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As Bush 'hunkers down'

Leaked memos show Iraq War conspiracy

Popular resistance wears down 'coalition of willing'

By Leslie Feinberg

The shock-and-awe invasion of Iraq was not a "war of last resort." The "regime change" had nothing to do with weapons of mass destruction [WMD] or "terrorism" or defense of neighboring countries or nuclear capability.

The cat's out of the bag now. All that was just a pretext created by U.S. and British imperialism.

Many in the anti-war movement who raised their voices to demand "No blood for oil profits!" said it all along. But this time it's coming from the same people who had claimed the movement was a bunch of conspiracy theorists.

Eight classified memos have now been leaked, mostly to the British media, that show otherwise.

They come at a time when Britain is also mired in the Pentagon's war. The occupation forces can't even keep a six-mile stretch of road open between Baghdad and the airport.

Popular anger in the U.S. is mounting along with the rise in troop casualties. A Gallup poll conducted June 6-8 revealed that 6 out of 10 of those asked wanted a partial or full withdrawal of GIs from Iraq. Only 41 percent approved of the Bush administration's handling of the Iraq War. A majority said they'd be upset if the president tried to send more troops.

Eight smoking guns

The eight memos released in recent weeks, stamped "secret" or "confidential," reveal the following:

• Six months after the 9/11 attacks, then-U.S. National Security Adviser Condoleezza Rice met with British Prime Minister Tony

Blair's chief foreign policy adviser, David Manning. According to Manning, Rice didn't want to talk about Osama bin Laden or Al-Qaeda, she wanted to press "regime change" in Iraq.

• Attorneys warned the Blair government that U.S.-British bombing of Iraq almost a year before the imperialist invasion—designed to provoke the Iraqi government into an action that would justify the invasion—was illegal, a violation of international law.

• The "Downing Street memo," perhaps the most damning of all, contains the transcript of official minutes of a July 23, 2002, meeting between Blair, his top advisers and Richard Dearlove—head of the British spy agency MI6. At that sit-down—eight months prior to the invasion of Iraq—Dearlove explained that Washington officials had made clear at a recent meeting that "Bush wanted to remove Saddam, through military action, justified by the conjunction of terrorism and WMD. But the intelligence and facts were being fixed around the policy."

• British Foreign Office Political Director Peter Ricketts wrote to Foreign Secretary Jack Straw in a March 22 memo of the importance of winning popular and parliamentary support for a war against Iraq. "We have to be convincing that: the threat is so serious/imminent that it is worth sending our troops to die for" The Blair government then released a pre-war intelligence report claiming that the Iraqi government could launch a chemical or biological weapons attack on 45 minutes' notice.

These secret papers found their way to British journalist Michael Smith and have been circulated on the Internet. Although U.S. and British officials have nit-picked some

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STONEWALL

means fight back



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Pre-Stonewall gay organizing

Impact of early Black civil rights struggle

By Leslie Feinberg

All five founders of Mattachine had at least some training in Marxism. Harry Hay, as a long-time teacher of the Marxist analysis of the development of society and the science of change, had the most theoretical experience. So rather than merely organizing to form an activist group, historian John D'Emilio points out, "The founders also brought to their planning meetings a concern for ideology that grew out of their leftist politics."

And, D'Emilio adds, "the worldview of its adherents rested on an analysis of society that saw injustice as rooted in the social structure. Exploitation and oppression came not from simple prejudice or misinformation, but from deeply embedded structural relationships." ("Making Trouble")

D'Emilio explores the attempts by Mattachine founders to bring ideological clarity to the social condition of homosexuals in the 1950s United States. "The founders' lack of an already developed analysis of the oppression of homosexuals forced them to generate one by scrutinizing the main source of information available to them—their own lives. Throughout the winter of 1951 the five men met frequently to share their personal histories."

They talked about their isolation, loneliness and fear of being the only one in the world with such feelings; how they'd come out as gay men and found others like them.

D'Emilio explained, "Trying to make some collective sense out of their individual experiences, they posed such questions as: How did one become a homosexual? Were homosexuals sick as the medical profession claimed? Was it possible to overcome the isolation and invisibility of the gay population and organize homosexuals? Were homosexuals, perhaps, a minority group, or merely a conglomeration of individuals sharing nothing but a sexual orientation?"

From these discussions they gleaned their early analysis of the oppression of same-sex love.

Rowland: 'What is our theory?'

Chuck Rowland, one of the original five founders of Mattachine, recalled, "We had been saying, 'We'll just have an organization.' And I kept saying, 'What is our theory?' Having been a Communist, you've got to work with a theory. 'What is our basic principle that we are building on?'"

"And Harry said, 'We are an oppressed cultural minority.' And I said, 'That's exactly it!' That was the first time I know of that gays were referred to as an oppressed cultural minority." ("Making History")

Rowland, with broad strokes, painted the outlines of two different political approaches. "But gay people didn't want to be an oppressed cultural minority, 'Why, we're just like everybody else, except what we do in bed.' They wanted to be like everybody else. But that isn't true; we're not like everybody else. I don't think or feel like a heterosexual. My life was not like that of a heterosexual. I had emotional experiences that I could not have had as a heterosexual. My whole person, my whole being, my whole character, my whole life differed and differs from hetero-

sexuals, not by what I do in bed. I believe there is a gay sensibility.

"When we tried to explain this to somebody, I would say, 'There is a gay culture.' People would say, 'Gay culture? What do you mean? Do you actually think we're more cultured than anybody else?' I would explain that I was using 'culture' in the sociological sense, as a body of language, feelings, thinking, and experiences that we share in common. As we speak of a Mexican culture. As we speak of an American Indian culture. We had to say that gay culture was an emergent culture."

Rowland continued, "The word *gay* itself is a marvelous example of what I mean by gay culture. You'll get a lot of arguments about this. But I know that *gay* was being used back in the thirties, and we didn't mean 'merry' or 'festive.'

We meant 'homosexual.' This does not constitute a language in the sense that English is a language and French is a language, but it's more comparable to Yiddish culture. A lot of people, Jews and non-Jews, used Yiddish words like *schlep* and *meshuga*. These words separate them culturally from my mother, for example, who would never have heard of such words."

Hay himself tried to clarify what he meant by "gay culture." He wrote, "The Homophile common psychological make-up manifests itself in a community of culture so phenomenologically remarkable that it transcends the mechanical barriers of formal language by creating an international behavioral language of its own, in addition to sharing the pedestrian language of each parental community. To be sure, the communities of culture differ in detail from one national community to another. But they are enough alike that no one need be a helpless stranger whatever the port of call." ("Radically Gay")

An expression of anti-racist solidarity

Today, these attempts by the early Mattachine founders to compare their situation to that of the Dine (Navajo) and Pueblo nations, Mexican culture and language, and the relationship of Japanese-Americans to Japan and of African Americans to Liberia may not seem very sensitive to those struggling for national liberation.

But in the 1950s these white men were anti-racists and anti-imperialists. They dedicated their lives to fighting all forms of oppression. Identifying themselves as a cultural minority was partly an attempt to express solidarity with those battling racism and anti-Semitism, as they stated clearly in their 1951 Missions and Purposes. They called African American, Mexican and Jewish people "our fellow minorities."

The written prospectus that the Mattachine movement was built on, penned by Hay in 1948 and amended by him in 1950, began: "With full realization that encroaching [North] American Fascism, like unto previous impacts of International Fascism, seeks to bend unorganized and unpopular minorities into isolated fragments of social and emotional instability; ... in order to earn for ourselves any place in the sun, we must with perseverance and self-discipline work collectively ... for the first-class citizenship participation of Minorities everywhere, including ourselves" ("Radically Gay")

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PART 39
The entire Lavender & Red series, which explores the history of the socialist movement and the struggle for sexual & gender liberation, can be read online at www.workers.org.

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WW CALENDAR

NEW YORK

Fri., June 24

We invite our Trans and Gender Non-Conforming people of color communities, and our allies, to march with us in the 1st Annual Trans Day of Action for Social and Economic Justice in New York City. Initiated by TransJustice, a project of The Audre Lorde Project, The Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Two-Spirit, and Trans People of Color Center for Community Organizing, focusing on the NYC area. 5:30 p.m. gather at Jackson Sq., the intersection of 8th Ave., Greenwich Ave, and Horatio St. 6:30 p.m. march to Union Square. 7:30 p.m. rally at Union Square. To endorse or more info phone (718) 596-0342 ext 18.

LOS ANGELES

Sat., July 16

Brunch & book signing with Leslie Feinberg. Feinberg is a managing editor of WW newspaper and an author of *Stone Butch Blues*, and *Trans Liberation*, among other works. Sponsored by Workers World Party. 11 a.m.-1 p.m. At 5274 W Pico Blvd, Suite 203. For info (323) 936-1416.

Sat., July 16

IAC Forum: Lavender & Red, featuring Leslie Feinberg, lesbian transgender author and activist. 2 p.m. At the Gay & Lesbian Center, Village at Ed Gould Plaza, 1125 N McCadden Pl. (one block E of Highland, N of Santa Monica Blvd). For info (323) 936-7266.

Workers World

55 West 17 Street
New York, N.Y. 10011
Phone: (212) 627-2994
Fax: (212) 675-7869
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Editor: Deirdre Griswold

Technical Editor: Lal Roohk

Managing Editors: John Catalinotto, LeiLani Dowell, Leslie Feinberg, Monica Moorehead, Gary Wilson

West Coast Editor: John Parker

Contributing Editors: Greg Butterfield, Fred Goldstein, Teresa Gutierrez, Berta Joubert-Ceci, Milt Neidenberg

Technical Staff: Shelley Ettinger, Adrian Garcia, Maggie Vascassenno

Mundo Obrero: Carl Glenn, Berta Joubert-Ceci, Donna Lazarus, Carlos Vargas, Teresa Gutierrez

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National Office
55 W. 17 St.,
New York, NY 10011
(212) 627-2994;
Fax (212) 675-7869
wwp@workers.org

Atlanta
P.O. Box 424,
Atlanta, GA 30301
(404) 627-0815
atlanta@workers.org

Baltimore
426 E. 31 St.,
Baltimore, MD 21218
(410) 235-7040
baltimore@workers.org

Boston
284 Armory St., Boston,
MA 02130
(617) 983-3835
Fax (617) 983-3836
boston@workers.org

Buffalo, N.Y.
P.O. Box 1204
Buffalo, NY 14213
(716) 566-1115
buffalo@workers.org

Chicago
27 N. Wacker Dr. #138
Chicago, IL 60606
(773) 381-5839
Fax (773) 761-9330
chicago@workers.org

Cleveland
P.O. Box 5963
Cleveland, OH 44101
phone (216) 531-4004
cleveland@workers.org

Denver
denver@workers.org

Detroit
5920 Second Ave.,
Detroit, MI 48202
(313) 831-0750
detroit@workers.org

Houston
P.O. Box 130322,
Houston, TX 77219
(713) 861-5965
houston@workers.org

Los Angeles
5274 West Pico Blvd.,
Suite 203
Los Angeles, CA 90019
(323) 936-1416
la@workers.org

Philadelphia
P.O. Box 9202,
Philadelphia, PA 19139
(610) 453-0490
phila@workers.org

Richmond, Va.
P.O. Box 14602,
Richmond, VA 23221
richmond@workers.org

Rochester, N.Y.
(585) 436-6458
rochester@workers.org

San Diego, Calif.
3930 Oregon St.,
Suite 230
San Diego, CA 92104
(619) 692-4496

San Francisco
2940 16th St., #207
San Francisco,
CA 94103
(415) 561-9752
sf@workers.org

State College, Pa.
100 Grandview Rd.,
State College,
PA 16801
(814) 237-8695

Washington, D.C.
P.O. Box 57300,
Washington, DC 20037,
dc@workers.org

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Crack in Herman Wallace case

State bribery of witness to get review

A crack has developed in the state's case against Herman Wallace, a Black Panther Party member who is one of the longest-confined political prisoners in the United States.

Wallace, along with Albert (Cinque) Woodfox, has been in solitary confinement for 32 years in Louisiana's maximum-security Angola Penitentiary.

In 1971, while in Angola, Wallace and Woodfox were founders of the only chartered prison chapter of the Black Panther Party. They were then framed in the death of prison guard Brent Miller and sentenced to life without the possibility of parole.

In the early 1970s, Angola was notorious as one of the most brutal prisons in the United States. The state created the prison in the late 19th century from thousands of acres of former plantations of the Confederate slavocracy. Many of the enslaved people forced to work this land came from the area of Africa named Angola by Portuguese colonizers.



Herman Wallace, Robert King Wilkerson and Albert Woodfox, 2002.

CREDIT: NATIONAL COALITION TO FREE THE ANGOLA 3

A rejuvenating victory

Now the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals in New Orleans has ordered a lower court to hear evidence about the testimony of Hezekiah Brown, a prison inmate who alleged he saw Wallace and Woodfox commit the crime. After the conviction of Wallace and Woodfox, the state admitted that Brown was promised, and received, rewards for his testimony.

The fact of the bribery was illegally withheld from defense lawyers during

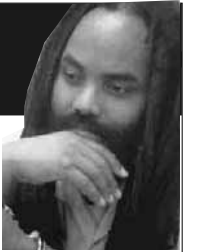
Wallace's trial. Obviously, this omission severely damaged Wallace's chance to get a fair trial.

Wallace and Woodfox were charged along with Robert King Wilkerson, a Black Panther Party member at the time he was imprisoned. They became known as the Angola 3. After a 30-year struggle, Wilkerson won his freedom in 2001.

Angola's Herman Wallace said about his legal victory: "It is time for everyone to rejuvenate their energy ... calling for justice! And I mean bullhorn justice!"

This article is based on information from the National Coalition to Free the Angola 3, on the web at www.angola3.org.

Mumia Abu-Jamal
from death row:



The collapse of compromise

By Mumia Abu-Jamal

It is sometimes utterly amazing what politicians will sell the American public.

The recent Senate squabble over the so-called "nuclear option," which threatened to abolish the old rules governing Senate filibusters, or the ability of a minority of senators to create roadblocks in the daily business of the Senate, came to an end when a number of senators, Democrats and Republicans, agreed to a compromise that takes the "nuclear option" off the table (for now), while the Senate proceeds to conduct up or down votes on President Bush's right-wing judicial nominees.

Already, Texas Supreme Court jurist Priscilla Owens now wears the robe of a judge of the Court of Appeals—for life.

By the time you read this, it's quite possible that California Supreme Court Judge Janice Rogers Brown will have been elevated to the D.C. Court of Appeals, the same bench that Clarence Thomas warmed for some 13 months before George W. Bush's daddy, the first President Bush, named Thomas to the U.S. Supreme Court.

By the Compromise of 14 (seven Democrats and seven Republicans), the gates are now open for some of the most antidemocratic, arch-conservative, anti-New-Deal jurists in the nation's history to sit in judgment of other Americans for generations.

If this is compromise, what does defeat look like?

Many will argue that the compromise was a political necessity to "preserve American traditions" or to "protect American values."

One wonders: What "traditions"? What "values"?

The so-called "Great Compromise" of 1790 made the United States possible. But it was a compromise that, 75 years later, would explode across these states as Civil War, leaving over half a million people dead.

For Africans, it was a "not-so-great" compromise, for it was based on the North's quiet acquiescence and then embrace of slavery.

THAT is the great American "tradition" and "value" protected by this compromise.

In the words of the Great Liberator, Harriet Tubman, who knew what she was talking about, slavery was "the next thing to hell." That "Great Compromise" kept millions in bondage for a century.

That compromise, as well as the compromises between North and South after the Civil War, meant vast betrayals of the very people, the very men, who fought and died for the Union—if they were Black people.

Compromise meant betrayal.

It meant White Supremacy *uber alles*.

It meant treating those who fought against the Union better than those who (if they were Black) fought for it.

It meant betrayal.

Today, it means betrayal of the essence of opposing the worst, most exclusive jurists that Bush can find, for the form of keeping the sacred tradition of filibustering safe.

We shall see, perhaps sooner than we think, the costs of such compromise. And like the other compromises of the past, it may take a century to undo the great and terrible damage they will do.

As before, it took great struggle and sacrifice to bring change.

Such struggle must begin anew, against the forces of repression, of fear, of closed doors and crushed hopes.

To quote another great freedom-fighter, Frederick Douglass: "Power concedes nothing without demand. It never has, and it never will."

If you want change, you **MUST** act as if you do; there is no other true alternative.

Join an organization that shares your ideas.

Mumia supporters protest latest legal setback

By Monica Moorehead
Philadelphia

On June 16, an emergency demonstration was held outside Philadelphia's City Hall to protest the latest legal setback in the struggle to free death-row political prisoner Mumia Abu-Jamal.

The anti-death-penalty activists passed out leaflets to hundreds of passersby and motorists that explained what was behind the May 27 ruling made by the Common Pleas Court.

This state appeals court outlined its intent not to grant Abu-Jamal an evidentiary hearing that would have allowed suppressed testimony to finally be heard that could prove he did not kill a white policeman on Dec. 9, 1981. The African American revolutionary journalist has been languishing on death row since July 1982 as a result of a first-degree murder conviction reached after a sham of a trial.

Besides the mass leafleting, a rally took place for several hours. The speakers included Pam Africa, leader of International Concerned Family and Friends of Mumia Abu-Jamal; Sundiata Sadiq, vice-president of the Ossining chapter of the NAACP; Monica Moorehead and Dustin Langley of the International Action Center; Suzanne Ross and Gwen Debrow of the New York Free Mumia Abu-Jamal coalition, and many more.

Throughout the day, delegations of Abu-Jamal supporters visited the office of Mayor John Street to demand that he come out publicly in support of Abu-Jamal's right to a new trial. Abu-Jamal's attorneys filed a reconsideration brief on June 16 in response to the May 27 ruling. This brief raised convincing arguments as to why Abu-Jamal should be granted an evidentiary hearing which should lead to him being granted a new trial. □



WW PHOTOS: ANNE PRUDEN
Taking it to the streets. Speakers included Monica Moorehead, right and Pam Africa, below.



MUMIA SPEAKS

An interview with Mumia Abu-Jamal from death row

Columns by the Black journalist on prisons, capitalism, politics, revolution and solidarity. Additional essays on the prison-industrial complex by Monica Moorehead, Larry Holmes and Teresa Gutierrez.

Order from International Action Center 39 West 14 St., #206 NY, NY 10011 \$3

Progressives challenge AFL-CIO on 'Solidarity Center'

By Bob McCubbin

An important, well-thought-out intervention by progressive activists is being planned for the upcoming AFL-CIO convention in Chicago in late July.

A group called the Latin America Solidarity Coalition has prepared a flier and a resolution to educate delegates on the reactionary character of the labor federation's American Center for International Labor Solidarity—known as Solidarity Center.

It also hopes to build genuine labor support for the wave of progressive and revolutionary developments in Latin America, and appeals to convention delegates to support real solidarity with the workers of Haiti, Venezuela, Iraq and elsewhere.

"The Latin America Solidarity Coalition (LASC) is an association of national and local U.S.-based grassroots Latin American and Caribbean solidarity groups, many of which have long histories of working with grassroots organizations

throughout Latin America and the Caribbean," explains the group's web site, www.lasolidarity.org.

The LASC flier points out that the Solidarity Center is presently funded mostly by the federal government, not by the AFL-CIO, and the resulting government control makes it "an instrument of George W. Bush's interventionist foreign policy."

The flier also comments on the source of the Solidarity Center's operating funds. Most of these funds come from the National Endowment for Democracy (NED). This nefarious organization also funds the International Republican Institute, the National Democratic Institute, and the Chamber of Commerce's Center for International Private Enterprise—"strange bedfellows," the flier comments, "for an organization supporting worker rights."

While the Solidarity Center has, in fact, aided workers' struggles in Haiti, the International Republican Institute actually

trained the armed bands that helped to overthrow Haitian President Jean-Bertrand Aristide. It has also provided financial backing for Haitian sweatshop owners.

And the Solidarity Center itself, through its funding of the pro-U.S., pro-business Confederation of Venezuelan Workers (CTV), has attempted to undermine progressive organizations, other unions and the elected Chávez government itself in Venezuela.

This fact certainly substantiates the flier's assertion that the center acts to support the Bush foreign policy agenda in Venezuela. Although a coup attempt supported by Washington ended in humiliating failure, the Bush regime has not wavered for a second in its ongoing attempts to derail the Chávez government, whose popular programs to improve the lives of Venezuela's poor and working class, while widely admired in the rest of Latin America, are bitterly opposed by Washington.

With regard to Iraq, the flier states, "Solidarity Center resources will be used in violation of the AFL-CIO's commitment to workers' self-determination. Projects will be designed to give exclusive support to the union officially sanctioned by occupation and interim governments, while undermining the development of independent unions."

The flier urges delegates to the AFL-CIO convention to endorse a resolution from the California Labor Federation (CLF) called "Building Unity and Trust Among Workers Worldwide." This resolution, passed by the CLF, "calls for a clearing of the air regarding AFL-CIO activities in Chile, Venezuela and elsewhere. It further calls for an end to Solidarity Center dependency on NED and other government funding in favor of mutual international worker solidarity programs funded primarily by union dues and with open books, accountable to, and operated by, union members." □

Ohio workers protest 'vulture' capitalists

By Minnie Bruce Pratt
New York

Thirteen determined aluminum workers, men and women, demonstrated at the foot of a Madison Avenue skyscraper on June 17, chanting, "No justice, no peace!"

The workers are members of Steel Workers Locals 5760 and 5724. They had driven 500 miles from Hannibal, Ohio, to protest the impact on their lives of the ruthless policies of the MaitlinPatterson investment firm.

MaitlinPatterson, a "vulture" investment firm, has bought up their bankrupt employer, Ormet Corp. Ormet is one of the top four U.S. aluminum producers, with factories in four states.

Now MaitlinPatterson is laying off employees, contracting out jobs, cutting wages, and slashing retiree health insurance benefits so it can bring Ormet out of bankruptcy and re-sell the company for a fat profit. (www.uswa.org)

In New York Sharon Strobe, a casting operator from Moundsville, W.Va., handed out fliers to passersby. The leaflet bore this question and answer: "What's

the difference between Mark Patterson and a vulture? At least the vulture waits until you are dead."

Strobe has worked 27 years for Ormet. She said the workers have been on strike for a fair contract and to protect pensions and health insurance since last Nov. 22.

Strobe, who pours molten aluminum that other workers will ultimately roll and shape, noted that she and her co-workers make products people use every day. Her aluminum ends up as decorative trim on cars, light-weight pans for cooking holiday meals—and even the buttons that activists wear to demonstrations.

The Steel Workers members have staged militant protests at Ormet plants in Indiana, Louisiana and Ohio—and at the homes of MaitlinPatterson owners in New York. At one demonstration at Ormet headquarters in Wheeling, W.Va., police arrested worker Norman (Pete) Gray, using the Homeland Security laws as a pretext.

On the picket line in New York, Connie Gray said that when her husband was arrested he was wearing a "Grinch" costume to dramatize MaitlinPatterson as the



WW PHOTO: BEV HIESTAND

Connie Gray with 'the Grinch that stole the pensions.'

"Grinch that stole the pensions." Pete Gray was well known to the arresting police, and clearly not concealing his identity in any way. He has refused to plead guilty and is demanding a jury trial.

As the aluminum workers chanted, they

were quickly joined in solidarity on the picket line by people passing by. A giant inflatable rubber rat, symbol of labor protest in New York, got inflated to its 12-foot height. Truck drivers honked their horns in support.

Groups of workers from New York unions suddenly appeared, including some in the distinctive green jackets of District Council 37, State, County and Municipal Employees, as well as representatives of the Mason Tenders District Council of Greater New York and the United Federation of Teachers.

The office of Mark Patterson, co-owner of the investment firm and a former executive at Credit Suisse, floated some 43 floors above the workers on Madison Avenue. Sharon Strobe commented: "He likes to stay far away from the dirt. He didn't work for 40 years only to have someone come and take it all away."

The Ormet takeover is part of a wave of economic manipulation by big business in search of easy profits. The impact on workers has been devastating. Layoffs in the United States jumped 42 percent between April and May 2005. □

Racist hiring practices exposed

By David Dixon
New York

Sociology Professor Devah Pager has been studying the problems ex-convicts face looking for a job. As a graduate student at the University of Wisconsin in the 1990s, she made a disturbing discovery: It is easier for a white person with a felony conviction to get a job than for an African-American person with no criminal record.

Pager, now at Princeton University, recently conducted a study in New York City along with Professor Bruce Western. The study, titled "Discrimination in Low Wage Labor Markets," was funded in part by the National Science Foundation.

Pager and Western found strong evidence of hiring discrimination by New York employers against male job-seekers who were African American or of another oppressed nationality as compared to white men.

The study used teams of young men who posed as job applicants, listing iden-

tical work and educational experience. They sought work as drivers, couriers, cleaners, fast-food servers, deli clerks, sales representatives, stockers, busers, waiters, cashiers and telemarketers. Some members of the study reported a felony drug conviction and 18 months of served prison time.

The results? According to the June 17 New York Times, "Black men who had never been in trouble with the law were about half as likely as whites with similar backgrounds to get a job offer or a callback."

Black men who stated they had done time in prison on their applications were only about one-third as likely to get a positive response as compared to whites who had been in prison.

The study also concluded that those with a criminal record had a 30 to 60 percent less chance of getting a positive response from employers. African Americans who had been imprisoned were at a double disadvantage because of racism.

Two-thirds of those serving time in

prison come from oppressed communities of color. On any given day, one in eight black males is in prison or jail. African American men have a one in three chance of going to prison in their lifetimes, compared to one in 17 for whites. Three-fourths of all those arrested on drug charges are people of color, a number hugely out of proportion to their incidence of drug use. (sentencingproject.org)

In New York City, it is illegal for employers to discriminate on the basis of criminal record as well as race. Faced with the study, Patricia L. Gatling, Commissioner of the New York City Commission on Human Rights, had to admit, "The results of this landmark study are deeply disturbing and highlight the need for strong enforcement of the city's Human Rights Law." (John Jay College)

In his 2004 State of the Union address, President George W. Bush proposed a \$300-million "prison re-entry initiative" for people released from prison each year. He touted this as typical of the United

States as "the land of the second chance."

But Jeff Manza of Northwestern University said Pager's study on racist discrimination in job hiring "demonstrates in a new and convincing way the extent to which the 'second chance' that Bush talks about runs headlong into the realities of race." (racematters.org)

By 2003 there were more than 123,000 prisoners in local, state and federal for-profit prisons. The profits made from prison construction and from prison contracts for food, telephone systems and other services is in the billions of dollars, far exceeding Bush's paltry sum.

Indeed, in a for-profit prison system, repeated and discriminatory arrests equal profit. Racist hiring practices become an additional method to drive people of oppressed nationalities into desperation. The solution is obvious: The racist prison system and hiring practices will only cease to exist when the people overthrow the capitalist system and replace it with socialism. □

Rally launches prisoner rights campaign

By Cheryl LaBash
Lansing, Mich.

Prison-rights activists, many of them families and friends of men and women behind bars, rallied on the Michigan State Capitol steps in Lansing on June 18. The action, sponsored by the March for Corrections and Judicial Reform Committee (MCJRC) and the National Lifers of America, launched a campaign to fight the U.S. prison and judicial system's profound injustice and racism.

Kevin Carey, initiator and coordinator of the MCJRC, chaired the rally that brought people from Detroit, Battle Creek, Holland and other cities and towns across Michigan. The keynote speaker, though, came all the way from Houston. Njeri Shakur, from the Texas Death Penalty Abolition Movement, described how prisons took the place of the dying agricultural economy in Texas in the same way the prison "industry" is replacing the closed factories of Michigan.

The state of Michigan pays more than \$43,000 per year in tax dollars to house and maintain each prisoner. At the same time, Michigan has eliminated education and other rehabilitation programs for prisoners, and has begun charging them for medical care. Rally speakers pointed out that one-fifth of the Michigan budget is spent on the state's Department of Corrections, equal to its funding for public education.

Michigan cities are going bankrupt



WW PHOTO: CHERYL LABASH

Big-business prisons are the crime.

while the Bush administration siphons tax dollars to pay for the war on Iraq. According to information from the Michigan Emergency Committee Against War and Injustice: "In 2004, \$429 million of Detroit's taxes went for the Iraq war. That's twice the city's 'budget deficit.'"

(www.mecawi.org)

The resulting cuts in social services mean more oppressed women, men and teenagers will be driven to crimes of survival, and into prison.

Thousands of petition signatures supporting the campaign are already in hand as prison-rights organizers continue to mobilize. The petition demands include:

- Pardon the falsely convicted, especially those who have exhausted court remedies to obtain justice, and battered women incarcerated for killing their abusers.
- Parole prisoners serving life sentences whose record shows their rehabilitation.
- Medically parole chronically ill, terminally ill and elderly prisoners who pose no risk to public safety.
- Exempt juveniles from life sentences.
- Reinstate funding for the Legislative Corrections Ombudsman's Office.
- Reduce state spending to any county that fails to racially diversify its court jury pools.
- End mandatory minimum sentences with restoration of sentencing discretion to judges.
- Halt the exploitation, racketeering and overcharging of the for-profit telephone contracts prisoners are forced to use in Michigan prisons.

One militant solidarity statement came from Workers World Party, from Monica

Moorehead and Larry Holmes. It read in part: "Under capitalism, big business will invest in any sector of the economy to make profits, including repression of the masses.

"Prison construction equals profits. Slave labor in private prisons equals profits. The victims are the disenfranchised youths, Black, Latino, Native and poor whites, who can't find decent-paying jobs. The victims are those who are suffering from mental disabilities and drug addiction. These sectors of society make up the vast majority of the 2-million-plus U.S. prison population.

"Instead of spending hundreds of millions of dollars a day on the brutal occupation of Iraq, instead of spending half a billion dollars a day on the institutions of repression, we say take that money and spend it on good-paying jobs. Take that money and spend it on schools with small class sizes, up-to-date equipment, teachers. Take that money and make sure that every human being has housing, health care, heat, lights and water. Our brothers and sisters behind bars are a vital part of the fight to reclaim our cities and communities.

"Free Mumia Abu-Jamal, free Leonard Peltier, free the Five Cuban Heroes, free the Angola Two and all political prisoners. Tear down the walls."

For more information, contact the March for Corrections and Judicial Reform Committee, c/o 5920 Second Ave., Detroit, MI 48202. Phone: (313) 831-0750. □

As Bush 'hunkers down'

Leaked memos show disarray over Iraq

Continued from page 1

details, they have not challenged their authenticity.

The documents confirm what Marx explained so clearly and distinctly about capitalist bosses: If the rate of profit is great enough, there is no crime they will not stoop to commit or pay to have someone commit for them. The drive for imperialist super-profits makes finance capital even more ruthless and adventurist.

Revelations of despair

It wasn't revolutionaries who leaked these documents—as happened with the 1916 Sykes-Picot treaty. That secret agreement made during World War I carved up the Arabian peninsula between England, France and Czarist Russia. A year later the U.S. intervened and demanded its share.

But after the Bolsheviks seized state power in Russia and established a workers' state in 1917, they exposed this colonial backroom deal.

The eight secret memos released in recent weeks also document imperialist wheeling and dealing to divvy up the spoils of occupation. But they would never have seen the light of day if U.S. and British imperialism had hit pay dirt in Iraq. These revelations reflect defeat and despair.

The memo dated July 21, 2002—which briefed officials for a meeting with Blair—stressed, "In particular we need to be sure that the outcome of the military action would match our objective A postwar occupation of Iraq could lead to a protracted and costly nation-building exercise. As already made clear, the U.S. military plans are virtually silent on this point."

Following the recent exposure of the documents, journalists John Barry and Mark Hosenball wrote: "The Brits held out hope that they would play a larger role in rebuilding Iraq. Instead, they found themselves marginalized, with top posts in

Baghdad going to Bush loyalists instead of British hands with years of field experience." (Newsweek, June 27)

The British imperialists, who once boasted that "the sun never set" on their empire, find themselves in their twilight years, eclipsed by U.S. imperialists who treat them like a junior partner. "Blair and his team have largely hidden any discontent they may feel," the two concluded. "Yet, as the Iraqi insurgency intensifies, small cracks are beginning to appear."

Costs of war, occupation

The massive financial investment in the military invasion and occupation of Iraq is not paying off for Wall Street or the London Stock Exchange.

After priming the pump with at least \$7 billion in "reconstruction projects," the oil and the profits that come with it are still not flowing out of Iraq. "Most of the cash goes to U.S. contractors who spend much of it on personal security," noted Rod Nordland. (Newsweek, June 13)

Widespread popular anger is fueling the Iraqi resistance.

"Rage is rising among Iraqis facing an official employment rate of 18 percent and infrastructure is destroyed," Nordland continued. "Basic services like electricity, water and sewers still aren't up to prewar levels. Electricity is especially vital in a country where summer temperatures commonly reach 125 degrees Fahrenheit. Yet only 15 percent of Iraqis have reliable electrical services. In the capital, where it counts most, it's only 4 percent."

The revelations expose a falling out among thieves. Their political costs are mounting, too.

Anti-war anger in Britain cost Blair's

Labor Party 95 Parliament seats in the recent election.

President George W. Bush told two leaders of the European Union on June 20 that his strategy of crushing the Iraqi opposition "is going to work."

Bush maintained his "stay the course" position during an East Room media conference with Jean-Claude Juncker, the prime minister of Luxembourg and European Union president, and José Manuel Barroso, the European Commission president.

Two years ago, the European imperialists were deeply divided over Iraq and aired those differences. But now the problems in the European Union have driven them to Washington on questions of trade.

Trouble on the home front

Bush and the neo-cons are hunkered down in the White House, trying to defend their empire-building strategies to broad groupings in the U.S. ruling class that are no longer so confident that these are the right "guys" to get the job done.

The June 20 New York Times assessed, "Mr. Bush and his administration now find themselves with little or no support from Democrats and with a Republican Party that has proven reluctant to support him on a number of fronts."

Calls for Bush's impeachment, muttered warnings of war crimes trials, denouncement of torture at Abu Ghraib and Guantanamo, demands to set a deadline to pull troops out of Iraq—these domestic "leaks" are hissing like steam from political fissures in both parties of big business.

"Congress is like Wall Street—it operates on fear and greed," explained Allan J. Lichtman, a presidential historian at

American University in Washington. "The Democrats don't fear him anymore, and they're getting greedy because they think they can beat him. The attitude you see among Republicans in Congress is, my lifeboat first." (New York Times, June 20)

Congressional Black Caucus members John Conyers and Maxine Waters, more in tune with mass sentiments, had spoken out against the Iraq War earlier. They are suddenly finding wider support from the Democratic and Republican elite. On June 16 Rep. Waters announced formation of the "U.S. Out of Iraq Congressional Caucus," with 41 members.

Conyers, the ranking Democrat on the House Judiciary Committee, wrote a letter to the White House on May 5 demanding an explanation about the revelations that the Bush administration manufactured the pretext for invasion of Iraq. More than 100 other members of Congress signed on. John Kerry and Edward Kennedy have also "taken up the issue."

Conyers widely circulated petitions demanding answers from the White House and got more than 560,000 signatures.

The refusal of the Iraqi people to knuckle under to Pentagon domination, and the building anger in the U.S. population against the war for empire, have at last created cracks in the political establishment here.

These disclosures about the ruses for the U.S.-led invasion of Iraq, however, will go nowhere unless they are used to help build a broad and powerful anti-war struggle based in the workers and oppressed who always suffer the most in a war.

They also demonstrate that as U.S. finance capital finds it harder to assert its economic will globally, the danger of its military adventurism grows. What schemes are in the works now against Iran, Korea, Venezuela and Cuba? □

**Free the Cuban 5 • Free Mumia Abu-Jamal • Free Leonard Peltier
FREE ALL POLITICAL PRISONERS**

Preparing for Pride activities

LGBTQ youth take on NYPD

By Ruth Vela
New York

FIERCE—an organizing project of transgender, lesbian, gay, bisexual, two spirit, queer, and questioning youth of color, ages 13 to 24—called a meeting with the NYPD Sixth Precinct on June 21 at the LGBT Center. It was in response to ongoing harassment by police of TLGBTSQQ youth in the West Village.

Set to take place three days before the first Annual Trans Day of Action for Social and Economic Justice, the meeting was part of a series of events aimed at kicking off the PRIDE weekend but also raising political awareness.

Several youth of color spoke out at the meeting, giving testimonies of experiences they've had with police all over the city, not just in the West Village. Some had been told to move for no reason when socializing with friends. Many described instances that began with being told to move and quickly escalated to violent hate crimes. One young man told of being handcuffed and repeatedly

kicked by police, while they attacked him verbally as well.

Another concern raised was the ongoing harassment faced by youth from residents of the West Village, who also tell them to move, yell insults and throw things from their windows. One youth posed the question to police, "Why don't you do anything then?"

"I'm being harassed for three reasons" said one young woman. "Because I am young, because I am a woman, and because I am gay." Unfortunately, her statement rings true for almost all LGBTQ youth of color in the city who have been denied a place to come together safely, and the right to self-expression and respect.

In response to the youth, the two police officers present on behalf of the Sixth Precinct claimed they were unaware that these issues even existed. According to them, no reports had ever been filed against the Sixth Precinct and they had never been made aware that there was a problem.

They repeatedly brought up the Civilian Complaint Review Board, urging youth to

take their complaints there, along with a name, badge number and description of the officer committing the abuse.

Past experiences, however, have taught youth that the CCRB, like the police, cannot be trusted. According to a survey conducted by FIERCE, 85 percent of victims of police misconduct in New York City are Black or Latin@. Also, those under the age of 25 represent 39 percent of the victims of police misconduct, even though they comprise only 14 percent of the general population. A total of 18,474 allegations were made against police officers in 2004. Of those, only 8 percent resulted in disciplinary action.

Instances of abuse raised by the youth were labeled "differences of opinion," by the police. The officers told the youth that "being asked to move was not harassment" and that residents choosing to hurl insults at the youth were merely exercising their rights to free speech.

The meeting ended unresolved. The youth demand an end to the violence while the police refused to even accept that it exists.

In discussions afterward, the youth made it clear they were not fooled by the condescending manner of the police. They are well aware that the harassment they have experienced has nothing to do with crime and everything to do with racial and gender profiling.

Youth demanded the Sixth Precinct be investigated and the attacks stop. One young woman shouted, "We're not going to take this any more ... it's not healthy, it's abusive!"

Immediately after leaving the meeting, FIERCE youth congregated outside to plan the next step in their ongoing struggle against police.

Historically, the West Village has been a hot spot for police violence and abuses. But the LGBT community also has a history—one deeply rooted in courage, strength and the tenacity to fight back. This meeting, like the coming PRIDE weekend and the TransJustice march, serve not only as celebrations of this history but as reminders that this is a community that cannot be silenced and will not be defeated. □

Pre-Stonewall gay organizing

Impact of early Black civil rights struggle

Continued from page 2

Those white gays and lesbians who later argued against this early Mattachine concept of gays as a cultural minority often used the most vile racist language because they did not want to be identified with African American, Mexican and Jewish people.

Many cultures raising their voices

The idea that lesbians and gays are one "culture" or comparable to oppressed nations obscured the fact that the vast population these movement founders were trying to organize was made up of many cultures and nationalities.

In 1950, for example, Merton Bird, a Black gay man, and Dorr Legg, a white gay man, formed the "Knights of the Clock" group in Los Angeles. The organization brought together inter-racial gay and lesbian couples and their families. This support network was necessary to provide a safe space to discuss social problems.

The Black gays and lesbians in the group not only faced the additional burden of racism, they were also part of an oppressed nationality with its own culture(s). Some of the racism directed at them also spilled over as discrimination and violence against their white loved ones—something not experienced by whites who partnered with whites.

Altogether, that's what made the formation of the Knights of the Clock necessary.

The underground LGBT bar crowds, largely blue-collar, were also made up of different nationalities. While the Mattachine founders were struggling in 1951 to find a political identity for homosexuals as a shared culture, Langston Hughes was publishing "Montage of a Dream Deferred," which included "Café 3 a.m." That poem, about a police raid on a gay bar, began "Detectives from the vice squad/with weary sadistic eyes/spotting fairies."

Hughes was part of the Harlem Renaissance, an exquisite artistic expression of a culture demanding its own liber-



Jose Sarria, shown here, led a successful 1951 battle for LGBT rights.

ation. Gay, lesbian, bisexual and trans artists and writers were among the visible, central figures who articulated that just demand.

'The Nightingale of Montgomery Street'

The formulation of a single culture was too narrow to fit the boldly ground-breaking 1951 San Francisco battle led by Jose Julio Sarria—a transgender Latin@—which demonstrated that bar life had its own "cultures." These included drag culture, which in reality was various cultures based on nationality, region and economic class.

Sarria, child of a Colombian mother and a Nicaraguan father, worked as a waiter and greeter at the Black Cat bar on Montgomery Street in San Francisco after World War II. Sarria drew audiences of hundreds when *ze* began singing arias on the job. Sarria gained local fame for leading patrons every night in singing "God Save Us Nelly Queens," which became a defiant gay anthem.

Sarria infused performances with the demand for gay rights and coined early gay

pride slogans such as "There is nothing wrong with being gay—the crime is getting caught" and "United we stand, divided they catch us one by one."

Sarria showed courage in the face of police repression. When undercover cops infiltrated the bar, Sarria would point them out to the crowd by asking for a round of applause for the individual. And Sarria interjected warnings in song lyrics if there was a tip-off that police were about to raid. The "Nightingale of Montgomery Street" also led bar crowds and other transgender performers to the nearby jail to stand outside and serenade the LGBT prisoners. (www.sfproud.org)

When the state's vice and alcohol control agencies tried to shut down the Black Cat, in part because of the popularity and activism of Sarria, the owners and patrons sued and won a landmark decision. The California Supreme Court ruled that no state law allowed a bar to be closed solely on the basis of the clientele it drew. (www.qx.net)

Struggles were emerging from many cultures, particularly oppressed cultures, to demand LGBT rights and freedom.

Impact of Black civil rights struggle

The momentous organizing for African American civil rights, long overdue after the overturning of slavery and the crushing of Black Reconstruction, lifted the aspirations of all who were discriminated against, downtrodden and disenfranchised.

A. Philip Randolph, president of the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters, had begun organizing a mass mobilization in 1941—the original March on Washington. Randolph, like the Mattachine founders, had been influenced by the struggle for socialism in his early years. He said that his discovery of socialism as a young man was "like finally running into an idea which gives you your whole outlook on life."

Harry Hay in particular must have been aware that the demands of the 1941 March on Washington challenged discrimination by some of the same capitalist class ene-

mies—the military, armament industries and federal government—that homosexuals were up against during the Cold War.

And Hay must have been inspired to see Roosevelt surrender to the demands of the March on Washington, which led to the cancellation of the demonstration, and the president publicly issuing the first executive order protecting the rights of Black people since the Emancipation Proclamation.

Two decades later, Randolph would turn to Bayard Rustin—a dynamic gay Black activist—to coordinate the 1963 March on Washington at which Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. delivered his now historic "I Have a Dream" speech.

Hay and other early gay rights activists were influenced by the Black civil rights movement in a broader sense, too. The rising tide of African American organizing raised all boats, and the hopes of all whose dreams had been deferred.

Edward Sagarin published "The Homosexual in America" in 1951 under the pseudonym Donald Webster Cory. Sagarin, who was a white member of the NAACP in his progressive years, had grasped the argument that there was no "race problem"—the problem was racism.

That led him to formulate his groundbreaking argument in "The Homosexual in America" that there is "no homosexual problem except that created by the heterosexual society." He may have been the first U.S. writer to describe homosexuals as a persecuted minority. And he urged homosexuals to rise up and demand their rights.

What set the Mattachine Society founders apart from others who were raising their voices for gay and lesbian rights, however, was that they were revolutionaries.

D'Emilio concluded, "As believers in a theory of social change that stressed action by masses of people on their own behalf, the founders kept the society focused on mobilizing a large gay constituency and wielding it into a cohesive force capable of militancy." ("Sexual Politics")

Next: *Busted!*

People of color initiate Trans Day of Action march

By LeiLani Dowell
New York

Trans and gender non-conforming (TGNC) people of color and their allies will march here on Friday, June 24, in an historic event to protest the injustices that trans and gender non-conforming people face on a daily basis, and demand social and economic justice for all people.

People of color are pioneering this effort. In the fighting spirit of Stonewall, the first annual Trans Day of Action for Social and Economic Justice has been initiated by TransJustice, the first and only trans and gender non-conforming people of color project in New York City, to call attention to the needs of TGNC and working people.

TransJustice is an outgrowth of the Audre Lorde Project, the lesbian, gay, bisexual, two-spirit, and trans people of color center for community organizing. Coincidentally, its march is being held on the same day as the second annual Trans March in San Francisco. Organizers plan to issue a joint solidarity statement linking both events.

The need for such an action is great. The National Gay and Lesbian Task Force's Transgender Civil Rights Project reports that only six states have anti-discrimination laws that explicitly include the trans community. And the Trans Day of Remembrance website reports that this year alone, 10 murders of trans people have been reported—more than one a month. (www.gender.org/remember/day/who.html)

Yet the organizers of the march are quick to note that the issues facing all working people are of concern to TGNC communities as well, including poverty, war and racism.

The call for the Trans Day of Action has garnered widespread support, including endorsements from New York City Councilperson Charles Barron; Al-Fatiha, NYC Chapter; Asian & Pacific Islander Wellness Center, San Francisco; Brazilian Rainbow Group, Inc.; Center for Constitutional Rights; FIERCE! Fabulous Inde-

pendent Educated Radicals for Community Empowerment; Gay & Lesbian Dominican Empowerment Organization; INCITE! Women of Color Against Violence; International Gay and Lesbian Human Rights Commission; Jews for Racial and Economic Justice; San Francisco Pride; San Romero de las Américas Church, NYC; Southerners On New Ground; Florida Gender Equality Project; Indigenous Peoples Solidarity Movement, Montreal, Quebec; International Action Center; Network/La Red: Ending abuse in lesbian, bisexual women's and transgender communities, Boston; Troops Out Now! Coalition; Workers' Rights Law Center of New York; Youth Enrichment Services of the LGBT Community Center; and others.

Reasons for Day of Action

Following are excerpts from the call:

"Communities of color have histories that are rich with multiple gender identities, experiences, and expressions, but today the two-gender system is enforced against us everywhere: in health care, immigration, bathrooms, clothing, shelters, prisons, schools, government forms, job applications, and identity documents.

"Gender policing has always been part of America's bloody history. State-sanctioned gender policing targets Trans and Gender Non-Conforming (TGNC) people first by dehumanizing our identities. It denies our basic right to gender self-determination, and considers our bodies to be property of the state.

"Gender policing isolates TGNC people from our communities, many of which have been socialized with these oppressive definitions of gender. As a result, we all too often fall victim to verbal and physical violence. This transphobic violence is justi-

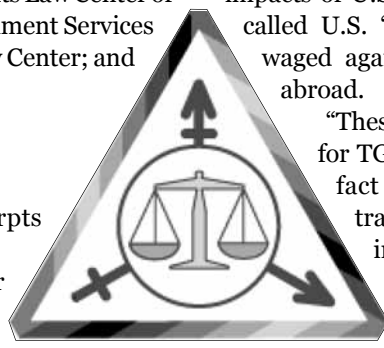
fied using medical theories and religious beliefs, and is perpetuated in order to preserve America's heterosexist values. Gender policing and violence denies our existence and is used to maintain control over us and keep our communities divided.

"The specific issues that TGNC people of color face mirror those faced by the broader communities of color in NYC: police brutality and harassment; racist and xenophobic immigration policies; lack of access to living wage employment, adequate affordable housing, quality education, and basic healthcare; and the impacts of U.S. imperialism and the so-called U.S. "war on terrorism" being waged against people at home and abroad.

"These issues are compounded for TGNC people of color by the fact that homophobia and transphobia are so pervasive in society. As a result, our community is disproportionately represented in homeless shelters, in foster care agencies, in jails and prisons.

"On April 2002, the city of New York passed a non-discrimination law that included gender identity as a protected category under the city's human rights law, yet it took the Bloomberg administration two years to create and release an inadequate set of guidelines to define what this meant. Meanwhile, TGNC people continue to experience high levels of violence and harassment everywhere we go.

"Across the country, people of color communities face high levels of unemployment. For example, it is widely known that in 2005 the unemployment rate for Black men in NYC is now at 50 percent. We can only deduce that the percentage of unemployment for TGNC people of color is likely to be much higher, since there is hardly any New York State employment data for our community. Due to the lack of employment opportunities, many of us are forced to accept work that is criminalized by the government, stigmatized by society



Trans Day of Action
HISTORIC EVENT
June 24 gather at 5:30pm at Jackson Sq.
8th Ave.-Greenwich Ave.-Horatio St.
March to Union Square at 6:30 • NYC



Pat Chin second from left holding the banner.

Join us to celebrate the life of PAT CHIN

A memorial celebrating the life of Workers World Party leader Pat Chin will be held on Saturday, June 25, from 3 to 6 p.m. at the Lang Center, 55 W. 13 St., 2nd floor, in Manhattan in New York City. Chin, a lesbian activist of color, died on May 16 at the age of 56 after a long bout with breast cancer.

The memorial will honor her exemplary contributions to the revolutionary struggle. Representatives of important struggles will be in attendance, including from the Haitian movement, as well as members of Pat's family, her friends, and political activists she met during her long history in the struggle.

Call (212) 627-2994 for more information about the memorial and about how to contribute to the Pat Chin Memorial Fund.

Win for lesbian co-mothers

By Minnie Bruce Pratt
Jersey City, N.J.

Lesbian couple Jeanne LoCicero and Kimberly Robinson of New Jersey won a court battle on May 23 to list both of their names as parents on the birth certificate of their new-born daughter, Vivian Ryan. The victory, a first for the state, continues an expansion of lesbian and gay rights by New Jersey courts, including a recent ruling that lesbian and gay couples are entitled to the same tax exemptions as heterosexual married couples.

LoCicero and Robinson, who are registered as domestic partners in New Jersey and were married in Canada, conceived Vivian through artificial insemination (AI). Under state law, the male partner of a heterosexual couple who use AI has his name automatically

and offers very little safety.

"The anti-immigrant REAL ID act not only blatantly violates the rights of immigrants, but also has a direct impact in the lives of all TGNC people. This is especially relevant for people of color, who since 9/11 have experienced rising levels of policing and scrutiny from state agencies such as the Department of Motor Vehicles and Social Security. TGNC people are portrayed as frauds and potential so-called "terrorists," then targeted or denied rights.

"The police, as agents of the government, have brutalized and murdered multitudes of people in our communities in the past few years. Many of them are people of trans experience, who have had no recourse because the violence perpetrated against them was, and still is, state-sanctioned.

"As Trans and Gender Non-Conforming people of color, we see that our struggle today is directly linked to many struggles here and around the world. We view the June 24 Trans Day of Action for Social and Economic Justice as a day to stand in solidarity with all peoples and movements fighting against oppression and inequality.

"We also view this action as following the legacy of our Trans People of Color warriors, such as Sylvia Rivera and others who with extreme determination fought not only for the rights of all trans and gender-nonconforming people, but also were on the front lines for the liberation of all oppressed peoples.

"In this spirit, we as Trans and Gender Non-Conforming Peoples of Color call on all social justice activists from communities of color, lesbian, gay, bi and trans movements, immigrant rights organizations, youth and student groups, trade unions and workers organizations, religious communities and HIV/AIDS and social service agencies to endorse this call to action and to build contingents to march in solidarity together on June 24. With this march we commemorate the lives of those who came before us, and honor the courage of all communities that continue to struggle and fight for liberation and self-determination every day." □

listed on their child's birth certificate. Lawyers for LoCicero and Robinson successfully argued these lesbian mothers should have similar legal protection.

The court ruling gives immediate legal and economic benefits to Vivian, including eligibility for health insurance as a dependent of either mother. Previously in New Jersey, a lesbian co-mother had to petition the court for an adoption to gain parental rights. This process took six months to two years, cost a hefty amount of money, and involved intrusive interviews and even fingerprinting by state agencies.

Judge Patricia Talbert conceded the point that the lesbian, gay, bi and trans movement has been clearly vocalizing: that the notion of "family composed of mom, dad and two children applies, in fact, to only 23.5 percent" of the U.S. population. □

The communist & the general depart

In Portugal, the struggle continues

By John Catalinotto

It was just a funeral procession. But it proved conclusively that the reports of the death of communism in Europe were false.

Hundreds of thousands of workers, farmers and Communist Party activists from all over Portugal marched in Lisbon on June 15. They carried scarlet banners with hammers and sickles, forming a vast sea of humanity as they marched behind the hearse carrying the body of the late communist leader Alvaro Cunhal. An observer remarked that, for three miles, from the Avenida da Liberdade to Lisbon's Morais Soares cemetery, the "streets of Lisbon were dyed red."

Cunhal, who died June 13 at the age of 91, had spent 74 years as a leading militant of the Portuguese Communist Party (PCP). He was its secretary general from 1961 to 1992, played a major role in the 1974-75 revolution that freed Portugal from a four-decades-long fascist dictatorship, and was a towering figure in 20th-century Portugal. To his last days, he helped ensure that the PCP he had done so much to build would remain true to the struggle for socialism.

As Cunhal's body entered the crematorium, tens of thousands of party militants, tears in their eyes, held their fists and their red banners in the air as they sang the hymn of the world communist movement—the Internationale. And they chanted the slogan made popular by the liberation movements in what were once fascist Portugal's African colonies: "The struggle continues."

That slogan was also chanted at the funeral of another Portuguese revolutionary who had died two days before Cunhal. General Vasco Gonçalves was a leader of the Armed Forces Movement that overthrew the fascist dictatorship on April 25, 1974. Gonçalves, who was 83 when he died, had led the Portuguese soldiers who were refusing to fight against the liberation movements in Angola, Mozambique and Guinea-Bissau.

Under Gonçalves' turn as Portugal's premier, Portugal recognized the liberation of the colonies and began within Portugal the most wide-sweeping land reform in Europe, relieving the lives of millions of Portuguese farmers and rural workers. Workers in Portugal refer to Gonçalves as "my general."

Gonçalves was the highest-ranking officer and one of the few Marxists to join the "revolt of the captains" against the fascist regime in the early 1970s. He embraced the revolutionary process in Portugal, and even in recent years contributed with his writing and speaking to the defense of socialist ideals.

Gonçalves and Cunhal, the general and the communist, fought shoulder to shoulder during the most progressive phase of the Portuguese revolution, which went to the brink of a workers' seizure of power before counter-revolutionary forces inside and outside Portugal were able to stop its progress.

It was a sign of the influence of Cunhal and his party that Portugal's capitalist government was obliged to declare June 15 a day of mourning and that the most vicious and obstinate enemies of Cunhal and communism had to acknowledge his courage, honesty and devotion to the cause of the workers.

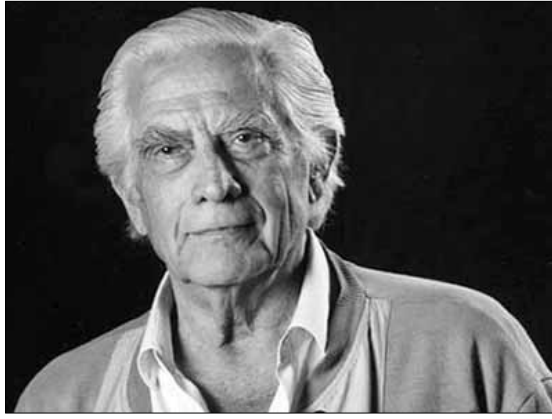


PHOTO: AVANTE

Alvaro Cunhal. Below, funeral cortege for Cunhal: a sea of red.



Cunhal's life entwined with the PCP

Like many other 20th-century communist activists and leaders, Alvaro Cunhal drew his political inspiration from the world-shaking 1917 Russian Revolution, which for the first time in history put an oppressed and exploited class in the seat of state power. Born in 1913, he had already joined the PCP by 1931. By 1935 he was elected to lead the party's youth organization, and was soon underground carrying out the struggle, as so many Portuguese communists had to do.

Clandestine organizing, exile, jail, torture by the hated fascist political police, a role in the Spanish Civil War—that was what so many European communist leaders experienced in the 1930s and 1940s, and Cunhal saw it all.

As a youth organizer he was jailed in

1937 and again in 1940, each time for a year and each time tortured. At each release he immediately rejoined the struggle. Through the early 1940s Cunhal became a senior party organizer, playing a role in three major regional general strikes, until he was arrested in 1949. In 1950 before a tribunal he turned the tables on his accusers, attacking the fascist government of Antonio Salazar and defending the PCP's program and actions.

This time the fascist regime tried to put him away for good. Indeed, he stayed until 1960 in the feared Peniche prison, spending eight of those years in solitary confinement. Then he and eight other communist leaders climbed down from a window on sheets tied together in a dramatic prison escape, one that undoubtedly relied on the skillful organization of the clandestine PCP apparatus they had helped to build. Soon after this escape, Cunhal was elected the PCP's general secretary, a post he held until 1992.



WW PHOTO: JOHN CATALINOTTO

General Vasco Gonçalves

While the PCP was deepening its roots with the Portuguese city and rural workers, especially those in the Alentejo region south of Lisbon, it was also aiding the revolutionary struggles for national liberation in the colonies, building close working relations with Agostinho Neto in Angola, Amílcar Cabral in Guinea-Bissau and Samora Machel in Mozambique.

Under the impact of the interaction between the liberation struggles, the turmoil in the colonial army and the workers' struggle against fascism, the revolutionary situation developed rapidly. It ended with the overthrow of fascism and the liberation of the colonies.

This is a historic lesson the Bush administration will probably ignore as it pursues its program for U.S. domination of the world. With incidences of "fragging" now reported in the U.S. military in occupied Iraq, all who want to stop U.S. imperialism's irrational drive for conquest should pay close attention to the Portuguese experience.

Alvaro Cunhal had distinguished himself as a graphic artist and, under the pseudonym of Manuel Tiago, as an accomplished novelist. But his major life's work was the party itself.

In the period after 1975, Cunhal was one of the few communist leaders in Western Europe who refused to fall into the trap of so-called Eurocommunism, which really meant turning away from class struggle and becoming a social-democratic electoral party no longer oriented toward a struggle for socialism. Even after the counter-revolution in the USSR had made a tactical retreat inevitable, he continued to insist that his party fight every inch of

Continued on facing page

Another brutal offensive in Iraq sees Bush support shrivel

By John Catalinotto

On June 20, as President George W. Bush was vowing to “stay the course” in Iraq, resistance fighters in Karabila were countering “Operation Spear,” the latest offensive by 1,000 U.S. Marines and 100 puppet Iraqi troops. Others in cities across the country were blowing up members of the puppet police force.

With almost no independent reporting coming from Iraq, it is nearly impossible to measure the Pentagon’s constant claims of victory regarding its offensives. For “Operation Spear,” the U.S. military claimed to have killed “40 insurgents,” meaning armed members of the Iraqi resistance, in a bombing assault.

However, a report from the Iraqi resistance forces, published in the Free Arab Voice, said there were “more than 70 civilians still buried under rubble after savage American bombing; 300 families near death from thirst pinned down by American snipers,” and added that the resistance was nevertheless holding off the U.S. offensive.

Even a U.S. source, the June 17 Los Angeles Times, reported: “Dr. Hamid Alousi, director of the General Hospital in nearby Qaim, said half a dozen bodies were stuck under a bombed house in Karabila. ‘We can’t get them out because of the continuous bombing,’ Alousi said.”

Much like the body-count reporting

during the U.S. war against Vietnam, U.S. officers make a rough estimate of the dead Iraqis and count everyone killed, even children, as an enemy combatant. To guess at the real progress of the battle in Iraq, it is perhaps more helpful to see the reaction of the ruling politicians in Washington and their pundits.

Cheney speaks of ‘last throes’

Interviewed on CNN’s “Larry King Live” on May 25, Vice President Dick Cheney claimed that the United States and its Iraqi forces were winning the war and that the “insurgency was in its last throes.” Cheney is one of the chief architects of the war on Iraq, but this comment sounded to many people as if he had remained in the bunker he fled to on Sept. 11, 2001, and missed the reality of the Iraq occupation.

Since that May 25 interview, hundreds of Iraqi puppet troops and police have been killed all over Iraq. Also since then, Bush’s support in U.S. polls has dropped significantly. Regarding Iraq, it’s now at 37 percent in the CBS-New York Times poll.

Bush himself has avoided making that same bold claim. He has confined himself to pledging that the United States will “stay the course” in Iraq, whatever the sacrifices. “More and more Iraqis are becoming battle-hardened and trained to defend themselves,” Bush said.

He meant to apply this comment to the puppet troops. Most intelligent observers will apply it more accurately to the resistance forces.

Another champion of “staying the course” is the chief flack of globalization,

New York Times columnist Thomas Friedman. On June 15, he looked at the disaster for U.S. imperialism occurring in Iraq and suggested that the Pentagon “double the American boots on the ground.”

Doubling the number of boots implies doubling the number of young people to fill those boots. The Times Op-Ed columnist doesn’t explain how this will be accomplished when recruiters are having nervous breakdowns trying to meet their quotas, which they fail to do. For Friedman, nothing could be worse for the U.S. empire’s fortunes than to be driven from Iraq by the Iraqi people in arms.

Despite the enormous problems the Iraq occupation is causing U.S. imperialism, ruling-class opinion agrees with Friedman. Not just Bush and the Republican leadership, either. The Democratic Party national leadership has refused to confront Bush on the war.

First split in ruling-class views

Where the growing mass opposition to Bush’s Iraq policy has broken through has so far been only among those members of Congress who are most in touch with their constituents. This opposition is a sign of the first real break in ruling-class opinion regarding the need to retreat from Iraq, but it is still a minority view.

Rep. John Conyers of Michigan held a “forum” with 20 House Democrats to discuss the “Downing Street memo,” which shows clearly the Bush administration had decided to invade Iraq from the start. Rep. Maxine Waters of California founded an

“Out of Iraq” caucus in Congress, with members of the Black Congressional Caucus like Barbara Lee of California and Charles Rangel of New York playing outspoken roles.

The dissent among politicians lags way behind attitudes on the ground. Recruiting has been down about 25 percent each month for the Army and National Guard. And it gets worse each month. But no one dares propose a military draft, even though every officer in the Pentagon is thinking about it. They’re also thinking and talking about “fragging”—that is, enlisted GIs killing officers, often by rolling a fragmentation grenade into their tent.

Meanwhile, the Pentagon made it clear it considers the recent deaths of two officers in Iraq a case of “fragging.” It has charged Staff Sgt. Alberto Martinez with murder in the deaths of Capt. Philip Esposito and 1st Lt. Louis Allen.

Whatever the details of the case, this sends a shiver up the generals’ spines. While there have always been examples of killings not by enemy fire, in Vietnam this reached the level of political protest, which many war resisters saw as a legitimate tactic against brutal or racist officers. Between 1969 and 1971, the U.S. Army reported 600 fragging incidents, which killed 82 officers and non-commissioned officers and injured 651.

The Pentagon knows the high level of discontent among U.S. troops, and fears that fragging will become a more popular method of opposing the tour of duty in Iraq. □

Portugal

Continued from facing page

the way and never give up the eventual goal of socialism.

The corporate-controlled media in the United States and even in Western Europe gave almost no coverage to the tremendous march in Lisbon. Some of the more influential newspapers did run obituaries that at least hinted of Cunhal’s real role and influence. But the imperialist ruling class hates to pay respect to a workers’ leader, and they tried to demonize Cunhal by using the terms “Stalinist” and a “rigid hardliner” to describe him.

As Workers World Party wrote in its condolence statement to the PCP, these attempts at insults simply meant that Cunhal “was unwilling to give in by one centimeter to the capitalist class, and for that he has kept the loyalty of workers and communists worldwide.”

If the media withheld all publicity, it was because the ruling class was concerned that this open display of pro-communist sentiment by hundreds of thousands of workers in a country of 10 million was not simply a last cry of nostalgia for 20th-century communism.

The funeral march was also the strongest pro-communist demonstration in Western Europe since 1989 and the collapse of the Soviet Union.

Along with the recent defeat for the European Union constitution in France and The Netherlands, it was another sign that the capitalist offensive that has been going full blast since 1989 may run into a wall of workers’ resistance.

Farewell, comrade Gonçalves, farewell comrade Cunhal. The struggle continues.

Catalinotto, a managing editor of WW, has been the New York correspondent for the PCP newspaper, Avante, for the past nine months.

Bolivarian Revolution is vigilant

New oil finds increase danger to Chavez

By Deirdre Griswold

It’s not hard to figure out what is happening in Venezuela. Under the government of Hugo Chavez, the resources of this oil-rich country are going to help the people for the first time. Oil money is paying for housing, decent food, education and health care.

Chavez has the support of at least 70 percent of the people in polls and elections. Another election is coming up in August and he is sure to win.

But a parade celebrating Venezuela’s independence on June 24 had to be rerouted to a military base because of credible threats to Chavez’s life, security forces said.

Who would want to kill a popular figure associated with so much positive changes for the majority of the people?

BusinessWeek Online pointed out on June 21 that Venezuela has just reported significant new oil finds in the western Lake Maracaibo region. It added that Venezuela has the world’s greatest oil reserves outside the Middle East.

When a business magazine makes a statement like that, its savvy readers perk up their ears. They look at everything that transpires between that country and the U.S. government in terms of whether or not it enhances the possibility that the immense profits that could be made from the oil might come their way.

Bloomberg.com is also very concerned about Venezuela. Why? Because the National Assembly is discussing requested legislation that would let the government take some of the money that Venezuela has in reserve, because of the current high price for its oil, and spend it on development projects. That sounds good, right?

Not to the financiers. “The legislation would leave the South American country, the world’s fifth-biggest oil exporter, with less reserves to defend the value of its currency and to make foreign debt payments,” says Bloomberg.

The financial news service quotes Richard Francis, an analyst with Standard & Poor’s in New York. “It’s unorthodox to just take reserves out of the central bank,” Francis said. “If you just look at some of the indicators, Venezuela would tend to be rated higher but the political risk and unorthodox economic policies keep it at a relatively low rating.”

So countries that spend their reserves on “unorthodox” things like services for the people get low bond ratings, which means they have to pay a higher interest rate in world markets.

U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice recently met with the Venezuelan “opposition” to encourage them. Why should a top representative of a powerful country like the U.S. bother with a political group that has no chance of getting elected? What other scenarios were

behind the purpose of that meeting?

Were promises of money and even more lethal support given to those who want to supplant Chavez? And with Chavez so popular among the masses, how could the opposition expect to ever get into power? Unless something happened to Chavez and his coalition of progressive forces were overthrown. And that’s exactly what happened in Chile in 1973, when President Salvador Allende was assassinated with the blessings of Secretary of State Henry Kissinger and the U.S. oil establishment he really worked for.

The U.S. has specially trained organizations to do exactly that. It has tried for over 40 years to assassinate the revolutionary leader of Cuba, Fidel Castro. It kidnapped the popular president of Haiti, Jean-Bertrand Aristide, last year and sent him into exile. It made sure Patrice Lumumba, the leader of the Congo independence movement in the early 1960s, was assassinated and his jailer, Gen. Mobutu, elevated to head of state.

So Venezuelans in charge of the president’s security have good reason to be very cautious and protect Chavez from whatever plots may exist against him. They know these can come not just from some disgruntled Venezuelans unhappy about land reform or their loss of the economic privilege and prestige, but from the ruthless professionals working for the world’s most desperate imperialist ruling class. □

Was justice really served?

"Mississippi Burning" was one of the most critically acclaimed movies of 1988. It received Academy Award nominations for best picture and for Gene Hackman as best actor. The movie takes place in a small town in Mississippi during the height of the African American struggle for voting rights during the 1960s. The screenplay was loosely based on the June 21, 1964, real-life murders of three civil rights workers—James Chaney, Andrew Goodman and Michael Schwerner, all in their early 20s—by the Ku Klux Klan near Philadelphia, Miss.

The movie included powerful scenes depicting the racist terror that Black people faced during this historic period—scenes rarely seen by a broad sector of the U.S. population. At the same time, the movie was rightfully criticized for falsely portraying the FBI as heroes during their so-called investigation into the murders.

This falsification was done to cover up the FBI's notorious Counter-Intelligence Program (COINTELPRO). Even though the FBI did infiltrate the fascistic, white supremacist group, it also treated the Klan with kid gloves. It was a different story altogether when it came to the leaders of the civil rights and Black liberation movements. COINTELPRO used every dirty trick in the book—including demonization, imprisonment and assassinations—to target leaders that included Martin Luther King Jr., Malcolm X and the Black Panthers.

Now—exactly 41 years later to the day that Chaney, Goodman and Schwerner were brutally beaten and executed—KKK member Edgar Ray Killen, 80 years old, was found guilty of manslaughter for the murders. He is the only KKK member ever convicted for these deaths, since the Mississippi courts did not bother to arrest anyone at the time. In 1967, the federal government found seven of the 19 Klan members guilty of conspiracy to commit the murders under a charge of "violation of the civil rights" of the young organizers. Nine of the Klansmen were acquitted, and the trials of Killen and two others ended in hung juries.

Some, including the family members of the murdered men, view the Killen conviction as an important symbolic gesture that justice is finally served. This is certainly understandable. Others are asking why Killen was not found guilty of first-degree murder? The courts say that the passing of time was an important factor. Key witnesses have died and evidence has reportedly disappeared or been destroyed.

But a white juror was quoted regarding the feelings of his fellow jurors, "...if they could just have better evidence in the case that they would have convicted him of murder in a minute. Our consensus was the state did not produce a strong enough case." (New York Times, June 22)

Ben Chaney, the brother of James Chaney, stated after the Killen verdict that at least nine other bodies were found on Aug. 4, 1964—the bodies of Black men buried in the earthen dam along with the bodies of the civil rights workers. He told the press that their killers should also be brought to justice.

The trial of Killen cannot be separated from the reopening of cases of other murder victims during the civil rights

era—so many others, like Medgar Evers, Vernon Dahmer, Emmett Till and the four girls killed in the Birmingham church bombing. Why weren't their killers brought to justice after these atrocities took place? The federal government, with all of its sophisticated wiretapping and other COINTELPRO-like tactics, knew every step of the KKK and other white supremacists. The federal government was well aware that the Southern courts would not prosecute anyone for these crimes. Instead of intervening in a meaningful way, it used "states' rights" as an excuse to do nothing but give a slap on the wrist to these lynchers.

Ben Chaney told Workers World in a February 2005 interview that there are people in high governmental positions in Mississippi today who were involved in his brother's murder and that Killen was an attractive and convenient scapegoat because of his sordid history. To take that point further, individual racists like Killen may have outlived their usefulness, but the U.S. government still depends on the presence of neo-fascist groups like the Klan and Nazis to whip up racist, anti-worker hatred to maintain capitalist rule. □

'Stop the killing of Philippine activists'

The Bush regime and the U.S. military are backing a wholesale terror campaign against the people of the Philippines. That was the message of an Emergency Conference on Human Rights in the Philippines held in New York June 16.

The supposedly democratic administration of Philippines President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo has carried out more human-rights violations than any previous Philippine government—including the fascist dictatorship of Ferdinand Marcos—according to Berna Ellorin of BAYAN USA. She had just returned from two months in the Philippines.

This year alone, 39 members of the mass organizations BAYAN and BAYAN-MUNA have been murdered by military-backed death squads. Slides showed the faces of labor organizers, priests and others who have been killed.

The Philippine military is armed, trained and funded by the Pentagon. U.S. Special Forces are operating in the country. In the past four years human-rights organizations have documented violations against 198,398 individuals, 18,977 families and 123 communities. The Arroyo regime also holds 238 political prisoners.

Ellorin and other speakers talked about the history of U.S. intervention in the Philippines, the Philippine people's struggle and the BAYAN movement. Exposés of corruption and massive electoral fraud have now discredited Arroyo's government, and BAYAN is leading a campaign for her resignation with a perspective to oust her if she refuses to step down.

The meeting ended with an appeal for international support for BAYAN's call: "End undeclared martial law! Stop the killing of political activists."

A Philippine Solidarity Committee in

Women workers on a risky journey

"Making Changes" by Patricia Hilliard, iUniverse Books, \$14.95, 2005

By Rosemary Neidenberg

Patricia Hilliard's first book, "One Pledge Unspoken," transported the reader to the 1960s and a reliving of the struggle of small-town Midwest high school students against the Vietnam War. (Does anyone remember running leaflets on a mimeograph machine?)

"Making Changes" takes us to a large Cleveland insurance company office in the 1980s. The women workers, the supervisors, the bosses—they're all here, so authentic in every detail. The personal lives of the workers, their problems, interests, life-plans, the way they think and dress and talk are real and recognizable.

Particularly familiar and poignant is the woman who collects figurines. She buys one every week. Do you know her? I do.

The mix of heritages found in every big-city workplace is there—newly arrived, as well as third-generation descendants—from Europe, Asia, the Caribbean, and women many generations out of Africa. Each cog in the American Empire Insurance Co. is a beautifully etched dimensional portrait.

The drudgery of the data-entry work, the drabness of the fluorescent-lit rows of computer-adorned desks—one shudders to envision it. But brightening the

picture are the lunchtime, break-time, stealthy stolen moments from work-time, camaraderie of the workers, the confidences about personal problems, the kidding around, the mosaic of personalities to deal with and gossip about (particularly the bosses and supervisors). And there is the occasional delicious event when the workers get over on management.

Ellen Anderson, leader and instigator, is happy to get the data-entry job. She will be able to pay her rent and buy film for her camera. Spiritual kin to the high-school anti-war organizer in the 1960s, she rejoices in an exciting prospect. She is determined to organize a union.

Hilliard provides a step-by-step, nitty-gritty, hold-your-breath account of how the disparate, generous, flawed, gutsy, disregarded, underpaid women office workers embark on their risky journey.

Anyone who has been involved in union organizing will recognize and relive the moments of desperation, the moments of triumph, the strategy meetings to counter each move of the bosses, the feelings of deep disappointment when it looks like the workers will lose, the exhilaration when victory is in sight.

Do the workers win? Well, it cannot be imagined that Hilliard would write a book where the workers lose.

Available from leftbooks.com.

BOOK REVIEW



Rusty Fabunan, Berna Ellorin and Gary Labad.

CREDIT: NYCHRP

the U.S. is now being created.

The conference was organized by BAYAN USA, the youth organization ANAKBAYAN and the New York Committee for Human Rights in the Philippines. The program also included a popular poem in Tagalog by Philippine laureate and labor organizer Amado V.

Hernandez. It was read by Gary Labad of the New York Committee for Human Rights in the Philippines and accompanied by a dance interpretation by NYCHRP member Donna Mae Santos. The program closed with the singing of the Philippine patriotic song "Bayan Ko."

—Bill Cecil

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Detrás del levantamiento indígena en Bolivia

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la burguesía local.

Ahora El Alto es 90% indígena. Según el Centro de Estudios Laborales y de Desarrollo Rural en La Paz, un 60% de l@s alteños vive por debajo del nivel de pobreza. De ellos, un 50 por ciento sobrevive bajo condiciones indigentes.

Sólo un 30% de los hogares tiene alcantarillado básico. Los servicios de educación y salud son muy pobres.

Fuertes comités bien organizados son la columna vertebral de la Federación de Juntas Vecinales, FEJUVE. Esta es una de las dos organizaciones principales de El Alto que han jugado un papel importante en las movilizaciones.

FEJUVE está encabezada por Abel Mamani, pero las bases son decisivas. FEJUVE y la Central Obrera Regional, COR, que tiene como secretario ejecutivo a Edgar Patana, conforman la base de un comité coordinador que moviliza las masas.

Estas organizaciones fueron la fuerza impulsora de los recientes bloqueos de ruta y la toma simbólica de plantas de gas en El Alto.

En el 2003 iniciaron y se volvieron el centro de protestas, con gritos de "¡El Alto en pie, nunca de rodillas!" y "¡Guerra civil ya!"

Esta fue la "Guerra del Gas" para defender esa reserva e impedir su venta al Norte. La rebelión forzó la renuncia en el 2003 del entonces presidente Sánchez de Lozada, un estrecho aliado de los EEUU quien escapó a los EEUU después de desatar una ola de represión con la policía y los militares en el intento de suprimir las protestas.

Esa represión mató 80 personas e hirió a 400, muchas de ellas alteñas. Ese "Octubre Negro" todavía resuena en la memoria del pueblo. Una de las demandas actuales es la de procesar al ex presidente. Sánchez de Lozada todavía anda suelto en el santuario de terroristas que es hoy EEUU.

Muchas otras organizaciones en Bolivia conforman la resistencia junto a FEJUVE y la COR. Todavía no hay unidad política general y algunas de sus demandas específicas a veces parecen contradictorias. Sin embargo, la gran mayoría comparte una resistencia al neoliberalismo y están listos a tomar acción hasta en las circunstancias más difíciles.

Todas estuvieron presionando tres demandas principales: nacionalización de los hidrocarburos; la Asamblea Constituyente; y el enjuiciamiento a Sánchez de Lozada y luego, que renunciaran Mesa, el neoliberal presidente del Senado Hormando Vaca Diez, y

Mario Cossío, el presidente de la Cámara de Diputados.

Acciones combinadas forzaron la renuncia de Mesa

Las acciones nacionales combinadas de todos los grupos de oposición paralizaron al país, forzaron la salida de Mesa, e impidieron la sucesión presidencial constitucional, que hubiera sido el presidente del Senado seguido por el presidente de la Cámara de Diputados. Esos puestos estaban ocupados por los impopulares Vaca Diez y Cossío quienes participaron en el programa neoliberal implementado por Sánchez de Lozada. El nuevo presidente, Eduardo Rodríguez, es el presidente de la Corte Suprema de Justicia, y como tal, la única persona que constitucionalmente puede convocar a elecciones tempranas.

Otras fuerzas en la revuelta incluyen al diputado Aymara Evo Morales y su organización, Movimiento al Socialismo, MAS, que tiene la segunda representación más grande en el Congreso después de los partidos tradicionales.

Morales, un cultivador de coca, es muy conocido por la batalla de su organización contra la erradicación de la coca en la región del Chapare, especialmente por parte del Plan de Washington, Plan Colombia. El gobierno de los EEUU se ha opuesto fuertemente a Morales y le han acusado falsamente de recibir financiamiento del presidente venezolano Hugo Chávez.

Los mineros militantes, que formaron la base de la Central Obrera Boliviana, COB, son los que encendían las cápsulas de dinamita durante las protestas. Grupos indígenas y de campesin@s de las regiones amazónicas del este de Bolivia también fueron cruciales en la lucha.

Santa Cruz: tierra de la oligarquía

Esta región oriental de Bolivia es muy rica en hidrocarburos. Es también la casa de la oligarquía, la población minoritaria de blancos racistas.

Los residentes del departamento de Santa Cruz lanzaron un movimiento secesionista con la demanda de autonomía, la cuál fue apoyada por la embajada estadounidense y las compañías transnacionales de petróleo, y por Vaca Diez, quien también es de esta región.

Las masas rebeldes se opusieron fuertemente a la secesión. Vieron esta maniobra como un intento de oposición a la lucha militante por la nacionalización, y para robar los recursos naturales del país. El primero de junio, una manifestación de indígenas, campesin@s y trabajador@s de la región que expresaban las demandas nacionales, fue insultada y atacada brutalmente por un grupo paramilitar racista, la Unión Juvenil Cruceñista.

Después de tres semanas, la protesta que al principio había empezado en El Alto se convirtió en una huelga general por todo el país. Paralizó el Congreso, el aeropuerto, los servicios, el transporte, los pequeños mercados—y al final, detuvo totalmente el país.

La huelga bloqueó completamente a La Paz. No permitió que entraran provisiones de gas o petróleo.

Así empezó una escasez de alimentos, no sólo en la capital sino también en El Alto.

En los días finales de la huelga, las

deliberaciones del Congreso, tratando de debatir la renuncia de Mesa, tuvieron que ser trasladadas a Sucre, capital constitucional al sureste de La Paz, supuestamente una ciudad tranquila libre de protestas.

Muerte de un minero amplía la rebelión

El 9 de junio, Mundo Obrero habló con el escritor y periodista boliviano de medios alternativos, Alex Contreras, quien se encontraba en Sucre. Con voz entrecortada luego de correr a causa de los gases lacrimógenos, dijo "Hoy en Sucre se venían a reunir los parlamentarios para tratar la sucesión presidencial, pero a las dos y media esta tarde se produjeron enfrentamientos donde se ha producido la muerte de un trabajador minero de 52 años. Él era uno de los mineros que venían a Sucre para impedir que sea elegido Vaca Diez como presidente, lo que ha ocasionado que todos los sectores populares se radicalicen y están prácticamente queriendo tomar la plaza de Sucre, la Plaza 25 de Mayo, donde se encuentran reunidos los parlamentarios."

Contreras describió cómo los manifestantes habían entrado por miles desde zonas rurales cuando oyeron la noticia de la muerte del minero: "Había contingentes de policía y de militares en los caminos, el aeropuerto y especialmente en la Plaza 25 de mayo donde estuvieron cientos si no miles de bolivianos y bolivianas en las calles. Hay un enfrentamiento con la policía..."

En este punto, con sonidos de balas y estallidos de dinamita en el trasfondo, se rompió la conexión telefónica. Mundo Obrero pudo comunicarse con Contreras más tarde y cerciorarse de que no fue lesionado.

Estos acontecimientos hicieron que el Congreso aprobara unánimemente la renuncia de Mesa. Más importante aún, los sucesores a la presidencia, Vaca Diez y Cossío, decidieron renunciar a la sucesión.

Cuando Mesa llegó a la presidencia en el 2003, debía haber llevado a cabo la "Agenda de Octubre", la nacionalización, la cuál de hecho hubiese sido un intento de desarrollar la industria de hidrocarburos para el beneficio del pueblo en vez de beneficiar a las compañías transnacionales. Él también debía haber convocado una asamblea constituyente donde el pueblo hubiese podido elegir y planear libremente el futuro de su país.

Mesa no cumplió con estas promesas. Vaciló cuando fue confrontado poco después de aceptar la presidencia, por el Congreso mayoritariamente neoliberal y por la oligarquía racista y pro-estadounidense que teme y odia a la misma vez, a la población indígena.

En marzo, una débil ley de hidrocarburos fue por fin aprobada. Aumentó los impuestos a las compañías extranjeras en un 32%, sobre el impuesto previo del 18%. Pero no era suficiente para satisfacer las demandas del pueblo.

Según los críticos de la ley, beneficiaba a las compañías a expensas de las masas bolivianas. Ahora la demanda es por la nacionalización total y el desarrollo de los hidrocarburos para el beneficio de la mayoría pobre.

La lucha continúa

Después de que fue investido Rodríguez como presidente, no todos los bloqueos fueron levantados. El combat-

ivo pueblo del Alto prometió seguir luchando hasta que sea lograda la nacionalización.

El nuevo presidente se reunió con los líderes de El Alto por horas, hasta que llegaron a un acuerdo. Las organizaciones otorgaron al nuevo gobierno una tregua corta pero vigilante.

Abel Mamani anunció la formación de una comisión conjunta de representantes del gobierno y de las organizaciones sociales del Alto para asegurar que la nacionalización, la Asamblea Constituyente, y la llamada a elecciones generales sean incluidas en la agenda del Congreso Nacional.

La rebelión en Bolivia no ha terminado. Sólo hay una tregua temporal. Aún l@s combativ@s residentes del Alto estaban pidiendo a sus líderes permitir una tregua para reaprovisionar sus escasos suministros de alimentos y poder así dar de comer a sus hijos.

Pero ell@s no tienen ninguna ilusión sobre Rodríguez o los partidos tradicionales. Ell@s se enfrentan a su burguesía y al imperialismo estadounidense.

Mientras tanto, Washington y las compañías estadounidenses trabajan sin parar con sus aliados, internacionalmente y dentro mismo de Bolivia.

Recientemente fue reportado que los Estados Unidos y Bretaña están "perdonando" la deuda a 18 de los países más pobres del mundo, entre ellos Bolivia. ¿Creen ellos que esto es suficiente para calmar a las masas combativas allá? ¿Se irán las compañías estadounidenses? ¿Pagarán reparaciones al pueblo?

¿O quieren una situación "estable" para que las compañías transnacionales puedan aprovecharse de las ganancias de los recursos naturales de Bolivia sin ningún obstáculo?

El imperialismo siempre desestima los movimientos del pueblo. La cuestión ahora en Bolivia es cómo pueden llegar al poder l@s indígenas, trabajador@s, y campesin@s. Según Contreras, hay intentos de formar un Comité Unitario de Movilizaciones entre todas las organizaciones. También le informó a Mundo Obrero que la FEJUVE y la COR del Alto "han decidido conformar con la Federación Única de Campesinos de La Paz que está conformada por campesinos Aymaras, una Asamblea Popular del Pueblo Indígena y Obrero—y han declarado la ciudad del Alto como la capital de la Revolución Boliviana del siglo XXI." □



MUNDO OBRERO

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editorial

MICHAEL JACKSON: ¿Un veredicto de 'culpable' después de su indulto?

Inocente.' El representante del jurado repitió esta palabra 14 veces. Y después Michael Jackson libremente pudo dejar la corte judicial de Santa Bárbara por su puerta principal. La gente en todo el mundo dejó de hacer lo que hacía para escuchar el veredicto. Una vez terminó el juicio con el indulto, la decisión de la corte fue objeto de intensos debates.

Aquellos que veían el juicio como un vehículo para promover el racismo y la reacción recibieron el veredicto con júbilo.

Pero otros, quienes veían esto como un caso de corte que bregaba con el abuso sexual de niños, están airados y perturbados. ¿Por qué?

El jurado—sin ni una persona de raza negra entre ellos—fueron entrevistados por largo tiempo después de finalizar el juicio. Hablaron sinceramente y de manera muy seria sobre cuán cuidadosamente laboraron tratando de ser objetivos y cuán cuidadosamente examinaron la evidencia que el fiscal les presentó. Después de 14 semanas de escuchar las evidencias y deliberaciones explicaron que ellos no encontraron base alguna para imputarle a Jackson cargos mayores o menores.

Incluso la prensa capitalista reporta que hay la creencia de que el fiscal conocido como Tom "Mad Dog" Sneddon ha perseguido a Jackson por más de una década como una vendetta.

¿No es acaso el mito de la justicia capitalista en los EEUU que una persona es "inocente hasta que se haya comprobado su culpabilidad?"

Entonces, ¿porqué los comentaristas tantos de programas televisivos como políticos corrieron a sus púlpitos a encontrar "culpable" a Jackson o ridiculizarle y deshumanizarle después de que un jurado, el cual nadie puede argumentar de que fue un jurado compuesto de sus iguales—cuidadosamente sopesó y analizó todas las evidencias encontrándole finalmente inocente?

Es porque Michael Jackson se enfrentó a dos juicios: uno en la sala judicial y el otro en las salas noticieras. Jackson fue ridiculizado y deshumanizado en los medios radiales y televisivos, no sólo en los medios sensacionalistas. Los titulares que gritaban las afirmaciones de la fiscalía, enterraban los argumentos de la defensa, sirviendo así para ganarse al "jurado" de opinión pública. De hecho, los medios noticieros ya habían condenado a Jackson aún antes de que el juicio comenzara.

Una vez que la publicidad sobre los cargos contra Jackson explotara, ya quedaba muy poco espacio para las noticias sobre la jerarquía de la iglesia católica encubriendo los abusos sexuales de niños y niñas y hasta de mujeres entre sus filas. O sobre la violación sexual de jóvenes por los reclutadores militares del Pentágono.

Ni tampoco la prensa tomó la oportunidad para proveer educación sobre el hecho de que el abuso sexual de niños es epidémico en los Estados Unidos y la preponderancia de los abusadores son hombres heterosexuales.

Este juicio nunca se trató de darle fin al abuso sexual infantil. Fue un foro para racistas de ridiculizar a un artista de raza negra quien ha promovido la unidad racial. Y fue también una campaña para hacer menos humano a una persona prominente que no cabe en los moldes de género diseñados por el estado capitalista.

Pero al menos un periódico lo hizo bien: Workers World/Mundo Obrero. El periódico que está usted leyendo toma muy en serio la lucha para forjar una unidad en contra todas las formas de discriminación capitalista e ideologías que dividen. □



Detrás del levantamiento indígena en Bolivia

Por Berta Joubert-Ceci

En la noche del 9 de junio, después de tres semanas de una revuelta masiva, el Presidente Carlos Mesa de Bolivia fue forzado a renunciar. Lo reemplazó el presidente de la Corte Suprema, Eduardo Rodríguez.

La incontenible fuerza de ira, orgullo y voluntad de la población indígena Aymara, Quechua y Guaraní de defender los recursos naturales de Bolivia, llevando a la capital sus banderas whipalas de liberación, han puesto al país en el centro de la efervescencia revolucionaria de América Latina.

Los pueblos indígenas junto a campesinos y trabajadores, han estado luchando valientemente en contra de las transnacionales de los Estados Unidos y de otras potencias. Por muchas décadas estas fuerzas extranjeras han estado robando los recursos naturales del país dejando a los pueblos indígenas en la miseria.

Su lucha es también en contra de su propia clase capitalista, la cual ha sido el agente de los monopolios extranjeros para subyugarlos.

Con las dos principales demandas, la nacionalización de los hidrocarburos y el llamado a una Asamblea Constituyente—ellos incrementaron las movilizaciones y huelgas hasta lograr la paralización del país.

Bolivia, con una población de 9 millones de personas, es el país más pobre de Sur América. Sin embargo, tiene una gran riqueza en gas natural. Bolivia es el segundo país con la mayor reserva de gas natural después de Venezuela.

En manos de compañías extranjeras como la Repsol, British Petroleum, Total, Enron, Shell, Petrobras y otros, esta riqueza natural no ha hecho nada para mejorar la calidad de vida de las masas.

La mortalidad infantil es muy alta: por cada 1.000 nacimientos, mueren 56 bebés. La mortalidad materna es de 550 por cada 100.000 partos vivos.

Cerca del 30% de la población sobrevive con menos de \$1 al día. La pobreza y la exclusión social afectan más a la población indígena, quienes constituyen el 62% de la población.

La pobreza nace de los robos por los imperialistas de los recursos naturales por medio de las políticas neoliberales del mercado libre que fueron puestas en efecto en 1985 para "controlar" una súper inflación del 24.000%, y por las imposiciones del Fondo Monetario Internacional y los requisitos del Banco Mundial. Durante este tiempo las corporaciones internacionales se adueñaron del gas natural de Bolivia.

Los tres partidos tradicionales—el Movimiento Nacionalista Revolucionario (MNR), la Acción Democrática Nacionalista (ADN) y el Movimiento de Izquierda Revolucionaria (MIR), por décadas han compartido el poder poniendo lealmente estas exigencias políticas en acción para el detrimento de la gran mayoría de la población.

Esto ha creado un gran descontento y desconfianza de

la clase dominante y sus partidos, entre los sectores más pobres de la sociedad.

Pero Bolivia también tiene una larga y magnífica historia de protesta política masiva. En 1952 una rebelión forzó la nacionalización de las minas y el derecho al sufragio universal. Más recientemente, la militancia de las masas impidió que el capital extranjero se apoderase de los recursos de agua.

En abril del 2000 brotó la "Guerra del Agua" en la ciudad de Cochabamba, al sureste de La Paz —que impidió que la empresa basada en los Estados Unidos, Bechtel Corp. privatizara el agua.

En enero de este año, residentes indígenas de El Alto, ciudad satélite de La Paz, llevaron a cabo protestas militantes que obligaron al gobierno del Presidente Mesa a terminar un contrato con la empresa francesa Lyonnaise des Eaux Co. Esta firma había estado operando en Bolivia desde 1997, bajo el nombre de "Aguas de Illimani". Administraba el servicio de agua en El Alto, cobrando precios exorbitantes a los consumidores, negando por completo este crucial servicio a los vecindarios más pobres.

Hay que tener en cuenta que el Banco Mundial y el Banco Interamericano de Desarrollo liderado ambos por los EEUU, son socios comerciales de Aguas, y fuerza motriz de la ola de privatizaciones, no solamente de los servicios de agua, sino de todos los recursos naturales y servicios de Bolivia.

El levantamiento comienza en El Alto

La reciente revuelta es un paso adelante en la lucha popular.

Comenzó a mediados de mayo en la ciudad de El Alto. Luego la resistencia se extendió al resto del país.

El Alto está ubicado en el altiplano, a 4.000 metros más alto que el nivel del mar. Es una ciudad de rápido crecimiento con aproximadamente un millón de habitantes, la mayoría Aymaras rurales. El Alto queda arriba de La Paz, a sólo siete millas de distancia.

Esta topografía única presta efectividad a las protestas de El Alto, dado que rodea al Aeropuerto de La Paz, y la carretera principal que conecta La Paz con el resto del país pasa por el centro de El Alto.

El Alto se originó como un vecindario pobre suburbano donde trabajador@s desemplead@s se asentaban mientras buscaban empleo en la capital.

Muchos de ellos eran de los 25.000 mineros bolivianos que perdieron su trabajo en los años de 1980, cuando se cerraron las minas de estaño luego de que cayera precipitadamente el precio mundial del metal. Aymaras, y en un grado menor los Quechua, llegaron a la comunidad después de que se les quitaran sus fincas pequeñas.

Trajeron consigo sus tradiciones y sus fuertes habilidades organizativas. Y comparten una experiencia común: Son todos víctimas de la política neoliberal de Washington, implementada por el FMI con la ayuda de

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