had wind gusts as high as 195 mph and an eye wall 30 miles wide at its center—also claimed five victims in Venezuela, three in Haiti, and four in the Dominican Republic.

It brought down trees and power lines and blew off roofs in Tobago, where a pregnant woman was killed, and in Barbados, where an elderly woman died.

After devastating Grenada, Ivan swirled west. On Sept. 11 Ivan "lashed Jamaica with monstrous waves, driving rain and winds nearing 155 mph ... as it smashed away homes, ripped up roofs and utility poles, but unexpectedly spared the island from a direct hit ... In downtown Kingston, 20-foot high trees were uprooted, some flung onto the roofs of cars, and twisted metal roof panels litter the streets." (Barbados Daily Nation, Sept. 12)

At least 15 people were killed. Stores and shelters are running out of food, among other things. Meanwhile, the Jamaican government has deployed police to protect the property of residents who are more well-off than the huge number of poor Jamaicans in a post-colonial

society plagued by class division and discrimination against dark-skinned Jamaicans who make up the majority.

The British-owned territory of the Cayman Islands—population 43,000 people—also got slammed by Ivan, with water up to five-feet-deep engulfing many homes. But there is less damage there since "the Caymans were better prepared for the punishment than were Grenada and Jamaica."

Why? Because "the Caymans have strict building codes and none of the shantytowns and tin shacks common elsewhere in the Caribbean." (MSNBC.com, Sept. 13)

The Sept. 12 Web edition of Bloomberg described this wealthy capitalist Caribbean enclave: "The Caymans, renowned as a tax haven, provide near-total financial secrecy for companies, banks and accounts. There are more than 500 banks and trust companies with deposits of more than \$1 trillion. ... That's more deposits than there are in New York City."

More than 40,000 companies are registered there. In no time, two British naval vessels arrived to survey the damage.

With the hurricane approaching, President Fidel Castro called on all Cubans to take every measure to save lives, "given that everything else can be reconstructed." (Granma International, Sept. 13 Web edition)

By the time Ivan brushed Cuba's western tip with heavy winds and huge waves, 190,000 people had been "mobilized to protect the population and material resources." More than 1.3 million people were evacuated, along with 550,000 animals and 1 million birds.

Close to 2,000 shelters were opened along with 1,400 canteens for the institu-

tionalized. Hundreds of tons of rebuilding materials and food had been safely stored.

Cuba is not as rich as the Cayman Islands, where most buildings remained structurally sound and there was no loss of life. Yet every measure was taken to safeguard the Cuban population and its industries. This reflects Cuba's planned socialist economy in which human needs and the means to satisfy them take priority over property. Even the Sept. 14 New York Times was forced to admit that "relief was palpable everywhere."

Jamaica was the main trans-shipment port for enslaved Africans during centuries of trade in human Black cargo that enriched the United States, Britain and other European countries. The island won formal independence from Britain in 1962. But, like Grenada and many other Caribbean and Latin American countries, Jamaica's socio-economic development is being stifled by Washington's domination of the world's financial institutions including the International Monetary Fund and World Bank.

And the lopsided terms of trade as evidenced in "accords" like the North Atlantic Free Trade Agreement have decimated many already poor people and enriched still further the multi-millionaires and billionaires that Capitol Hill represents.

The United States has sucked billions of dollars in wealth from the Caribbean region starting with the slave trade, which was rationalized by religion and racism. Under capitalism it is the poor who suffer the most during a natural disaster. Any U.S. aid given to countries decimated by Ivan will at best be, in true imperialist style, paltry. This illuminates the need to fight for socialism. □



Welcome President Chávez!

Continued from page 1

elected in 1998. Your victory brought hope to Latin America and the world. The people who will be welcoming you to this country will be thinking of all the accomplishments of that revolution.

Since 1999, 20,000 new homes have been built and another 10,000 rebuilt by military programs. Three million people have been able to have clean water for the first time.

Two-and-a-half million acres of productive land have been distributed, along with credits, technical support and equipment, and 30,000 land titles given to people without property in the urban areas. More funds for education meant 1 million more children joining the education system, with the hiring of additional teachers. The Bolivarian school model was established in 3,000 schools, bringing two meals a day, art, sports and recreation programs to children.

One million people joined literacy programs. New Bolivarian public universities are opening, offering tens of thousands of scholarships to the underprivileged.

Hundreds of thousands of people in poor neighborhoods where no medical facilities had ever existed before are being treated by volunteer Cuban doctors through the Barrio Adentro Program that provides one doctor per

200 families. Infant mortality and malnutrition have dropped significantly.

There has been significant improvement in the environment and the protection of community fishers. A new program exists to provide food free of cost for the poor over the next several months. This program will render emergency assistance to homeless children and adults as well as seniors and pregnant women.

All these steps forward have been accomplished while the revolution was defending itself against imperialist assault. Three times U.S. imperialism and the Venezuelan oligarchy tried to remove you from office.

First the April 2002 coup attempt that failed as millions of Venezuelans intervened. Then the bosses' lockout and oil sabotage during the winter of 2002-2003. And lastly, the referendum this summer, when your landslide triumph was your third election success in the last six years.

We not only followed those events, but as revolutionaries we went out into the streets throughout the country together with Venezuelans and others to protest against U.S. intervention.

And we pledge our continued anti-imperialist support and defense of the Venezuelan Bolivarian struggle. □

TRIBUTES TO CUBA

Continued from page 8

up by the Cuban brigade members.

Cuban specialists are distributed throughout Haiti's provinces. They care for 75 percent of the 8.3 million inhabitants.

The aid is crucial because Haiti has fewer than 2,000 doctors and nearly 90 percent work in the capital. The medical aid brigade has saved the lives of more than 86,000 people. The Cuban specialists will continue to save lives and combat disease.

The Cuban government has offered to train nurses and doctors to fight AIDS throughout the Caribbean, and will provide anti-retroviral drugs far

below market prices. Cuba has one of the world's lowest HIV infection rates. (BBC Cuba correspondent Stephen Gibbs, July 16)

There have been precious and vast improvements in the lives of the Cuban people since 1959. And Cuba has made great and generous contributions to African and Caribbean peoples, all in the face of continued vicious Yankee aggression. Cuba says to the world: "We can win. We can save the planet. Every child, woman and man in this world can be free from hunger, ignorance, oppression and war. We have made this magnificent beginning." (Granma, March 3)

—Rosemary Neidenberg

Workers World Party presidential candidate, John Parker, at the half a million strong anti-war, anti-Bush march in NY on Aug. 29.

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Interview with FIST activist

Sweden: Meeting extends solidarity to Palestinians

Special to Workers World

From Sept. 7-11, activists from Europe and the Middle East gathered in Gothenburg, Sweden, for a conference in solidarity with the Palestinian liberation struggle. Revolutionary Communist Youth (RKU) and Proletaren FF, groups that organize Palestine solidarity work in Sweden, sponsored the event.

Julie Fry, a member of Fight Imperialism-Stand Together (FIST) in the U.S., was invited to participate. Upon her return, she spoke to Workers World about the conference.

Workers World: What was the purpose of the International Conference in Solidarity with Palestinian Youth in Sweden?

Julie Fry: One of the main purposes was for people in Sweden to learn about the Palestinian liberation struggle from activists in Palestine and to build on the ongoing efforts of the RKU and Proletaren FF to give support to this struggle.

The solidarity conference was originally scheduled to be held in Gaza last year, but it was cancelled after an Israeli bombing attack.

The RKU has been building a relationship with a youth organization in Palestine called the Palestinian Progressive Youth Union (PPYU). The RKU and Proletaren FF invited 19 representatives of the PPYU to attend. However, only two of them made it out of Gaza.

All the delegates were held at the Egyptian border for four days by the Israeli government. The two who did finally make it were strip-searched and interrogated for hours before being allowed to leave. They are still in Sweden now and both are very worried about what the Israeli Army will do to them when they return.

In addition to the PPYU, representatives from the Shatila refugee camp in Lebanon came and spoke about their struggle. A representative of the Iraqi Patriotic Alliance in Denmark shared information about the resistance movement in Iraq. He said that when the resistance is successful in Iraq, they will not give any contracts to the U.S., but they will give free oil to Cuba. Cuba supported Iraq as a member of the United Nations Security Council during the first Gulf War in 1991.

There were also representatives from Red Youth in Norway, the Anti-Imperialist Camp in Austria and the Che-Leila Youth Brigade in Britain, as well as representatives from the Basque Country, Western Sahara and Cuba. We exchanged information and ideas about building international support for the Palestinian struggle.

What did you learn about the state of the Palestine solidarity movement in Sweden and other parts of Europe?

Both the RKU and Proletaren FF are working very hard to find ways to support Palestine. Both groups have sent delegations to Palestine and the Shatila camp. Proletaren FF, which is a left-wing soccer club in Sweden, is developing a soccer program for the youth in Shatila.

The RKU and all of the other European organizations present were promoting a boycott of products made in Israel. They talked about the successes they have had with this campaign. Sales of Israeli products have dropped in several countries, including Sweden, since the boycott began. The groups discussed ways of taking the boycott campaign further.

One of the unique events that Sweden has every year in support of Palestine is a "Peace



Race" organized by Proletaren FF. The race was originally organized 20 years ago as a solidarity action against apartheid in South Africa. For several years now it has been a race in solidarity with Palestinian. It draws hundreds of people every year. This year, it coincided with the conference.

The race is important because it makes the link between the historic struggle against apartheid in South Africa and the current struggle against the racist Israeli state.

Before the race started, there was a "mini-tribunal" of the U.S. government that featured speakers from Palestine, Cuba and Western Sahara. There were also performances by a local Palestinian dance group and Swedish bands.

The solidarity movement in Sweden is very vibrant, but it is also under attack from right-wing forces. Several Swedish newspapers denounced the conference organizers for supporting "terrorism." A right-wing party in the Swedish parliament tried to have the conference cancelled and threatened to stop government funding that is provided to the organizers, as it is to many political organizations in Sweden.

The organizers handled the attacks very well. They did not back down at all. They were invited to debate a member of the right-wing party on a national Swedish television show during the conference. On the show, the representative of the RKU said it's the Israeli state that is terrorist and that the Palestinian people have the right to resist the occupation of their land.

What was your contribution to the conference?

I was invited to speak about the Palestine solidarity movement in the U.S. I spoke about the work of the International Action Center and the struggle to promote the Palestinian liberation struggle in the anti-war movement here.

I also reported on the demonstrations during the Republican National Convention, which I had just come from. All of the conference participants were very happy to hear that there is a vibrant anti-war movement fighting U.S. imperialism here.

What else did you learn about current struggles in Sweden?

I had a lot of questions for the activists in Sweden about the economic situation in their country. I told them that many people in the United States think of Sweden as a country that represents a successful "compromise" between capitalism and socialism because of the broad welfare system there that provides many of the same benefits to Swedes that people in socialist countries receive.

The Swedish activists I spoke to explained that they felt the welfare system in Sweden was created as a response to the Soviet Union and was an attempt by the ruling class in Sweden to keep the country from turning to socialism. They also reported that, since the fall of the Soviet Union, and especially since Sweden joined the European Union, Swedes are facing massive cutbacks in salaries, health care and the public pension system. All of these were major pillars of Sweden's welfare system.

The youth from the RKU reported that there are more and more attempts to try to privatize education by imposing school fees or by making students pay for food at school, which used to be free. There have been major demonstrations in Sweden recently in response to the health-care cuts, which have affected many major hospitals and clinics.

Basically, the Swedish situation shows that there is no "kinder, gentler" form of capitalism. □

Fact-finding delegation reports:

Worsening conditions plague coup-ravaged Haiti

Continued from page 9

who do come forward find that officials refuse to take action against the perpetrators.

Almost everyone the delegation visited noted that all these violations are accompanied by further economic hardships on those suffering them. Because of the repression and forced exile, it is hard for many to find places to sleep, or to secure money or food while on the run.

Many of the political prisoners interviewed said they were the main wage earners in their families prior to their arrest. Conversely, inside the prisons inmates are only fed once a day—meaning prisoners must rely on now-exiled families to provide food.

U.S. role exposed

The hand of the United States in the deteriorating situation of the Haitian people was evident. Former U.S. Army Capt. Lawrence Rockwood stated, “For me personally, the most distressing information we received ... was the role played by American officials. The allegations of the improper, if not criminal, conduct of American officials include detainees being transported and transferred in U.S. diplomatic vehicles, senior American officials in Haitian jails directing activities, and even the incarceration of four former [Haitian] government officials on a maritime vessel for 20 days with the U.S. Coast Guard playing a direct physical role.”

Rockwood placed direct responsibility for the situation in the hands of the U.S. government.

U.S.-funded “human-rights groups” were also found to be contributors to the atrocities being committed throughout Haiti, with a biased approach that ignores or reacts weakly to violations against Lavalas members and supporters—those most affected. Many of the women’s groups working in Haiti won’t service women associated with the Lavalas Party who have been raped.

In addition, the delegation repeatedly heard testimony from individuals stating that one of the most prominent groups—the National Coalition for Haitian Rights—has actively accused innocent people in the media, calling for their arrest, and issued a distorted report regarding the “massacre” in St. Marc that Prime Minister Neptune is accused of involvement in.

While their report stated that 50 people had been murdered on Feb. 11, several other reports, including those of the

bourgeois press, stated that four or five bodies had been found.

The complicity of U.S. corporations like Disney, Wal-Mart and J.C. Penney, who have factories in Haiti, was also discussed during the delegation.

A representative of the Office of International Lawyers stated that “definitely one reason [for the struggle against Aristide and Lavalas] was that Aristide raised the minimum wage from about \$1.00 to \$2.40 a day... The new prime minister has given corporations three years without taxes.”

In addition, in the province of Ounaminthe, there are reports of the military being used to repress workers’ rights at the Grupo M factory.

Clark: ‘A new struggle’

During a news conference held by the delegation on Sept. 6, Ramsey Clark said, “We’ve come back to see the most sophisticated and violent effort to destroy the capacity of the people to exercise their will to choose their own leadership.”

Clark discussed the current situation in the context of the 2004 bicentennial of the revolution against slavery, saying, “Haiti was able to overcome the most powerful army at the time. Freedom from slavery is the beginning of hope for all freedom, but today a new struggle has evolved.”

He described lists some 20 pages long shown to the delegation by prisoners, naming Lavalas supporters to be arrested or murdered. He said, “These are the same sort of lists [previously] seen in Chile and other places.”

One of the most inspirational visits the

delegation had was the meeting with Sò Anne.

Around midnight on May 10, U.S. Marines arrived at her house, killed her two dogs, and handcuffed Sò Anne and her six children, aged 5 to 12, putting bags over their heads and leaving them on for two hours until they arrived at the medical school they had taken over as headquarters.

She was later brought to the Petionville prison, where she remains and where the delegation met her. She has no hearing date set for her trial. Around the time of her arrest, activists in New York protested at the NCHR office there, denouncing their silence regarding the arrest.

Sò Anne assured the delegation that she was “still strong, and still fighting,” and said that she’s not scared to die, because if she did, it would be for a good cause.

She lauded the upcoming Million Worker March in Washington, D.C., on Oct. 17, as did the leader of the Confederation of Haitian Workers, who expressed interest in having a simultaneous protest on that day. October 17 marks the anniversary of the assassination of Haitian leader Jean Jacques Dessalines in 1806.

Resistance to the fierce attack on the people continues, in Haiti as well as the United States. □

LeiLani Dowell, who represented the International Action Center on the delegation, is running for Congress in California's 8th Congressional District on the Peace and Freedom Party ticket.

HAITI A SLAVE REVOLUTION 200 YEARS AFTER 1804

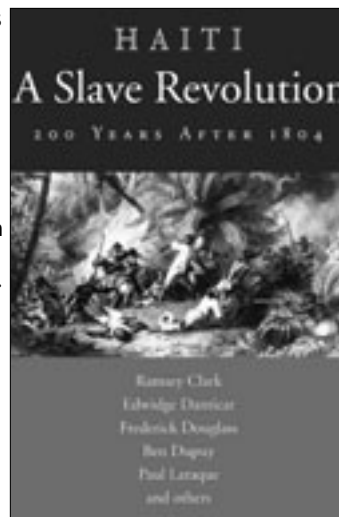
The Haitian Revolution is a singular event in history. Never before or since has an enslaved people risen up, broken their chains, and established a new state. Haiti was a beacon of hope and inspiration to the enslaved Africans of the United States.

Haiti’s history has been turbulent, but not for the reasons given by mainstream historians. Racism underlies their charges that the first Black Republic lacks “democratic traditions and is prone to violence.”

Drawing from a wide range of authors, experts, and historical texts, this book challenges these stereotypes and counters 200 years of cultural myths. It exposes disinformation about Haiti from the 18th century until today. Above all, it reveals the intertwined relationship between the U.S. and Haiti, and the untold stories of the Haitian people’s resistance to the U.S. aggressions & occupations.

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By Mumia Abu-Jamal from death row

Scrubbing Abu Ghraib away



The following are excerpts.

If persistent news tips are correct, the U.S. Army’s report on the barbarities at Iraq’s Abu Ghraib prison will lodge blame for the events there at the rank of colonel and below, and no real bigwigs or command staff officers will be tied to the vile events that took place in the American-controlled gulag.

If so, I’m tempted to say, “I told you so.”

When the Abu Ghraib prison scandal broke, I wrote that the nation must prepare for an efficient, neat, tidy whitewash. The grunts would bear the brunt of any discipline, and the dudes at the top would emerge unscathed. There it is.

When it first happened, I thought back to the scandals that rocked SCI-Greene several years ago, when a score of guards were charged with brutal, racist and vile behavior against men in the hole. Roughly two dozen guards were fired, but

after union appeals, most were quietly reinstated after the media furor died down.

One day, while on the way to the yard, a young red-haired guard said, “It’s all about protecting yer ass, that’s all the white shirts care about—know what I mean, Jamal?”

I actually didn’t, and asked, “Whatchu mean, Reds?”

“You remember when they fired all of us a few years ago?”

I nodded.

He continued: “They left us out to dry, just hanging. Every damn thing we did in a Hole, we did ‘cause they *told* us to. They told us to ‘tune guys’ up, to give ‘em an ‘attitude adjustment’, ya know what I mean?”

I nodded again.

“And then when the heat came down—wham!—they left us hangin’! I learned from that, ‘protect yer ass!’”

“Damn, Reds—You was one of dem dudes in that stuff?”

“Yeah, Jamal—I was out for months, doncha remember?”

I actually didn’t know then, but his brief conversation came back to me, years later, when the events at Abu Ghraib made the news. Nor was I even remotely surprised when a former guard from SCI-Greene just happened to be at the forefront of the vile and violent assaults at Abu Ghraib. He just took what he learned here, over there.

It was a whitewash here; why not one there? The brass, the White House and the Senate wanted a whitewash. They got it.

Why ask why?

Political power, which demanded and created the mess in Iraq, now commands a clean up.

We’ve all heard it all throughout our lives.

“A few bad apples.” “Just poor training.” “It’s not a systemic problem.”

The same lines. The same lies. The same soap used to cover up the stench of racist, brutal, vile, deprived treatment of people who are not white enough to matter.

To be sure, for millions, perhaps billions of people in Arab and Muslim lands overseas, it matters little what Army officers or “investigators” say. As the saying goes, a picture is worth a thousand words. □

MUNDO OBRERO

Perspectiva de una joven sobre las protestas contra la convención del Partido Republicano

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conocer el papel de la policía al atacar una protesta en contra de la pobreza. El martes los jóvenes organizaron el Día de Acción Directa no Violenta y Desobediencia Civil. Estos jóvenes pagaron su concientización con miles de detenciones injustificables. Pero las detenciones no lograron prevenir que los jóvenes siguieran protestando a lo largo de la semana. De hecho, al parecer, los jóvenes se volvieron más fuertes, más unidos y más conscientes.

En el último día de las protestas, el 2

de septiembre, una marcha por Harlem resultó verdaderamente diversa, políticamente sólida compuesta mayormente de jóvenes.

Un grupo multinacional llamado SIANTU, cuyos miembros lideraron consignas en una manifestación en contra de la Coca Cola la noche anterior, gritó consignas en varios idiomas, incluso, “Gente de color dice no a la guerra. Estamos airados y no aguantamos más”, y “Uno. Somos el pueblo. Dos, griten más. Tres, queremos viviendas para la gente que no la tiene”, y “no hay nadie ilegal. Que abran las fronteras y

que cierren el Comité Nacional Republicano.” L@s jóvenes que salieron a las calles por primera vez aprendieron lecciones importantes sobre la naturaleza del sistema capitalista —no solamente las políticas de una sola administración, sino las políticas impuestas por un sistema explotativo. L@s que asistieron a manifestaciones anteriores aprendieron nuevas lecciones en las calles en una semana de protestas y solidaridad constante y diversa.

La escritora es una activista y organizadora del grupo FIST.

Bienvenido Presidente Chávez

Presidente Hugo Chávez Frías, Queremos darle la más calurosa bienvenida a Nueva York, una ciudad de inmigrantes que tienen más en común con el pueblo venezolano que con su gobierno en la Casa Blanca y en los pasillos del Congreso.

Hemos estado siguiendo el progreso de la Revolución Bolivariana que desde que la eligieron en 1998, trajo esperanza a América Latina y al mundo.

La gente que le dará la bienvenida a este país pensará en todas las realizaciones de esa revolución. Desde 1999, se han construido veinte mil nuevos hogares y otros 10.000 han sido reconstruidos por programas militares. Tres millones de personas han podido tener agua potable por primera vez.

Dos millones y medio de acres de tierra productiva se han distribuido, junto con créditos, ayuda y equipo técnico; y 30.000 títulos de tierra han sido otorgados a personas sin posesiones en las áreas urbanas. Más fondos para la educación significaron que 1 millón más de niños y niñas asistieran al sistema educativo, empleando profesores adicionales. El modelo de la escuela Bolivariana fue establecido en 3.000 escuelas, trayendo dos comidas al día, y programas de arte y deportes para l@s niñ@s.

Un millón de personas entraron a programas de alfabetización. Nuevas universidades públicas Bolivarianas están abriéndose, ofreciendo decenas de millares de becas a estudiantes sin recursos.

Centenares de millares de gente en las vecindades pobres donde antes ninguna instalación médica había existido, están siendo tratadas por doctor@s cuban@s voluntari@s bajo el programa Barrio Adentro que proporciona a un/a doctor/a por cada 200 familias. La mortandad infantil y la desnutrición han bajado significativamente.

Ha habido una mejora significativa en el medioambiente y en la protección de l@s pescador@s de la comunidad. Un nuevo programa existe para proporcionar alimentos libre de costo para los pobres durante los próximos meses. Este programa dará ayuda de la emergencia a l@s niñ@s y a los adultos sin hogar así como a envejecientes y a mujeres embarazadas.

Todos estos adelantos se han logrado mientras la revolución se defendía contra el asalto imperialista. Tres veces el imperialismo estadounidense y la oligarquía venezolana intentaron derrocarlo.

Primero la tentativa del golpe de abril de 2002 que falló al intervenir millones de venezolan@s. Luego el paro patronal y el sabotaje del petróleo durante el invierno de 2002-2003. Y por último, el pasado referéndum cuando su triunfo constituyó su tercer éxito electoral en los seis años pasados.

No solamente seguimos esos acontecimientos, sino que como revolucionari@s, salimos a las calles del país junto a patriotas venezolan@s y otr@s defensor@s de la revolución, a protestar contra la intervención de los Estados Unidos en Venezuela.

Prometemos continuar nuestro apoyo antiimperialista y defensa de la revolución bolivariana. □

‘El mundo está mirando’—

Perspectiva de una joven sobre las protestas contra la convención del Partido Republicano

Por Stephanie Nichols
Nueva York

Jóvenes convergieron en la Ciudad de Nueva York para una Semana de Resistencia a la Convención Nacional Republicana, llevando consigo un amplio espectro de ideologías políticas. Para much@s fue su primera experiencia en luchas callejeras.

Comenzó lentamente en la Convigencia “Libros sí, Bombas no” el 28 de agosto. L@s jóvenes llegaron para aprender sobre política así como para compartir sus propias ideas. Estaban reuniéndose con una fuerza unificadora para protestar durante la semana que apenas había comenzado. El 29 de agosto, medio millón de personas se presentaron para protestar la ocupación de Irak, la “agenda de Bush”, y otras cosas. Los contingentes de jóvenes que marcharon juntos manifestaron el grado de unidad más alto en comparación con los demás contingentes. Los contingentes “Libros sí, Bombas no”, de solidaridad con inmigrantes, de la Liga de la Juventud Comunista, y el contingente de la coalición FIST (siglas en inglés significan: combate el imperialismo, mantente unid@), estaban entre ellos.

Un grupo se extendió por la cuadra de la Calle 18 hasta la Séptima Avenida gritando, “Estamos todos en esto juntos”, “Libertad para Palestina”, y “A globalizar la Intifada”. Aquell@s que se identifica-

ban como comunistas marcharon junto a los anarquistas. Marcharon por la calle frente al Madison Square Garden, el lugar de la convención, sin problemas. La policía arrestó a varios jóvenes al azar y les acusó de haber robado las pancartas de otros participantes.

El lunes, 30 de agosto, el primer día de la convención, las protestas comenzaron con el entusiasmo de la juventud. Un canto memorable de la marcha de la coalición “Still We Rise” fue, “Ellos dicen ‘Pena de muerte, nosotros decimos ‘ni para el infierno’” Muchos jóvenes, particularmente jóvenes de color marcharon para demostrar su ira contra el sistema y su efecto contra inmigrantes y personas de bajos ingresos.

El grupo ACT-UP, que convocó unas de las manifestaciones más militantes durante la semana estuvo creando conciencia sobre el SIDA y la crisis del cuidado de salud.

Más tarde, el grupo Marcha por Nuestras Vidas, mayormente de jóvenes y encabezado por la Campaña de la Gente Pobre por los Derechos Humanos Económicos intentó marchar desde la Organización de las Naciones Unidas hasta el Madison Square Garden sin permiso legal. La Orquesta Mecánica Ruda tocó música de fondo durante la marcha, cantando canciones en varios idiomas.

Hora por hora los jóvenes se unían más, con más solidaridad y conciencia de clase. Algunos gritaban “Declaramos

una guerra de clases sociales, organicemos para romper el estado”.

Algunos partidarios de John Kerry se presentaron pero fueron abucheados por los asistentes a la marcha. Aparentemente en momentos al azar, la policía atacó a los asistentes a la marcha arrestando a algunos. Finalmente, cuando los manifestantes llegaron a la Calle 28, la policía atacó de nuevo, golpeando y arrestando más de los manifestantes.

La mitad de la marcha se paró cuando una multitud de jóvenes rodearon a un grupo de policías, gritando, “El pueblo unido jamás será vencido”, “¿Las calles de quién?, ¡nuestras!” y “Si no hay justicia, no habrá paz, que la policía cochina se vaya de las calles”.

El frente de la marcha siguió mientras que la parte de atrás fue obstaculizada. La policía había logrado erigir barricadas en la calle 28 donde la marcha fue dividida en dos partes. Como resultado, en la calle 29 la policía erigió más barricadas y atrapó a la gente como en una jaula entre las calles 28 y 29. Lo que quedó de la marcha tuvo que salir huyendo en varias direcciones. La gente comenzó a gritar, “Somos gente pacífica, practicando la no violencia”. Lo ocurrido ese día no solo aumentó la conciencia de clase entre los jóvenes que vinieron a protestar, sino que también les dio a

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LEONARD PELTIER:

Aún luchando por la justicia

Por Minnie Bruce Pratt

El guerrero indígena Leonard Peltier siguió en su lucha por la justicia el 2 de septiembre entablado una demanda en contra del gobierno de los EE.UU. por encarcelamiento ilegal.

Peltier, candidato al Premio Nobel de la Paz y preso político, ha estado encarcelado por más de 28 años. Fue arrestado después de un incidente en la Reserva Indígena Pine Ridge en el estado de Dakota del Sur en 1975, cuando dos agentes del FBI murieron en un tiroteo. Moradores de Pine Ridge habían invitado a Peltier y a otros miembros del Movimiento de Indios Americanos a proporcionar seguridad en la reserva. Agentes del FBI y equipos SWAT rodearon a la reserva y según reportes abrieron fuego y en la batalla que siguió, murió también un hombre indígena.

Existe un movimiento mundial para revertir lo que consideran los partidarios de Peltier una injusticia.

En la demanda entablada en Washington, D.C., Peltier dice que los

oficiales del Departamento de Justicia de los EE.UU. a sabiendas violaron la Ley de Reforma de Sentencias (SRA por las siglas en inglés) de 1984 para ilegalmente extender las sentencias de los castigos a presos ya encarcelados.

El Congreso promulgó la SRA para mejorar los castigos inconsistentes pronunciados por jueces a distintas personas condenadas por los mismos crímenes, así como decisiones inconsistentes o arbitrarias en situaciones de libertad bajo palabra.

La demanda acusa al gobierno de los EE.UU. de rehusar respetar la parte de la SRA que mandó la entonces Comisión de Libertad Bajo Palabra para otorgar fechas de excarcelación a los presos del “sistema antiguo” encarcelados antes de una fecha especificada por la SRA.

Si la SRA hubiera sido respetada, argumenta Peltier, él hubiera sido liber-



Leonard Peltier

ado hace 12 años. Su demanda acusa a la Comisión de Libertad Bajo Palabra de los EE.UU. y a sus miembros durante las últimas dos décadas, incluso los Fiscales Generales de la Nación John Ashcroft, Edwin Meese, Richard Thornburgh, William Barr y Janet Reno.

Peltier está cumpliendo dos sentencias de condena perpetua.

Yorie Von Kahl, un agricultor que protesta contra los impuestos y está cumpliendo una condena perpetua por el supuesto asesinato de dos agentes federales en 1983, también está participando en la demanda. Después de los juicios, evidencias indisputables de mala conducta por parte de la fiscalía federal fueron reveladas en estos dos casos controversiales.

En agosto, el Partido de Paz y Libertad de California nombró a Peltier como su candidato para la presidencia, prefiriéndolo a él antes que al candidato tercerpartidista Ralph Nader.

Para apoyar a Leonard Peltier, comuníquese con: Leonard Peltier Defense Committee PO Box 583, Lawrence, KS 66044 □