

MUNDO OBRERO

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WWP STATEMENT

Which road forward for labor?

The AFL-CIO leadership is gathering at a crucial moment for the labor movement and the entire working class in this country. The attacks of the bosses and the government are escalating on all fronts, from the destruction of pensions, to mass layoffs, to take backs in health care, as well as all-around union busting.

The debate in the labor movement over how to turn the situation around and move on to the offensive is a welcome development. There has been too little of it

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Occupation breeds resistance

U.S. forces again under fire in Falluja

Growing cry in U.S.: TROOPS OUT NOW!

By LeiLani Dowell and John Catalinotto

The weekend of July 15-17 saw a marked increase in strikes by the Iraqi resistance. Reuters reports that 11 bombs struck U.S. and Iraqi military targets on July 15. Around the country the next day, 16 were killed in bombings, including three British soldiers and one U.S. soldier. On July 17, four bombs went off within a four-and-a-half-hour span in Baghdad.

Iraq Solidarity, based in Spain, transmits a report from Iraq that U.S. occupation forces put the city of Rawa, 200 miles west of Baghdad, under siege from July 15-19. An assault on the town with intensive bombing from the air has left numerous unarmed Iraqi civilians dead, according to Iraqis who have been able to flee the area.

Much as in Falluja last fall, the siege of Rawa is creating a critical humanitarian crisis inside the city, with serious shortages of food and medicines. U.S. troops are fighting street by street and house by house against the resistance, according to eyewitnesses.

Many dwellings have been totally or partly destroyed during the bombardments. Others have been occupied by U.S. troops who, after ousting their inhabitants, use them as points of attack for snipers. According to local sources, five car bombs exploded July 19 in the city. (www.nodo50.org/iraq)

These battles, along with a suicide bomb next to a gasoline tanker in Musayyib that killed at least 98 people, and whose origin is unexplained, show the continued instability inside occupied Iraq. Most fighting continues to be between resistance forces and occupation troops supplemented by troops and police of the puppet Iraqi regime.

A study by the Defense Intelligence Agency showed that throughout 2003 and 2004, more than 75 percent of the attacks in Iraq were against the occupation troops and puppets.

Once again, U.S. military claims that they have pacified the resistance have proven false. A report from Baghdad in the July 17 New York Times says that "the American command ... only a month ago claimed that military offensives had sharply under-

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'U.S. bases—Out of Korea!'

Protesters battle police in massive South Korean demonstration against U.S. military base in Pyeongtaek July 10, left

PHOTO: KIM KYU JONG @TONGILNEWS

Representatives from Korean Democratic Labor Party, lower left.

PHOTO: VOICE OF PEOPLE

Everyone joined the protest, below.

PHOTO: VOICE OF PEOPLE

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WW PHOTO: B. SANDBURG

FIGHT RACISM!

- LAPD kills dad, baby 3
- Buffalo KKK terror 3

LOS ANGELES

Toddler & father killed by police

By John Parker
Los Angeles

At the funeral for 19-month-old Suzie Peña, one person summed up the feelings of many who attended when he shouted in Spanish: "The police are assassins!"

Suzie and her father, Jose Peña, were both shot on July 10 in Watts when the father, with his daughter in his arms, exchanged gun fire with a Los Angeles Police Department SWAT team, hitting one police officer in the shoulder. Instead of calming the situation, the police decided that neither Peña nor his daughter were worth a little more time and negotiation—which the family was pleading for—and decided to fire on a desperate man holding a baby and a gun.

Forensics have shown that the bullet that killed Suzie was fired by the SWAT team—one of 90 rounds the police blasted at the Peñas. Though the LAPD tried to conceal the coroner's report, even Los Angeles Chief of Police William J. Bratton assumed the LAPD killed the child. He, however, put all the blame on the father, calling him a "cold-blooded killer," even though there is no evidence that Peña killed anyone.

Bratton, on the other hand, has a long record of police brutality and killings done under his watch in Los Angeles. And from 1994-1996, when Bratton served as chief of police in New York City, 75 people were killed by the police there.



At the front gate of the car business of Jose Peña in Watts. Inside of the gate Peña and daughter Suzie were killed by police. Neighbors, activists and children decorated the gate with flowers, toys and messages of support and love for the family. Many of the signs call the police "baby killers" and demand community control of the LAPD.

WW PHOTO: JOHN PARKER

Instead of showing remorse for Suzie's death, Bratton insulted the grieving Peña family, saying they were distorting the truth. "This father was not a father of the year, as the family is now attempting to portray him," Bratton said shortly after the tragedy.

Lorena Lopez, Peña's wife, has pointed out that the reckless endangerment of life by the LAPD is the real issue here, and has called for justice in the death of her hus-

band and daughter.

According to the Los Angeles Times, Lopez and her older daughter called the police seeking help because they were being threatened by Peña, who also threatened to kill Suzie. They communicated that he was under the influence of drugs and alcohol. What they wanted was for the police to keep their family, especially the baby, safe from harm.

When police arrived, the family asked to participate in the negotiations with Peña. But the LAPD SWAT division refused.

Buffalo activists rally against KKK

By Beverly Hiestand
and Marge Maloney
Buffalo, N.Y.

For months, African-American families in the Seneca-Babcock neighborhood of Buffalo have withstood smashed windows, thrown bricks, racist slurs and death threats—from gangs of white racist youth. KKK graffiti deface the neighborhood.

A brutal beating of members of an African-American family was the last straw. They wanted to fight back, and reached out to anti-racist activists.

The Buffalo/Western New York International Action Center mobilized at once. They put an urgent call out to a wide spectrum of community activists for an emergency response to the racist attacks.

The first priority was to bring an awareness of conditions being endured in the Seneca-Babcock neighborhood to the entire city. The IAC organized a car caravan that drove through the streets of Seneca-Babcock on July 18, covered with

signs that said, "We won't let hate groups divide us," "Together we can stop racism" and "Our youth need jobs, not KKK recruiters."

In spite of the presence of a crowd of young racists, many people in the neighborhood, both African-American and white, made clear their opposition to bigotry by cheering, clapping and waving at the caravan as it passed. The caravan ended with a street-corner rally.

Caravan activists commented that the economic conditions of poverty and helplessness have clearly made Seneca-Babcock a breeding ground for racist ideology.

Every Buffalo media outlet covered the event, and, for the first time, the television news presentations clarified the serious problems in the community, and exposed the urgent need to address them.

Participants felt that this first mobilization will surely lead to a wide and much-needed discussion about racism in the community, and are already planning a meeting for future actions. □



KLAN & GOVERNMENT Foes or allies

"All who are concerned with the course of the struggle of the working class and the oppressed, all who seriously consider the path to the socialist revolution in the U.S., must study in detail the very rich lessons of the powerful anti-Klan demonstration in Washington, D.C., on Nov. 27, 1982."

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'Hands Off Assata' meeting held

By Monica Moorehead
Harlem, N.Y.

A community teach-in, "International Hands Off Assata Day," was held in Harlem's St. Mary's Church on July 16, the 58th birthday of Black revolutionary Assata Shakur. A former member of the Black Panthers and the Black Liberation Army, Shakur has lived in socialist Cuba since 1984 after escaping from a New Jersey prison in 1979.

In May, New Jersey state officials and the U.S. government placed a \$1-million bounty on Shakur's head and added her to the FBI's most wanted list. The state convicted Shakur, formerly known as Joanne Chesimard, on a first-degree murder charge in the killing of a white state trooper in the late 1970s during a shoot-out on the New Jersey Turnpike.

Speaker after speaker at the teach-in stated that Shakur is a beloved freedom fighter and should be viewed as a political prisoner in exile. The program also paid tribute to other political prisoners like the Cuban 5, Mumia Abu-Jamal, Leonard Peltier, Sundiata Acoli, Marilyn Buck, the MOVE 9, Ruchell Magee, Hugo Pinell and the many others languishing in U.S. jails and prisons. Participants at the meeting also praised the Cuban revolution for its

With an officer hit, they decided instead to even the score—and then some.

"It's been cruel what's happened to my brother," German Peña told the Los Angeles Times. "They didn't have any patience, none at all, knowing that my niece was with him, that he was a father."

This fatal shooting comes two months after deputies from the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department volleyed 120 bullets into a vehicle at an unarmed man in a Compton residential neighborhood. Their reason? He failed to stop and was leading them around the block—at 35 miles per hour. The driver was struck four times, and many stray police bullets sprayed into nearby houses.

Local activists point out that this reckless racist police behavior is not experienced in more affluent neighborhoods, like Beverly Hills, where fewer Black and Latin@ people live.

Newly elected Los Angeles Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa has refused to put the blame for the killing of the Peñas squarely on the police. Instead, he has asked the police chief and the family to tone down their remarks.

Given the increased police brutality and killings in South Los Angeles, a much more appropriate response is the loud and militant demand for justice voiced at demonstrations organized by the family at the site of the killing.

Many believe an additional important step would be to fire and then jail Chief Bratton as an accomplice to the numerous killings of Black and Latin@ people by the police force he heads. □



Assata Shakur;
Michael Tarif
Warren, July 16

WW PHOTO:
MONICA MOOREHEAD

heroism, and especially for its role in keeping Shakur safe from the clutches of a racist U.S. government.

Speakers included Iyalua Ferguson, a leader of the Jericho Movement in support of U.S. political prisoners; Rosemary Mealy, a former Black Panther and a long-time Cuban support activist; Pro-Libertad representative Frank Velgara; and movement lawyers Joan Gibbs and Michael Tarif Warren.

The meeting also featured the films "Mission Against Terror," on the case of the Cuban 5, and "Eyes of the Rainbow," an interview with Shakur in Cuba.

Members of the New York Hands off Assata Coalition chaired the meeting and told the audience how to get involved in the struggle to challenge the criminal bounty and to win total amnesty for Shakur. For more information, go to www.handsoffassata.org or call (718) 303-7037. □

Feinberg Tells West Coast Crowds

'Socialism & LGBT movement are linked'

By B. Sandburg
San Francisco

"There is nothing intrinsic to socialism—a planned economy in a workers' state—that lends itself to anti-gay bigotry or any other form of divisive ideology," well-known transgender lesbian activist Leslie Feinberg stressed at West Coast public meetings July 15-18. "Capitalism, on the other hand, is a dog-eat-dog economy that requires divide-and-conquer ideology."

Feinberg, a managing editor of Workers World, spoke in San Francisco, Los Angeles, San Diego and Las Vegas about her journalistic series "Lavender and Red" which has run weekly over the last year in WW newspaper. She stated, "It documents how the left wing of the revolutionary movement, including leaders of workers' states, have supported the demand to end state repression against same-sex love for more than a century."

"Where problems have existed in workers' states," she added, "they have been the result of too little socialism—based on imperialist encirclement and lack of material resources—not too much socialism. Yet let no one forget that they have done what no rich capitalist country can do: provided free education and health care, jobs, housing and food for all."

Feinberg called for movement-wide discussion groups to delve into a detailed discussion about communism, an examination of history from a class-struggle vantage point and commitment to confront red-baiting. That call was met in all four cities with standing ovations.

San Francisco

A multinational audience of some 200 people—including many youth—packed a hall at the San Francisco Women's Building on July 15, sitting in the aisles and pouring into the hallway.

Feinberg refuted the idea that bigotry was a result of human nature, pointing to the book "Living the Spirit," an anthology by Gay American Indians that documents alternative sex/gender roles in 135 Native nations in the Americas. What makes this fact of human history so subversive, she emphasized, is that it shows that since society has not always been the way it is now, it doesn't have to be this way.

NOW resolutions

Victory for gender defiance

By Minnie Bruce Pratt

Transgender organizers and anti-racist activists scored an important victory July 3 when the National Organization for Women (NOW) passed two resolutions broadening the group's support for transgender inclusion and for lesbian, bisexual and transgender people of color. NOW, founded in 1966, is the largest U.S. feminist organization, with half a million members in 50 states and Washington, D.C.

The resolutions, approved by nationwide delegates at NOW's annual convention, stressed a commitment to "ending gender stereotypes for transgender people as well as anyone who does not conform to gender stereotypes."

The group emphatically "opposes any piece of legislation that intentionally or unintentionally targets the transgender community or anyone that does not conform to gender stereotypes, such as the federal 'Real ID Act.'"



Ruth Vela, Leslie Feinberg, Maggie Vascassenno and John Parker in Los Angeles

WW PHOTO: JULIA LA RIVA

store's purpose — " a t t a c k , demoralize, destroy, create and exploit the working poor."

John Parker, a leader of the West Coast International Action Center and of the Million Worker March Movement in Los Angeles, spoke eloquently about the links between struggles: the fight against the war in Iraq, the work of unions and the Million Worker March Movement and the struggle for LGBT rights. He concluded that "All these struggles are against a common enemy. All movements need to stand together to fight oppression. They know we'll fight back so they try to put more fear in people's hearts, to divide people. We can't let them do that."

Judy Greenspan, who chaired the meeting, noted that Workers World Party had supported an end to LGBT oppression even before the modern U.S. movement raised the demand. "It's not often you hear the words lesbian, communist and transgender together," she said.

Nedjula Baguio, a transgender prisoners' rights activist, spoke about the abuse that trans people suffer behind prison walls, including the denial of hormone treatments. Trans and gender-variant individuals are often unable to get higher education, employment, housing or access to affordable health care. "When your every move and all your behavior is continuously criminalized, you're bound to end up in a negative situation or prison," Baguio said.

Rebecca Cooper—a fourth-generation steel worker, union organizer and slam poet from Pittsburgh—wowed the audience with her poem "Wal-Mart," which passionately and powerfully described the

Congress passed this anti-immigrant act in April as part of a \$81-billion war appropriations bill. It criminalizes discrepancies in documentation and will also negatively affect transgender people as well as people fleeing from domestic abuse.

NOW also committed to fighting for the trans inclusion currently omitted in other federal legislation, including the Family Medical Leave Act, the Employment Non-Discrimination Act (ENDA), and the Local Law Enforcement Enhancement Act—the so-called 1968 national "hate crimes" act.

Additionally, the resolutions acknowledged the special oppression and struggle of lesbian, bisexual and transgender people of color, saying that in their lives "homophobia, biphobia and transphobia are compounded by race and sex discrimination." The solidarity call included support for LBT women of color in immigra-

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Los Angeles: 'Fight war, racism and reaction!'

Feinberg and Parker spoke together at a standing-room-only meeting the following day at the LGBT Community Center. Almost half the audience Latin@, Black and Asian.

Feinberg drew lessons for coalition building from Frederick Douglass' 19th-century fight for the abolition of slavery, against the U.S. war on Mexico and for women's rights. She added that the communist leaders of the early 1950s Mattachine movement for homosexual emancipation also reached out when they opposed the Korean War and spoke out publicly against police brutality unleashed on the Chican@ community in Los Angeles.

Ruth Vela—a leader of FIST (Fight

Imperialism, Stand Together)—and Maggie Vascassenno of the Los Angeles IAC co-chaired the meeting.

San Diego

Ruth Vela and Feinberg addressed an activist audience that drew Mexican@/Chican@, Black, Asian and white activists—lesbian, gay, bi, heterosexual and trans.

Vela chaired the meeting and spoke on the San Diego border struggle against the racist anti-immigrant vigilantes known as the "Minutemen."

Feinberg talked about how the "war on terror" was aimed at any country that tried to defend its right to self-determination and sovereignty abroad and also as a cover for repression against immigrants and other oppressed groups in the U.S., as well.

Las Vegas

In Las Vegas, Feinberg and Workers World Party leader Bob McCubbin spoke to an enthusiastic multi-national audience that included an overlap of LGBT youth, anti-war and labor activists. The meeting, called by the local Peace Now Coalition, was chaired by Las Vegas SEIU organizer Pete Reilly.

McCubbin traced the ground-breaking work of Marxists that has revealed the roots of lesbian, gay, bi and trans oppression in the development of class-divided societies, large-scale private-property and the repressive state—cops, courts, police and military.

Feinberg concluded that ultimately, LGBT liberation can only be achieved by ending the exploitation of human labor on a world scale. □

Mattachine battles police

Continued from page 2

leadership, however, took the position that innocence or guilt was irrelevant to the question of support. The law itself was unjust, they argued, and needed to be questioned, and the abusive police practices toward homosexuals must be stopped."

This progressive argument held sway, which eventually rallied the whole Mattachine Society behind Jennings' case.

'An anonymous call to arms!'

Rather than leave the internal Mattachine Society members open to harassment and arrest, the group used the external and more public Mattachine Foundation to establish an ad hoc "Citizens Committee to Outlaw Police Entrapment."

Committee organizers sent news releases to newspapers and broadcast media about the group's determination to fight Jennings' charges. The media ignored the case.

Committee activists opened up a mass campaign, as well. They addressed a series of leaflets to "the community of Los Angeles," vowing to take the struggle to the Supreme Court if necessary.

One was headlined "Now is the Time to Fight!" Another flier was titled "An Anonymous Call to Arms!" These may have been the first in the United States to publicly articulate demands by this oppressed segment of the population.

The "Call to Arms" leaflet explained the dangers of "guilt by association," a political line of reasoning that was part of Hay's original prospectus for homosexual organizing. ("Sexual Politics")

The leaflet text argued in part, "We the Citizens Committee Against Entrapment, an anonymous body of angry voters in full sympathy with the spirit of

rebellion in our community concerning police brutality against Minorities in general, **are convinced that now, also, is the time to reveal in the clearest possible manner the full threat to the entire community of the special police brutality against the homosexual minority.**"

Mattachine members distributed the leaflets at Santa Monica beaches and Los Angeles bars, in parks and at bus stops in areas frequented by LGBT people, and in public bathrooms where gay men were known to gather.

Hay recalled that "Mattachine even had a couple of supermarket clerks in the Hollywood area who surreptitiously dropped fliers into the packages of their gay customers." ("Sexual Politics")

The power of mobilization

The bold public campaign act electrified those who lived under the threat of police entrapment. The Citizen's Committee began receiving mail offering help and donations to defray legal costs.

Shibley only needed \$750 to represent Jennings. But Mattachine leaders wanted to raise another \$3,000 to cover the cost of sending trial transcripts to at least 40 other attorneys across the U.S. who might take up similar court challenges.

One fund-raising event—a dance and raffle at a private home north of Los Angeles—drew close to 500 people and netted more than \$1,000.

Lester Horton offered an evening's box office earnings from his dance troupe to the committee; one of the Horton dancers had also been entrapped that year.

The unofficial Mattachine benefit was a virtually sold-out success that raised \$1,500—enough to pay for the lawyer's fee and 10 copies of the trial transcript.

Next: 'A great victory!'

Customs agents terrorize immigrant community

By David Hoskins

The U.S. Occupational Safety & Health Administration describes its mission as seeking to “assure the safety and health of America’s workers ... and encouraging continual improvement in [the] workplace.” Despite a mixed record of enforcement, OSHA’s creation was rooted in the fight for an eight-hour day and the fight-back by workers against unsafe working conditions.

Now, the Federal Bureau of Immigration and Customs Enforcement is manipulating the promise of OSHA to launch a vicious attack on one of the most vulnerable sectors of the working class—undocumented immigrant workers.

Immigrant laborers working for contractors at the Seymour Johnson Air Force Base in Goldsboro, N.C., were recently given fliers announcing a mandatory safety meeting sponsored by OSHA.

Once at the location, workers discovered that the meeting was a ruse planned by customs officials to round up and persecute immigrants. Forty-eight people from Mexico, El Salvador, Honduras and the Ukraine were detained and now face deportation. Workers at the meeting described swarms of agents who entered the room and began making mass arrests. (New York Times, July 16)

Letter to the editor

Endorsement of billionaire mayor splits union

On July 13 the Executive Board of District Council 37, AFSCME, voted to endorse the re-election of Wall Street’s candidate for New York City mayor, billionaire Republican Michael Bloomberg. The endorsement was accomplished by the narrowest of margins: 13 Executive Board members voted yes, 12 voted no.

The closeness of the vote reflects the misgivings among the DC 37 leadership over the wisdom of this endorsement, which doesn’t reflect the thinking of the membership of DC 37.

No meetings of the members were held to discuss the pros and cons of an endorsement. No prior meetings of the 56 local union executive boards of the unions that are members of DC 37 were held, nor any public indication given that such an endorsement was even being contemplated!

The endorsement came as a complete surprise, even to the most involved union members and the elected members of constituent union executive boards, for whom DC 37 supposedly speaks.

The day after the press conference, I received “distress calls” from delegates and members who were shocked and bewildered by the endorsement. Other executive board members of my union have told me of similar “distress calls” they received. This indicates that there will be serious resistance coming from the union membership on following the DC 37 leadership down this dangerous path.

It is ironic and telling about the political direction of AFSCME that it would have its “flagship” council endorse a Republican Party mayor in a city where the workers overwhelmingly vote for the Democratic Party. The disappointment resulting from the wasting of more than

The U.S. government claims its actions are a necessary component of its “war on terrorism.”

Dean Boyd, a spokesperson for the immigration office, justified the raid: “We believe it is a very serious vulnerability when there are illegal aliens working at Air Force bases ... they have access to some of the most sensitive work sites in the U.S. Our job is to take actions to immediately remove them from positions where they can do harm.”

Most of the arrested workers installed air-conditioners and heating units, or worked in construction, cleaning or cutting grass.

Boyd has called for procedures that would encourage closer cooperation between OSHA and the immigration office.

The international president of the United Food and Commercial Workers, Joe Hansen, criticized the entrapment for making it less likely that immigrant workers will voluntarily report workplace injuries in the future.

Cecilia Munoz, vice-president of the National Council of La Raza, issued a statement saying, “We think it’s an absolute outrage and danger for the immigration authorities to use this type of tactic.”

Munoz pointed out, “Our ability to keep the work force safe depends on workers being able to complain, and, by mas-

\$100 million of precious union funds on the Kerry presidential campaign has left the current union leaderships floundering around for some way to rescue the situation.

Two things are obvious from this endorsement: (1) the NYC Democratic Party is viewed by the labor leadership as too weak and, therefore, an endorsement of a candidate from that party would bear no fruit, and (2) there must have been secret promises of “goodies” in exchange for the endorsement, emanating from Mayor Bloomberg in relation to upcoming contract negotiations. These “goodies” for DC 37, in the unlikely event that they even materialize, will not offset what will be lost by this endorsement.

Billionaire Bloomberg is a direct representative of Wall Street in the class war against the workers and the poor. Wall Street wants to split the NYC union movement and Bloomberg will use this endorsement to further fracture the

Continued on page 8

querading as OSHA officials, immigration authorities will clearly discourage immigrant workers from coming forward. This won’t affect just immigrant workers, it will affect the safety of all workers.”

Perhaps it is not coincidental that immigrant workers have recently won organizing victories in notoriously “right-to-work” anti-union North Carolina, including a 2004 campaign for recognition by 8,000 workers, immigrants from almost all the states of Mexico, now represented by the Farm Labor Organizing Committee.

Increasingly the U.S. government is using the pretext of “terrorism” to demonize workers who protest and to divide the



WW PHOTO: MONICA MOOREHEAD

July 4, 2005 immigrant workers march, Freehold, NJ

working class along racial lines.

These tactics make it more important than ever for the entire working class to close ranks with its immigrant brothers and sisters. □

ATLANTA

Big business leads attack on the poor

By Dianne Mathiowetz

Atlanta homeless people and community activists packed City Council chambers July 18 to block an “anti-panhandling” ordinance. Under pressure, the City Council tabled the proposed ordinance for more study and input from the community.

The ordinance before the Council would outlaw any form of begging or asking for help in an area encompassing most of the city’s downtown. Someone convicted of this “crime” could get 30 days in jail and/or a \$1,000 fine.

“Neo-apartheid zone” is how Atlanta homeless activists describe the proposed “commercial solicitation” area.

The ordinance would effectively curtail the rights of speech, assembly and free association for poor people in this “tourist triangle.”

For two years Central Atlanta Progress, a powerful organization of business, banking, hotel and restaurant owners and loft-dwellers, has worked behind the scenes with Mayor Shirley Franklin to craft the ordinance.

Backers cite Atlanta Convention Bureau studies claiming convention goers have one major criticism about their stay in the city—poor people asking for spare change.

The response of the image-conscious money elites? Jail the homeless.

Estimates of Atlanta’s homeless population range from 10,000 to 40,000. Many are men, often veterans. A growing number are women and children. Many people who are homeless have jobs that pay minimum wage, but not enough for rent and utilities in this increasingly expensive city.

Gentrification of in-town neighbor-

hoods, and the building of stadiums, interstate and other big developments in working-class areas, have decimated the stock of affordable housing.

Public housing that borders downtown—Capitol Homes, Grady Homes and the McDaniel-Glenn projects—is being torn down to build townhouses and single-family homes priced beyond the reach of low-wage workers.

Only a small number of new units will be reserved for previous poverty-level residents. Hundreds of families, mostly young single mothers, will be desperately looking for shelter. The section 8 program that currently provides vouchers for privately owned housing has a waiting list of thousands.

Hundreds of people, including many homeless, have turned out to speak passionately against the proposed ordinance during the three weeks it has been before the City Council. Their eloquent and dignified statements have exposed the underlying racist and anti-poor bias of the proposed law.

Atlanta’s “quality of life” ordinances criminalize the poor and account for at least one third to one half of people arrested each month. Police jail mostly African-American men for cutting across a parking lot, jay-walking or “looking poor.” These same actions committed by well-heeled party-goers go unpunished.

Ordinance critics point instead to the lack of jobs that pay a living wage, the scarcity of affordable housing, the shortage of treatment facilities for alcohol and drug addiction, and the paucity of mental health services. They say these are the real crimes in a city that proclaims it is “too busy to hate.” □

Housing Not War

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**BRING
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NOW!**

Message to the AFL-CIO convention

Organize, don't split

By Milt Neidenberg

One thousand AFL-CIO delegates will converge on Chicago July 25-28 to debate the future of the labor movement. The convention comes at a critical time for 13 million members, especially the low-paid workforce in service industries that is multinational and largely women. They face a relentless war in Iraq perpetrated by Wall Street and "corporate America."

Backed by a monopoly-minded capitalist government, its agencies, its courts and legislative arms comprising Republicans and Democrats alike, the war has been disastrous for the laboring masses.

Here lies the essence of the crisis: the dispute in the labor movement has created an unfavorable relationship of class forces fraught with danger for the AFL-CIO. The leadership should be planning a strategy of resistance to this war.

Instead, hanging over the convention is the threat of a split over how the organization should be restructured.

This issue will not advance the economic and political interests of the rank and file or attract the millions of unorganized workers. Yes, an objective debate is a welcome development, and structural changes need discussion among the rank and file. But unfortunately, bureaucratic, top-down factions have developed around this issue. The word "split" is recklessly thrown around by one faction, which is relentlessly pushing for the changes.

Called the Change to Win Coalition, it is led by Andy Stern, president of the Service Employees International Union (SEIU), with 1.8 million members. Joining him are leaders of the Teamsters, the United Food and Commercial Workers, UNITE HERE! which includes garment, textile, hotel and restaurant workers, and the Laborers union. These unions are among the largest in the federation and would control the AFL-CIO under their structural proposals. Supporting them, but outside the AFL-CIO, is the Carpenters union.

The primary target of this coalition is John Sweeney, president of the 13-million member AFL-CIO for the last 10 years. There is every indication that he will be re-elected for a fifth term. As yet, he is running unopposed on a program of making some bureaucratic changes in structure and maintaining political alliances with the Democrats and moderate Republicans.

On foreign policy, in a shameful display of subservience to U.S. imperialism, the AFL-CIO accepts funds from the National Endowment for Democracy, a CIA front.

While Sweeney has mobilized a majority of the 57 affiliated unions in a call for unity, his 10-year leadership has been on a trail of retreat.

The federal minimum wage of \$5.15 has not risen in seven years. Millions of immigrants work for less under conditions that violate labor laws.

Some 45 million people lack health insurance. For those who have it, premiums and out-of-pocket medical expenses have skyrocketed.

Rising inflation in the cost of food, housing, transportation and social services has wiped out meager wage increases.

Pensions and other gains won by the sweat and blood of years of struggle are down the drain.

Hard hit are the unemployed, along with people of color and their children who face racism and national oppression. The laboring masses are engulfed in a

vicious downward spiral, which is pauperizing more and more of the unorganized workers and oppressed.

A false parallel

The Change to Win Coalition has confused its members by drawing a parallel between the situation today and the 1930s, when the Congress of Industrial Unions broke from the American Federation of Labor. SEIU President Andy Stern presents his strategy as a similar model for progressive change. But this is a stark misrepresentation.

The 1930s were characterized by militant, revolutionary class warfare, which forced "corporate America" to recognize a union movement that was recruiting millions of unorganized industrial workers and also forced a reluctant government to pass progressive labor and social legislation.

Before the CIO split from the AFL in 1938, three general strikes in 1934 and the historic General Motors sitdown in 1937 had helped organize industrial workers. The San Francisco longshore workers, led by Harry Bridges—a socialist-minded, class-conscious and militant leader—shut down the West Coast ports.

Today, that tradition is very much alive in Local 10 International Longshore Workers Union (ILWU). Their Black leadership initiated the Million Worker March Movement (MWMM), which set a splendid example during the last presidential election. They organized a march on Washington on Oct. 17, 2004, calling for independent political and classwide struggle against the wars abroad and the war on the workers and oppressed at home.

Other general strikes of the 1934 upsurge were organized by auto workers in Toledo, Ohio, and truck drivers in Minneapolis, Minn. Led by socialist-minded and progressive leaders, they too shut down the cities.

It wasn't until 1935 that the Committee for Industrial Organization was born. It remained in the AFL until 1938. By then, following the historic seizure of General Motors plants, the CIO had recruited millions of industrial and unorganized workers. Black, white and other oppressed nationalities signed cards.

Women played an important role in those general strikes, but they faced discrimination by employers and were shut out of the industrial work force—which diminished their leadership in the CIO from the beginning.

Compare that upsurge with the conditions facing the laboring masses today. They are on the defensive, in retreat, awaiting a call from their leaders for resistance and struggle. It hasn't happened. Dissension and demoralization has set in among the top AFL-CIO officials. Their inability to develop a strategy of struggle has led to this bureaucratic factional wrangling and threat of split.

Both factions are led by white men who have not consulted with their membership. They have muddied up the issues, yet both factions are demanding loyalty from their rank and file. The ruling class, as always, is united against the workers and the oppressed.

A split in the unions is a dangerous idea. There is still time for the Change to Win Coalition to pull back from the brink. However, regardless of the outcome of the factional fight, the conven-

tion will not be the last word.

Objective basis for optimism

According to a poll taken in February by Peter D. Hart and Associates, "Some 57 million non-union workers in the United States would form a union tomorrow if given the chance."

In response to the poll, Stewart Acuff, director of the AFL-CIO Organizing Department, wrote an article dwelling on the perils facing the campaign to organize the unorganized. Says Acuff, "For many of them, especially women and people of color, having a union is often the difference between living in or out of poverty. Yet the truth is that a sophisticated and systematic effort to deny workers their basic freedom of association is rampant in this country." (The Nation, April 18)

Acuff is considered to be a progressive leader within the AFL-CIO. He concludes that legislation would solve the problem.

In November 2003, the Employee Free Choice Act was introduced. This proposed law would oblige an employer to recognize a union when a majority of workers simply signed union cards, free of coercion from the boss. The act was signed by 210 members of the House of Representatives, less than eight short of a majority.

After two years it is still languishing in Congress. The AFL-CIO has relied on lobbying and collaborating with Democrats and moderate Republicans. But these legislators must feel the breath of mass struggle to act.

The AFL-CIO leaders are dreaming if they believe continuing on the lobbying road will get it passed and signed into law by Bush. Perhaps they are waiting for the 2008 presidential election. The Change to Win Coalition has not challenged this notion.

If either faction wants to follow the splendid example of the 1930s, they have to prepare for a class-wide, all-out, independent struggle that will shake the foundations of Congress and the White House. That is what forced the corporate bosses and the Wall Street financiers in the 1930s to bend to the will of the unorganized, bringing huge gains to the CIO and the AFL.

The coming AFL-CIO convention will not be the arena for a revival of the class struggle. Unity and struggle, not bureaucratic divisions, are what is necessary. Neither faction will take a stand against the Iraq war or call for the end of the occupation and bringing the troops home now. The AFL-CIO has given silent approval to this imperialist war, which has diverted hundreds of billions of tax dollars from social services.

There is growing opposition to both capitalist parties brought on by the debacles in Iraq and Afghanistan. This is true among rank and file trade unionists and particularly workers of color who have joined the military to escape poverty.

Militant, class-wide solidarity among the workers, immigrants and born here, can attract and inspire anti-war activists and the militant global anti-imperialist movements, and can coalesce with the struggle of women and the lesbian-gay-bi-trans movement. Very important are the Black and Latin@ movements and others fighting national oppression. The face of unity will bring forth solidarity from abroad with those who are fighting the empire.

There is a model for this development. The MWMM, led by Black trade union leaders and their allies in the oppressed communities, is for broad unity. They have set a splendid example in protests



A United Auto Workers rally early 1937 in Detroit's Cadillac Square drew 150,000 supporters for Flint's GM sitdown strike.

and demonstrations that have attracted people of color and white workers.

As the crisis of monopoly capitalism intensifies and the empire continues to decline around the world, movements like the MWMM will grow and come together with other movements with a collective will to change the relationship of class forces, inaugurating an era of social, political and economic change.

New leaders will rise in the stormy days ahead. The AFL-CIO leadership is no longer homogeneous. However the faction fight turns out, there will be doors opened for independent and class-wide unity. All profound and progressive change begins with organizing from below. The laboring masses will begin to build for a massive struggle in their own name.

Neidenberg belonged to Steelworkers Local 2604 and was a member of the negotiating committee for Teamsters Local 840. He is now retired.

WWP statement

Continued from page 1

in the labor movement over the decades. But the terms of the debate initiated by the Change to Win Coalition avoid the fundamental questions facing organized labor. Worse, Andrew Stern of SEIU has repeatedly threatened to split from the AFL-CIO if his demands are not met.

Change-to-Win made the debate revolve around issues of federation structure and the allocation of funds. It is better to spend money on organizing workers than to throw it down the drain paying for the campaigns of capitalist politicians, the way the John Sweeney leadership shamelessly did in the last election campaign. And no one can deny that centralizing the labor movement for struggle has its advantages.

Begin with the rank-and-file

But the keys to reviving the labor movement and expanding its numbers do not lie in restructuring or reallocation of funds.

First and foremost, labor's future depends upon mobilizing its real core resource—the strength, energy and enthusiasm of the millions of rank-and-file workers who are its heart and soul. No advance can take place without this. And this is what the bosses fear the most.

Former Teamsters president Ron Carey shook up the corporate rulers in 1998 when he mobilized the ranks as he built unity between the full-time, part-time and temporary workers. The UPS workers battled the scabs and refused to be cowed by calls for a Taft-Hartley injunction.

With organization, the solidarity of the higher-paid and the lower-paid workers and militant struggle, the Teamsters won a stunning victory against the mighty UPS. This triumph awakened hope and enthusiasm in the workers. But instead of building upon the UPS victory to make it a turning point in the fightback, the

Packinghouse workers expose unsafe plant conditions

By Yolanda Carrington
Raleigh, N.C.

On July 14, a public hearing by the North Carolina Workers Rights Board was held at Pullen Memorial Baptist Church in Raleigh. Organized by the Triangle Justice for Smithfield Committee, this latest hearing dealt with conditions at Smithfield Foods, the largest pork-processing plant in the world.

Based in Tar Heel, N.C., Smithfield has a notorious reputation as a ruthless, oppressive employer, regularly cited for violations against the health, safety and basic dignity of its workers.

Even by the atrocious standards of the meatpacking industry, Smithfield Foods has a reputation as one of the worst offenders. Both current and former Smithfield workers speak about the harassment, dangerous conditions and unfair treatment that they receive on the job.

Union organizer and Smithfield veteran Ronnie Simmons put it this way: "What people should know about Smithfield Foods is that it's nothing but modern-day slavery." Because of the company's gross history of racist harassment and manipulation, workers at Smithfield's Tar Heel facility have lost two major United Food and Commercial Workers Union elections over the past 11 years, in 1994 and 1997.

The first speaker at the hearing was Dr.

Lance Compa, author of the Human Rights Watch report "Blood, Sweat, and Fear: Workers' Rights in the U.S. Meat and Poultry Plants." In his report, Compa described dangerous and unsanitary conditions inside the Bladen County facility, including blood-drenched floors, hog carcasses hung directly above workers' heads, unsafe cutting-line speeds and lethal hog-processing machines.

These conditions have led to numerous workplace injuries and accidents, including several deaths. According to the UFCW, the Tar Heel plant has the highest accident rate in the entire industry.

The National Labor Relations Board has cited Smithfield several times since 1997 on repeated violations of labor law, including worker intimidation, physical assault, race and gender discrimination, workers' compensation violations, and union busting. Each time, Smithfield's lawyers appealed the decision. The latest ruling against Smithfield was in 2004, when the company was found guilty on 42 counts.

The most compelling testimony at the hearing was from the workers themselves. Gwen Mullins, an African American organizer for UFCW, worked in Smithfield's packing house for over six years. Mullins described the racist "divide-and-conquer" tactics that the plant's management used to weaken worker unity, thus crippling

union organizing drives.

Management would tell Black workers that undocumented "illegal" immigrants were "taking their jobs," then tell a segregated audience of Latin@ workers that the Black workers were trying to get them fired and deported back to Mexico. Mullins counteracted the boss's manipulation by bringing all workers together and pointing out their shared experiences as exploited workers and stressing their collective needs and class interests.

Manuel Plancarte, a Latino immigrant who worked for Smithfield subcontractor QSI Janitorial Services, was assaulted by Smithfield's private police force after he tried to intervene in the vicious assault of his son, another Smithfield worker.

Bladen County Sheriff's deputies participated with the company police in the assaults against father and son, and both men were subsequently fired from their jobs. Plancarte and his son were threatened with deportation back to Mexico after they reported the assaults to the local authorities.

Two members of the seven-person panel at the hearing were State Sen. Janet Cowell and State Rep. Rick Glazier. Many of the workers, like Simmons and her fellow UFCW organizer Roberto Mancha, were hopeful that the presence of these

officials at the hearings would put pressure on Smithfield to change its ways and treat workers with fairness and respect.

Indeed, Smithfield workers have testified in the North Carolina General Assembly, in front of the NLRB, at numerous public hearings around the state, and even in the U.S. Senate in 2002. Despite all the public attention given to this issue, Smithfield's management continues to exploit, harass and disable its workers in Tar Heel.

The only way that Smithfield workers will realize justice is to come together and organize in their own name for better work conditions and wages. The workers must resist the racist, sexist and xenophobic attacks from management that are designed solely to turn people against each other rather than against the boss.

In their fight for justice, the Smithfield workers of Bladen County need and deserve the support of a conscious public that will no longer stay silent about the abuse of the very people who put food on their tables.

Carrington is a member of Raleigh FIST—Fight Imperialism, Stand Together. Contact the youth group at FIST@workers.org for more information.



Which road forward for labor?

entire AFL-CIO leadership shamelessly put their tails between their legs and watched as Carey was framed up and crucified by the capitalist government.

It is not surprising that neither the Stern group nor the Sweeney leadership has made mobilizing the membership for class struggle a part of their platform. In fact, the debate itself between these two camps has been largely confined to the upper echelons of the labor movement. This top-down style has left the ranks in the dark.

Fight for the whole working class

The labor movement can grow by becoming a beacon of progress and fighting for the needs of the entire working class and the oppressed communities throughout the country. The words "labor" and "union" must become identified not only with the fight for wages and benefits, but with the fight for causes like national health care, affordable housing, immigrant rights, the right of women to choose, turning the Pentagon budget into funding for schools and clinics and day care centers, ending racism and police brutality, defending the right to same-sex marriage and putting an end to the occupation of Iraq and Afghanistan.

In order to grow, labor must reach out to the millions of workers, women and men of all races, nationalities and sexual identities, documented and undocumented. It must mobilize to meet their needs and defend their rights against the bosses and the government. The union movement must strive to change the reactionary political atmosphere which breeds fear and timidity among the workers. Fighting for the class as a whole will breed enthusiasm, hope and confidence and help pave the way to organize the unorganized.

Oppose war and the big business parties

This class-wide approach was raised on Oct. 17, 2004, with the Million Worker March Movement. The MWM, organized by a bicoastal Black union leadership, marched on Washington, D.C., to raise social and economic issues. But they also took the historic step, in the midst of a presidential election campaign, of demanding that labor be independent of the two capitalist parties and that it oppose the occupation in Iraq.

The war budget is swallowing the wealth and resources needed by the working class to survive on a daily basis. The people of Iraq are suffering death and destruction while U.S. soldiers are being killed and wounded, all for the colonial occupation sought by anti-labor U.S. transnational corporations. The Democratic Party leadership, despite all their complaints about Bush and Rumsfeld, are solidly for continuing the occupation and the war—the only difference is they want more troops.

Neither Change to Win nor the Sweeney leadership has opposed the war. And both cling to the capitalist parties.

NED versus international solidarity

In the era of globalization, international class solidarity is more and more important as a practical matter. Yet, the AFL-CIO leadership refuses to break with the National Endowment for Democracy, which is a corporate and CIA front. The Stern leadership has been silent on the issue. Right now NED is waging a subversive war against the Hugo Chávez government in Venezuela. Chávez is fighting to raise the standard of living and defend the rights of workers and peasants. He is opposed by U.S. big business, led by U.S. oil companies.

Despite all these common positions on fundamental issues, the Change to Win group is threatening a split. To split the labor movement at a time of weakness, when the class enemy is united and when the split will further weaken labor, is reckless.

Stern makes a false analogy with the break of the CIO from the AFL in 1936. But that split vastly strengthened the labor movement. The CIO was formed as a committee inside the AFL in 1935. It grew under the pressure of hundreds of thousands of industrial workers demanding organization who were being rejected by the AFL's narrow, aristocratic, craft leadership. It was a period of upsurge and there were 1,000 sit-down strikes reported between 1935 and 1937. Much of the crucial organizing was carried out by socialists and communists.

The split was driven by the rank-and-file workers and it enabled the labor movement to more than double in two years. When John L. Lewis led the CIO split from the AFL, he was operating from a pre-existing position of strength based on the most intense period of mass organizing in the history of U.S. labor.

The present situation is a far cry from that.

Strengthen labor from the ground up

If Stern and the Change to Win Coalition want to revive the labor movement, they do not need to split to start things going. These are unions with major

resources. They can start by setting the example. First bring in the rank-and-file. Start preparing a coordinated effort in the class struggle against a corporate target.

Open up an appeal to the entire working class. Organize a campaign for the millions of immigrant workers, who need labor's help and who could greatly strengthen the labor movement. Find a way to show solidarity with the Millions More March this coming October, which promises to be a massive outpouring of the Black community.

Use the resources already available to open up a political struggle against the anti-working class Bush administration with a major march on Washington—without handing the movement over to the Democratic Party.

The needs of the multinational working class are vast. It is under pressure as U.S. capitalism spreads across the globe, seeking sweatshops, lower wages and non-union work forces. The corporations are shipping their factories and offices to every continent. They coordinate production and sales with the means of communication and transportation brought about by the scientific-technological revolution.

The working class is being organized into a disciplined world-wide work force which cooperates in the process of socially coordinated production under the direction of giant capitalist monopolies.

The working class, in order to be truly independent of the ruling class, must ultimately organize not just against the corporations, but to get rid of the system of capitalist exploitation entirely under which these corporations rule. The ultimate goal of those who want to organize labor for its true emancipation must be to establish a system of social ownership operating for human need, not for profit—that is, socialism. □

Read **HIGH TECH, LOW PAY**
A Marxist analysis of the changing
character of the working class
on line at [www.workers.org/
marcy/cd/samtech/index.htm](http://www.workers.org/marcy/cd/samtech/index.htm)

ON THE PICKET LINE

by Sue Davis

California nurses vote to strike July 21

Some 9,000 registered nurses who work for University of California hospitals voted overwhelmingly to reject the contract offered by UC administrators and called a one-day strike for July 21. The nurses belong to the California Nurses Association (CNA), representing 60,000 RNs, most of them women.

Issues of retirement security, staffing and a “safe-lift” policy—all demands attacked previously by Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger—are at stake. Schwarzenegger wants to privatize pensions for all state workers, and UC wants to mandate 8 percent of the workers’ pay be automatically put into the pension system. The CNA wants no changes in nurses’ pensions, retiree health or other benefits.

The CNA insists that a safe staffing ratio be included in the UC contract. Last year the governor postponed the implementation of a one-to-five RN-to-patient staffing ratio law from 2005 to 2008. Even though the Sacramento Supreme Court overturned the governor’s order in June, Schwarzenegger re-filed an identical emergency order in early July to reject the staffing change.

In addition to competitive wages, the nurses are demanding a “safe-lift” policy. Schwarzenegger vetoed such a CNA-sponsored bill last year. Government labor statistics show that nursing personnel lead the U.S. in work-related back injuries, with 37.5 percent more than truck drivers. Surveys show 52 percent of all nurses report chronic back pain.

“Failure to listen to what nurses need to care for their patients and families will lead to a revolving door of inadequate care,” said nurse negotiator Maureen Dugan in a July 8 CNA press release. The release noted that four CNA leaders were suspended after the strike vote, though such anti-worker retaliation is illegal.

Qwest workers in tough negotiations

Communication mega-corporation Qwest claimed it needed to “save money” and wanted givebacks in health care, work hours and job conditions from 25,000 workers represented by the Communications Workers of America. But the union bargainers shot back: “We didn’t make this mess—you did.”

With the contract set to expire Aug. 13, the workers are gearing up for a big fight. The CWA says the “retrogressive bargaining demands” include eliminating pension and retiree health coverage for new hires. Designed to divide and conquer, that tactic is another way to cheat workers out of what they earn.

Three class action law suits

Utility workers in California, African American truck drivers in Arkansas and workers on TV reality shows are taking legal action to defend their rights.

Workers at the Southern California Gas Company have filed a federal suit to stop changes made in their pension fund in 1998. They charge that the changes violate federal and state laws against age discrimination, as well as a federal provision requiring companies to notify workers in advance of benefit reductions. The July 11 New York Times noted that reinstating the former pension plan would be “very costly” for the company.

African American truck drivers filed a federal suit on July 12 against Wal-Mart, charging that the company discriminated against them by denying them jobs because of their race. Statistics show that only 2 percent to 3 percent of Wal-Mart drivers are Black, compared with 15 percent of all highway truck drivers. One driver applied for positions at Wal-Mart 22 times between 1998 and 2004 and was turned down for “illegitimate reasons” each time.

The Writers Guild of America, West, filed a federal suit on July 7 on behalf of nearly 1,000 workers who edit and produce reality TV shows. These workers toil for long hours at low wages with no health or pension benefits, unlike their counterparts on scripted TV shows. Broadcast and production companies, which include ABC, CBS, Turner and WB, instruct workers to falsify time cards so as not to reflect actual overtime hours they worked. For example, one worker logged 84 hours but was paid a flat rate of \$7.41 per hour. □

Rally promotes bill ordering safe nurse-to-patient ratios

By Bryan G. Pfeifer
Boston

Hundreds of nurses and health-care activists from across New England rallied at the Statehouse here on July 13 to demand that legislators pass state legislation mandating safe nurse-to-patient ratios.

The one-day action, sponsored by the Massachusetts Nurses Association union, was a continuation of mass state-wide actions in an effort to pass House Bill 2663, “An Act Ensuring Patient Safety.” (www.massnurses.org)

Similar to state-mandated nurse-to-patient ratio legislation won by the California Nurses Association, the MNA-supported bill would order safe staffing levels based on specific hospital location and specialties. In intensive care the bill calls for one nurse to two patients, while in medical and surgical units the nurse-to-patient ratio would be one to four.

The MNA represents over 22,000 nurses and other health-care workers at 85 facilities in Massachusetts. The third-largest state association in the United States and the largest in Massachusetts, the MNA is a member of the American Association of Registered Nurses.

Nurses took over the Statehouse wearing blue T-shirts reading “Safer ratios save lives” and testified before the Public Health Committee, which discussed the safe-staffing legislation. As MNA executive staff and rank-and-file workers spoke at the podium in support of the bill, nurses and their allies held aloft placards declaring: “Registered nurses say: Ratios save lives.”

The MNA continues to gain broad support most evident by the Coalition to Protect Massachusetts Patients, an alliance of 93 health and patient groups that support H2663. Coalition members include Arise for Social Justice, Communication Workers Local 1365, Community Church of Boston, Boilermakers Local 29, Electrical Workers Local 2222, Food and Commercial Workers Local 1459,

Jobs with Justice, Laborers Local 429, plus the Massachusetts chapters of Asian AIDs Prevention Project, Federation of Teachers, Immigrant and Refugee Advocacy Coalition and the Steelworkers union.

Over 100 legislators also support this bill. This is largely due to MNA pressure and the massive support for the bill from poor and working-class people.

In response to this widespread public support for the safe-staffing bill, the Massachusetts Hospital Association, a bosses’ industry council representing 85 private and public hospitals in the state, is attempting to ram through a bill of its own. The MHA bill has no mandates and is filled with language aimed at co-opting points in H2663 without enforcing them. Hospital bosses and their stooges in the legislature spoke on behalf of this bill at the Public Health Committee July 14.

In response to this bill, the MNA states on its website: “It’s full of empty promises. Hospitals cannot be counted on to adequately staff registered nurses because doing so cuts into their profits.”

“Their plan,” the response continues, “asks us to trust that they will do something in the future that they have already failed to do in the past. It is up to the state to put patient safety before profits by enforcing minimum nurse staffing levels.”

A system-wide crisis

A study by the Opinion Dynamics Corporation, an independent research company, released at the Statehouse rally, establishes that 90 percent of RNs surveyed say patient care is suffering due to understaffing and speed-up conditions with devastating and even deadly results for patients.

(www.opiniondynamics.com)

According to the MNA, in Massachusetts there are adequate numbers of certified registered nurses to fill all the needed positions but many won’t or can’t work because of the

abysmal working conditions. And many nurses simply burn out after working 32-hour weeks for only a few years or less.

The ODC survey found that:

- More than one-in-three nurses report patient deaths directly attributable to having too many patients to care for
 - 77 percent report an increase in medication errors due to understaffing, a 10 percent increase over 2003
 - 59 percent report readmission of patients due to understaffing.
- “These results represent an indictment of the hospital industry and demonstrate without a doubt that hospital administrators are not putting patients first—they are putting them in harm’s way,” said MNA President Karen Higgins, herself a registered nurse.

Other recent studies by ODC have found that:

- 78 percent of doctors surveyed in early 2005 think staffing levels of registered nurses in Massachusetts are too low and 82 percent agree that the quality of patient care in hospitals is suffering because there are not enough registered nurses working in the hospitals
- 79 percent of patients and their loved ones say that the quality of patient care in general is suffering in Massachusetts because nurses are being forced to care for too many patients at once
- 83 percent of patients and their loved ones overwhelmingly support passing a law mandating safe-staffing ratios to address understaffing.

Not backing down

With this evidence and with poor and working-class public support behind them, the MNA will not stop until the safe-staffing bill is passed and signed into law by Massachusetts Gov. Mitt Romney. Declared Higgins: “The time has come to pass the nurses’ bill and end the suffering of our patients.” □

Letter to the editor

Endorsement of mayor splits union

Continued from page 5
unity of the city unions.

The previous DC 37 contract agreement—where it accepted a very small raise in salary for incumbents, while substantially cutting salaries for new hires and forcing DC 37 members to pay substantially more for drug co-pays—caused a split in the NYC union movement because of its small raise and givebacks, which set a pattern for all the city unions.

It created great bitterness among city unions towards the leadership of DC 37. This ill-advised endorsement of Bloomberg will only further scandalize DC 37 as the union that is being used as a political wedge against the rest of the city unions and will further isolate DC 37 from the rest of the NYC labor movement.

How can workers take seriously the claims of the DC 37 leadership

that it desires “labor unity” while this leadership breaks unity with other city unions by “making friends” with labor’s arch enemy at City Hall and Wall Street! City workers want and need real unity—unity of labor with the community!

While it is understandable that individual union leaders, looking at the current difficult political “landscape,” made what was in their minds a “practical” decision to “get what they can” in what appears to be an untenable situation, it must be said that the leadership of DC 37 has acted, in this case, as if it were not an integral part of the community.

The membership of DC 37 is overwhelmingly women and people of color, reflecting the composition of the working class and oppressed neighborhoods that are under attack from the Bloomberg administration. This endorsement can

only aid Mayor Bloomberg and Wall Street’s continuing attack on these communities. This will aid Wall Street’s attack on DC 37’s own membership who are an integral part of those very same communities.

It is this short-sighted “get what you can now” and to hell with the consequences “somewhere down the road” attitude that must be reversed if the labor movement is to survive and grow. The labor movement is an integral part of the community and the oppressed. When it ignores that fact, as it did in this case, it damages its own base, the only base from which it can grow.

By Mike Gimbel
New York City

The writer is an executive board member of Local 375, DC 37, AFSCME.

U.S. losing its grip PART 3

Rove, Bush and the crisis of empire

By Fred Goldstein

The case of Karl Rove has become the axis of a struggle within the capitalist establishment over the political course of the Bush administration and its disastrous colonial adventure in Iraq.

This struggle is being played out as a legal contest over whether or not Karl Rove leaked the identity of undercover CIA agent Valerie Plame to reporters in July 2003. Rove is charged with leaking her name as an act of retaliation against her husband, Ambassador Joseph Wilson.

Wilson had revealed in a New York Times op-ed piece on July 7, 2003, that certain Bush administration claims made more than a year earlier, prior to and in justification of its planning for an assault on Iraq, were completely false. The White House claim was that the government of Saddam Hussein was buying yellow-cake uranium from Niger to build nuclear weapons. Wilson had gone to Niger in February 2002 on an official mission to investigate the matter.

The big business media are focusing almost entirely on the legal issues of what did Karl Rove say, to whom did he say it, and when was it said. The media are also raising the issue of Rove's tactics and his reputation for dirty tricks and deception.

To be sure, Rove is a right-wing reactionary and a practitioner of the most venal methods of political smearing—even of bourgeois opponents. During the South Carolina primary in 2000, when Bush was running against John McCain, Rove spread the rumor that McCain's wife, Cindy, was a drug addict. In 1994 when Bush was running for governor of Texas against Ann Richards, Rove spread rumors that she was a lesbian in a blatant appeal to bigotry.

Rove was behind the campaign to smear and get rid of Secretary of the Treasury Paul O'Neill because he was opposed to the Bush administration's fixation on going to war with Iraq.

And it is highly likely that he was the force behind the leaks about Valerie Plame.

But while taking note of what an underhanded political operative Rove is, it is essential to get a class understanding of what is really going on.

Where were they when the war started?

In the first place, the news media are expressing outrage at the act of "endangering national security" by outing a CIA agent.

The CIA is in every country in the world carrying out subversion and covert operations to undermine and destroy the enemies of U.S. big business and do its part to secure Washington's world domination. Right now in Venezuela, agents of a CIA front, the National Endowment for Democracy, are on trial for taking money to overthrow the revolutionary government of Hugo Chávez.

The CIA has waged a ceaseless campaign to overthrow the socialist government in Cuba. CIA operatives are in Iraq, Afghanistan, Palestine, Colombia, the Ukraine, Georgia—just to name a few countries—supporting counter-revolution, doing "interrogations," and spying on governments. It should not be a matter of concern to the workers and oppressed in this country or around the world that one of its agents got exposed.

Valerie Plame was alleged to have been working undercover in the area of "weapons of mass destruction" regarding

Iraq and perhaps other formerly colonized countries, helping the U.S. to disarm them and thereby weaken their ability to defend themselves against imperialism. That is a thoroughly reactionary role and should be condemned.

But more importantly, it should be noted that the capitalist media, now dwelling on the Karl Rove case, themselves spread all the pre-war lies put out by the Bush administration about the danger of the Saddam Hussein administration and the necessity to go to war. Furthermore, this is the same media that was "embedded" with the military during the war and put out press releases for the Pentagon, hailing the lightning victory, cheering on the warmakers, and covering up the war crimes of the "shock and awe" bombing of Iraqi cities.

In fact, the New York Times, which printed Wilson's exposé in its July 2003 op-ed piece, sang a different tune during the run-up to the war when it printed close to a dozen articles by now jailed journalist Judith Miller. She parroted the discredited Iraqi banker-exile, Ahmed Chalabi, who fed Miller unsubstantiated false stories about Saddam's alleged weapons of mass destruction. These stories were so fraudulent that, after the war, when things started going downhill for the U.S. military, the Times had to print a long confession of journalistic "error."

With enthusiasm and crass cheerleading, the media obediently reported on a unilateralist imperialist war for "regime change" in which the Pentagon brutally tested all its new high-tech weapons systems on the Iraqi people in its quest to secure Iraqi oil and bases for the Pentagon.

The war was unconstitutional, in violation of international law and the UN Charter. By deliberately targeting civilians, the U.S. violated the Geneva Convention. And it was widely known and reported in this same media—before the war—that Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld, his deputy Paul Wolfowitz and Vice President Dick Cheney were manipulating so-called "intelligence" to make the case for war.

There was not one dissenting voice in any of the major capitalist media about support for the war. Once the Pentagon sounded the charge, they all fell in line.

So why has the massive capitalist propaganda machine suddenly become outraged at the deceptions and possible illegal measures of Karl Rove?

The answer is the Iraqi resistance and the crisis of empire building.

A ruling class struggle

This is an inner struggle of the ruling class over the war. They were all for it when they thought it could be won. Now the Pentagon is sinking into a morass. Instead of expanding U.S. imperialism's domination, the heroic struggle of the Iraqi resistance has dealt it a great blow. The worldwide repercussions of this mighty military machine being unable to subdue a country of 26 million people who are fighting against the occupation are profound and are just beginning to be felt.

Instead of demonstrating the prowess of U.S. imperialism, the occupation has demonstrated its vulnerability. The troops in Iraq are exhausted and demoralized. The military cannot make its recruiting goals. The dilemma of having to institute the draft or pull back is fast approaching.

Thanks to the communications revolution, every setback for the U.S. military in Iraq or Afghanistan is instantly transmitted to every corner of the globe. These setbacks are observed by every government, every political party, every liberation movement around the world. And Washington is slowly losing its grip on world events.

The Karl Rove case is not about deception *per se*. The ruling class and its media have no inherent opposition to deception. They all went along with the Gulf of Tonkin falsification, which led to the escalation of the Vietnam War. They all went along with covering up the CIA-engineered massacre of a million communists and progressives in 1965 during the counter-revolution in Indonesia. They all went along with covering up the Bay of Pigs invasion of Cuba in 1962, until it failed.

They surely have no qualms about deception of the workers and the oppressed.

But now they are crying foul because the Bush administration promised them profits and conquest in Iraq and it has all come apart because of the resistance.

Bourgeois politics in an imperialist democracy is a continuous exercise in deception. The fact is that the democracy is really exercised by different imperialist factions. They fight and contend with each other by getting control of different parts of the capitalist state, controlling different sectors of the media and lining up different factions of the political establishment while manipulating the electoral process.

The task for them is to carry out their struggles and at the same time conceal their true essence from the workers and the oppressed, as well as the middle class.

The Watergate debate was discussed in terms of illegal break-ins, wiretaps and other violations of bourgeois legality. This was an exposure of the criminality of the Nixon administration on one level. But the struggle over criminality masked a deeper struggle over Nixon's attempt to carry out a virtual coup and transform the capitalist state itself into an authoritarian dictatorship.

Capitalists disillusioned with Bush

While the Rove controversy has not risen to this level, it is directed at Bush himself and his entire regime and the occupation is the underlying issue. The fact that Time magazine, Newsweek, the Washington Post and the New York Times—organs of the mainstream imperialist ruling class—are all going for Rove's jugular indicates a deep disillusionment with Bush. Rove is, after all, "the architect" or "the brain," as they say.

Wilson is an inconsequential ambassador and an accidental figure. He was elevated to become a witness against the Bush administration by the New York Times and the Washington Post in July 2003, after the giddy taste of victory in Iraq subsided and the resistance started up in earnest.

The exposure called into question the credibility of Cheney, who started the nuclear weapon scare, Condoleezza Rice, who spoke about preventing "mushroom clouds," and Bush himself, who referred to the yellow-cake uranium in his State of the Union speech in January 2003. It was a broadside at the entire administration, including Secretary of State Colin Powell, who repeated the lies at the Security Council in arguing for war.

Wilson's trip was made in February 2002, almost a year and a half before the Times opened up its pages for the exposure, once the occupation began to come apart.

The problem of the critics is that none of them have a solution to the crisis in Iraq. They cannot devise any strategy to defeat the Iraqi resistance and reestablish the upper hand for U.S. imperialism.

The Rove controversy should be seen as a struggle between two warring camps of

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Popular movement arises to stop Army recruiting

By Dustin Langley

It is impossible to read the daily reports of the growing resistance in Iraq without realizing that the Bush-Rumsfeld plan for a quick high-tech war is a complete failure.

In response, leading Democratic politicians, including Senators Joe Lieberman, Hillary Clinton and John Kerry, have called for increasing the size of the Army by 100,000, hoping to relieve some of the stress on an overextended military. In January of this year, the Project for a New American Century called for increasing the Army by at least 25,000 troops each year.

But any plans to expand the military fail to take into account that young people are refusing to sign up for a war of conquest and occupation.

The Army is unable to meet even its current recruiting goals. The Army's top general told Congress in late June that the Army is at "serious risk" of not making its recruiting goals for the year.

One Pentagon official said the Army had already realized it would not make the

goal of 80,000 recruits this year—the only question was how many thousands short it would be. It is about 7,800 recruits short now, with three months left in the recruiting year.

In meetings of school boards, parent-teacher associations and student governments across the U.S., parents and students are taking action. Recruiters have identified parents as the biggest obstacle to meeting their quotas.

San Francisco: 'College, not combat!'

In San Francisco, parents and antiwar activists submitted a local ballot measure on July 11 that will, if passed, put the city on record as opposing the presence of military recruiters in public high schools and colleges.

Organizers are working to gather enough signatures to place the initiative, called "College Not Combat," on the November ballot. It would encourage school officials to deny access to recruiters, even if that means the loss of federal money. The initiative also encourages the creation

of scholarships and training programs to challenge the military's appeal to disadvantaged youth.

One of the organizers, Ragina Johnson of the International Socialist Organization, said, "We do not see George Bush's daughters signing up. It is poor and working-class people who need a job and education at the same time billions are being spent on this war."

The Parent-Teacher Student Association of Garfield High School in Seattle took a decisive step in May, voting 25 to 5 to adopt a resolution that says, "Public schools are not a place for military recruiters."

"The mission of the PTA is to protect and defend kids," said Amy Hagopian, a mother of three whose son is a Garfield senior. "It's not just limited to education issues—which explains why the PTA takes positions on kids' health, violence and other serious issues."

She added, "They're spending \$4 billion a month in Iraq, but we have to cut our race relations class, which costs \$12,500. That's an important class for our kids."

Steve Ludwig, whose son is a senior at Garfield, made a point shared by many in the PTSA: Garfield does not allow organizations that promote illegal activities to recruit students to perform those activities, nor does it allow organizations that discriminate on the basis of race, gender, national origin, or sexual orientation to recruit on campus.

Ludwig told the Christian Science Monitor, "Planned Parenthood, as far as I know, does not advocate or perform ille-

gal acts. The U.S. military does." He said he would not object if Army representatives came to Garfield to debate their ideas on torture or aggressive war. "What I object to is their coming here to recruit students to perform those acts," he said. "It's not about free speech."

Help remove military recruiters from schools!

The Army Recruiting Handbook for High Schools—available on the No Draft No Way website, www.nodraftnoway.org—says that the recruiters' goal is "school ownership." But parents, grassroots activists and students are working to deny them that ownership.

No Draft No Way, as part of a fall offensive against military recruiting, is producing thousands of activist toolkits.

This will include a 120-page book, "We Won't Go—A Guide to Counter-Recruiting and Draft Resistance," which will include chapters on military recruiters' lies, the No Child Left Behind Act, challenging recruiters on campus, how to organize an opt-out campaign, how to get ROTC off your campus, and how to organize a protest at your local recruiting station.

Along with the book will be a two-hour DVD. This will include original presentations by youth, counter-recruiting activists and veterans discussing military recruiting and how to organize to challenge it. The DVD will also include downloadable petitions, posters, leaflets and fact sheets so that local activists can watch the DVD and immediately put the information to active use. □

U.S. forces under fire in Falluja

Continued from page 1

mined the ability of the insurgents to launch attacks and cut the number of suicide bombings in half."

Instead, the article says, "the American and Iraqi military commands have been unable to figure out how to fight what appears to be a prolific industry producing car bombs" and "have found it equally difficult to stem the seemingly steady stream of bombers willing to sacrifice their lives."

In the context of a report issued by the puppet Iraqi Interior Ministry on the death rate of Iraqi civilians and police officers—over 800 a month between August and May—the Times this week also reported on two civilian deaths by U.S. military hands. The first was Muhammad Summaidai, a 21-year-old engineering student who was murdered by Marines in his home. The second was Yasser Salihee, an Iraqi employee of the Knight Ridder newspaper chain, sniped on his way to a gas station.

Faced with a number of murders of journalists in Iraq, often by U.S. troops, the Times is now withholding the names of its Iraqi employees for security reasons.

Resistance returns to Falluja

Meanwhile, in Falluja, the city that has become synonymous with U.S. terror against Iraqis, the resistance has returned.

Last November, U.S. forces concluded a siege of Falluja, the "City of Mosques," with an all-out assault that lasted eight days and killed some 1,500 Iraqis. Half of the city was destroyed and another quarter suffered structural damage. Since that time the city has remained a police state, with streets lined in barbed wire. There is a 10 p.m. curfew and checkpoints where every Iraqi entering the city must endure a search and show a badge.

Iraqi engineering teams have estimated the cost of reconstruction at \$500 million; to date only a fifth of that has been paid out.

Despite all this, the New York Times reports that suicide bombs in the city have killed six U.S. troops, that two of the five police forts being built have been fire-

bombed, and that three members of the city council have quit and another member has stopped attending meetings. Lt. Col. Rip Miles is reported as saying that U.S. Marines and allied Iraqi forces are either attacked with or find homemade bombs almost every day, despite house-to-house searches in November.

The Times also reports that in the face of the occupation, more and more Falluja residents are favoring the resistance. It quotes an auto repair shop owner as saying, "Some preferred the city quiet, purified of the gunmen and any militant aspect. But after the unfairness and injustice with which the city's residents have been treated by the American and Iraqi forces, they now prefer the resistance, just so they won't be humiliated."

Col. Miles told the Times, "rightly or wrongly, Falluja means something." No doubt the return of the resistance there means, for U.S. military planners, yet another sign of the tenacity of the Iraqi people—something that, in their arrogance, they are still scratching their heads over. For Iraqis throughout the country, it must mean yet another sign of hope.

And for U.S. troops and antiwar activists, it is yet another reason to demand, "Bring the troops home now!" □

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War and racism

What led to the bombings in Britain

By Deirdre Griswold

What can they be thinking? The Blair government in Britain, it seems, is just as out of touch with reality as the White House in Washington.

It has now adopted an official policy of indignantly denying that the recent bombing attacks on the transit system in London, which killed 55 people, have anything to do with Britain's role in the wars and occupations of Iraq and Afghanistan.

Foreign Secretary Jack Straw on July 18 dismissed a report by an independent establishment think tank on foreign affairs. "I'm astonished that Chatham House is now saying that we should not have stood shoulder to shoulder with our long-standing allies in the United States," Straw told reporters. He implied that the report, which says that the wars have galvanized anti-U.S. and anti-British sentiment, were making "excuses for terrorism."

According to Straw and Blair, who sound more and more like the fundamentalist Christians in George W. Bush's camp, it is not these brutal wars, nor the attempt to recolonize the area, that are the problem, but an "evil ideology."

This is not the view of most people in Britain, however.

According to a leading British daily, "Two-thirds of Britons believe there is a link between Tony Blair's decision to invade Iraq and the London bombings despite government claims to the contrary, according to a Guardian/ICM poll published today. The poll makes it clear that voters believe further attacks in Britain by suicide bombers are also inevitable, with 75 percent of those responding saying there will be more attacks. The research suggests the government is losing the battle to persuade people that terrorist attacks on the UK have not been made more likely by the invasion of Iraq." (The Guardian, July 19)

The Blair government is trying to avoid a situation like that in Spain, where the voters threw out the conservative government of José Maria Aznar last year after a deadly terrorist attack on commuter trains in Madrid. Despite huge public opposition, Aznar had sent Spanish troops to Iraq as part of Bush's "coalition of the willing." His successor, Prime Minister José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero, quickly brought the troops home.

Rally unites Muslims, anti-war forces

In Britain, talk of an "evil ideology" may appeal to the racist and xenophobic elements who have a long history of bashing immigrants, but it certainly does not speak for the many millions who have demonstrated their anti-war sentiment, and who punished Blair's party at the polls in the recent election because of his aggressive foreign policy and collaboration with Bush's wars.

Some of them rallied July 17 in London's Russell Square to say that they will continue to oppose the wars and stand in solidarity with the 1.6 million Muslims in Britain, who face hostility and violence every day.

The rally, called by the Muslim Association of Britain and Stop the War Coalition, honored the people killed in the transit attacks but rejected the government's conclusions.

STWC chairperson Andrew Murray

said the groups were rallying for three reasons: "Innocent victims have lost their lives in an incident that proved how ridiculous the war on terror has been. The second reason is to express our solidarity and support for the Muslim community in Britain and the third reason is: we are not going to stop our campaign against the war on terror. We will continue to campaign for the speedy removal of troops in Iraq and we are going to fight for it harder than ever." (Quoted in IrishExaminer.com)

Neo-fascist party active in Yorkshire

British police claim the explosions, which tore apart three subway trains and a double-decker bus, were the work of four young men, all British citizens—three whose parents had immigrated from Pakistan and one who was brought from Jamaica as a young child. All four reportedly died in the blasts.

They all have lived at one time or another in West Yorkshire, an area in the north of England that used to be very industrial but now has pockets of deep poverty and a preponderance of service workers. Many of these workers come from countries in the former British Empire, where long years of colonialism and the continuing hold of imperialist corporations and banks have distorted the economies and undermined national sovereignty.

For many years, the National Front, an openly fascist movement, organized attacks on immigrants in Britain, blaming them for the decline in living conditions that took place as capitalist firms restructured the economy while politicians, most notably Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher, slashed social programs and weakened unions.

The NF—whose founder, A.K. Chesterton, had once been a leader of the League of Empire Loyalists—has in recent years metamorphosed into the British National Party. The BNP keeps up a steady drumbeat against immigrants, but has tried to clean up its fascist image in somewhat the same way that David Duke, a former

Behind Israel's retreat from Gaza

By Michael Kramer

Palestinian resistance to occupation by the U.S.-armed and -financed Zionist movement and its Israeli settler state continues today and every day throughout all of Palestine.

Despite unrelenting imperialist intrigue, the youth of Palestine and their families refuse to back down. They are tenacious as they defend their streets, homes, communities and nation.

This intrigue is evidenced by the frequent visits of U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice; the deployment of former World Bank President James Wolfensohn and his entourage to "rebuild" the Palestinian economy; the appointment of former International Monetary Fund First Deputy Managing Director Stanley Fischer as governor of the Bank of Israel; the stationing of U.S. Army Lt. Gen. William E. Ward and his large entourage to allegedly help the Palestinian Authority



Anti-war protestor in Russell Square, London, July 17.

Grand Wizard of the Ku Klux Klan in the United States, did when he entered the election for governor in Louisiana in 1991. In fact, Duke last May hosted a New Orleans conference of 300 racists and anti-Semites from around the world that was attended by the head of the BNP, Nick Griffin.

The BNP recently received over 13 percent of the votes in Dewsbury, a city in West Yorkshire where one of the alleged London bombers, Mohammed Sidique Khan, had recently moved with his wife and child.

Just one year ago, on July 15, 2004, the BBC broadcast a tape it had secretly made of a BNP meeting in Keighley, West Yorkshire, where speakers bragged about having beaten up Pakistanis and West Indians. At the meeting, BNP leader Griffin called Islam a "vicious, wicked faith." Griffin, it should be noted, is also a notorious anti-Semite.

Now Muslims all over Britain are hearing similar words from government figures who, while not directly accusing their religion, are demanding that all Muslim leaders declare their loyalty to the government.

Some 300 racially motivated attacks were reported in the first week after the London bombings. Filmmaker Sarfraz Manzoor says, "If you are a British Muslim, you're as likely to be a victim of an attack as you are likely to be accused of doing it."

While the participation of the British government in the Iraq and Afghanistan wars has undoubtedly been a major factor

in creating the atmosphere in which—assuming that the government account is true—four young men would make the decision to die in a terrorist attack, it can also be said with confidence that the existence of an openly racist, xenophobic party in British politics must also have filled them with alienation and rage.

Imagine the feelings of the communities of color, for example, when on July 9, two days after the London bombings, a member of the BNP was appointed to the local council's Commission for Racial Equality in the Calderdale area of West Yorkshire. (BBC News, July 15) After a furor developed and 17 members of Parliament signed a motion calling for the removal of BNP councillor Adrian Marsden, this "race relations" committee was disbanded.

Worker solidarity versus 'empire loyalists'

Beginning with the Industrial Revolution in the 19th century, British capital's search for markets, resources and cheap labor led to the plunder of huge areas of Asia, Africa, the Middle East and the Caribbean. For the benefit of a small class of British elite, colonialism turned hundreds of millions of people into subjects, deprived of control over their own lives.

Since the rise of the national liberation struggles in the last century led to the formal dissolution of the British Empire into the Commonwealth, some have made the difficult transition of relocating to Britain itself in hope of work and a better life. They have had to endure the hostility of white supremacists and "empire loyalists," who use them as scapegoats for all the social problems caused by capitalism.

The British working class is now very multinational. Its ability to fight back against the further depredations of the billionaire class depends on its degree of solidarity. And this depends on rejecting those, whether in the government or on the far right, who use religion, national origin, sex or gender to pit worker against worker. □

train and unify its security forces; and so-called "mediators" led by the deputy chief of Egyptian intelligence, Major-General Mustafa al-Behairy.

The Israeli state uses the most sophisticated U.S.-supplied multi-million-dollar weapon systems, such as the McDonnell Douglas AH-64 armored helicopter and Global Positioning System (GPS) guided bombs.

The Palestinians use simple ground-to-ground rockets and mortars manufactured in low-tech machine shops.

Yet on Aug. 15 the Israelis are scheduled to close down all their agro-industrial fortress-like settlements and complete a retreat from the Gaza Strip region of Palestine. However, they will still control the borders between Gaza, Egypt and the rest of Palestine, as well as airspace and the Mediterranean Sea that borders Gaza.

The daily pounding by the Palestinian resistance and the scheduled retreat have

exposed a number of fractures among the various Zionist tendencies. Religious fundamentalists and those who fear the possible electrifying impact of the withdrawal on the Middle East, and also fear the potential introduction into Gaza of weapon systems that would negate Israeli air superiority and the use of large formations of armored forces, are all opposed to leaving Gaza.

At this time the future implications of these divisions are unknown. Assassinations and armed conflict are part of the history of the Zionist movement.

With all its contradictions, potential setbacks and unexpected ramifications, an Israeli retreat from Gaza cannot be considered anything less than a concession won by the Palestinian resistance and steadfastness, which began during the very first days of occupation in June 1967.

Kramer is a former Israeli soldier who became a militant anti-Zionist.

Battle for pensions, retirement, wages

Half-million public workers strike in Portugal

By André Levy
Lisbon, Portugal

Portugal's Common Front of Civil Service Unions (FP), representing 700,000 public-service workers, held a one-day strike July 15 to protest pension cutbacks, a freeze in wages and higher taxes. The workers are from diverse sectors: trash collection, urban transport, hospitals and health centers, courts and the state offices in general. There was a strong response, with 75 percent participating, according to the FP, which promises the struggle will continue during the summer with new actions aimed at reversing the government's program.

More than 85 percent of nurses had struck in June, paralyzing a number of hospitals and health centers, to protest an increase in the retirement age. Tens of thousands of civil service workers had marched through Lisbon to the Parliament on June 17, calling the new prime minister, José Sócrates, a liar, contesting the government's aggressive measures and demanding it negotiate with their unions. Then, on June 22, even security personnel—including police officers, the national guard and the maritime police—hit the streets against the government measures.

A new day of protest is planned for July 28, when Parliament will discuss a proposed increase in the retirement age as well as health benefit reform for the security forces.

This strike wave, especially of government workers, may be surprising since the present government was elected just this past February, but the Socialist Party (PS)

government has failed to deliver on its electoral promises. It has not satisfied the deep desire for change and socio-economic improvements expressed in what was an election debacle for the right-wing parties.

In addition, the government has repeatedly tried to create divisions and alienate workers who are simply struggling to defend their rights. During a recent teachers' strike, which took place in the exam period, the government accused the teachers of harming students and families. This attack merely revealed the true face of this government, which uses slander freely while attacking worker rights.

Electoral defeat of right-wing parties

It has been only three decades since the overthrow of fascism on April 25, 1974. During the last couple of decades, the Portuguese government was formed either by the PS or the openly pro-capitalist Socialist-Democrat Party (PSD), occasionally in coalition with the rightist Popular Party (CDS/PP).

Despite this alternation, it was an uninterrupted period of right-wing, neoliberal policies, obedient to the directives imposed by the European Union (EU). This has meant a gradual erosion of the most progressive social, economic and political measures implemented shortly after the 1974 revolution.

The previous legislature and PSD-CDS/PP coalition government entered a period of crisis when Prime Minister Manuel Durão Barroso assumed the position of president of the European Commission. The succeeding govern-

ment, led by Santana Lopes, was wrought with executive blundering and unable to gain the confidence of workers and capital alike, forcing President Jorge Sampaio to call for early elections.

The overwhelming victory of the left-wing parties, namely an absolute majority of the vote to PS, but also an increase in parliamentary seats for both the Communist Party (PCP) and Left Bloc (BE), reflected the demand for a true change in policies. A majority wanted to relieve the growing inequality between rich and poor, correct the uneven development of different regions of Portugal, and reverse the process of destruction of the backbone of the Portuguese national economy.

It did not take long, however, to realize that once in government the PS had begun to carry out a right-wing program. The government's policies included a number of measures that clearly contradicted its electoral promises: an increase in sales tax, fuel prices, rents; attacks upon workers' rights, including the right to collective bargaining.

Instead of trying to balance the budget by taxing profits and combating tax evasion, the government opted to impose sacrifices upon those already suffering social injustice and exploitation.

PS gov't tries to divide working class

Claiming it was faced with a budget deficit much larger than expected (6.8 percent), and much larger than members of the Euro zone are allowed (3 percent), the government argued it had no choice but to impose harsh measures. Civil servants were particularly hit hard, with the elimi-

nation of 75,000 jobs, a freeze on promotions, an increase of the retirement age to 65 years (or 40 years of service)—the second such increase in the last two years—and a limit on wage increases of 2 percent for the next four years.

Were it not enough that hard-won rights were eroded, these were referred to as civil service "privileges." With these insults, the government was trying to divide civil servants from workers in the private sector.

Successive governments have asked for sacrifices to balance the budget, but the sacrifices are not shared equally. Despite the so-called crisis, large economic interests and financial capital continue to accumulate huge profits. The five largest banks had a 45.7-percent increase in profits in 2004. The group Sonae had a 135-percent increase in profits in the first quarter of 2005. Yet banks pay only half the corporate tax paid by small businesses.

Between 1985 and 2004, tax evasion accounted for a loss of nearly \$150 billion in revenues. The government could collect \$5 billion over the next three years if it ended the illegitimate privileges (and here the term is appropriate) granted to financial institutions and operations. Meanwhile, Portugal is the EU country with the lowest wages and pensions, unemployment affects more than 10 percent, or 500,000 workers, and more than 2 million of the 10.5-million population live in poverty.

What the country needs is a genuine investment in rebuilding its economic structure with respect for workers' rights.

Levy is a contributor to the PCP weekly newspaper, Avante.

The 'no' vote PART 2

Where is France headed?

By Rémy Herrera
Paris

A reader who is not a specialist in French politics might think that the appointment of Dominique de Villepin to the post of prime minister on May 31, after the people won a "no" victory in the referendum on the European Constitution, meant a change of course in the relations between Paris and Washington.

Isn't de Villepin the political leader who, just some months ago in the UN Security Council, stood up against the Bush administration's war machine and opposed the war on Iraq? And in France, didn't he make his first priority the fight against unemployment?

Question: Should an alteration in France's political position in a less neoliberal and less pro-U.S. direction be expected?

Answer: most probably, no. De Villepin is simply reusing the old untrue slogans of President Jacques Chirac's political campaign—of whom he was and is a faithful supporter. He is calling for reducing the "social split" and has discovered that unemployment in France has been more than 10 percent for 20 years now.

But he plans to "create jobs and reinforce social cohesion" by attacking social security and the laws defending labor rights. In other words, he is accentuating

the same neoliberal policies that are at the root of the problems he claims he is solving.

This government's perspective is for more neoliberalism and also, in spite of appearances, more pro-U.S., that is, more "Atlantic." Several facts suggest this course.

First, the French people have learned, to their surprise, that a French-U.S. joint military base has been active for more than three years in Paris, where French secret service agents and CIA agents work together. One can imagine these professional colleagues following on television together the famous "confrontation" between France and the United States at the UN.

A strong force in the new government is Chirac's rival in the UMP, Nicolas Sarkozy, who is minister of the interior and now leader of the most powerful right-wing party in France. Sarkozy is supported by the majority of the members of Parliament and is pro-U.S. It is said he will receive Washington's support. It is almost unnecessary to add that he, too, is in favor of a hard neoliberal line, just like his brother Guillaume, who is considered the second most powerful of the French bosses.

Finally, the friendship between French and U.S. capitalists has been reinforced by the appointment of pro-U.S. ministers of commerce, budget and foreign trade. The

Villepin-Sarkozy duo thus promises to deliver a little more of the same thing.

While waiting for the presidential term to end in 2007, de Villepin hopes to attract votes on the left by promising more jobs, while Sarkozy will reach out to the right using the issues of safety and the fight against immigration—priorities of the extreme right. At the beginning of July, de Villepin announced new privatizations, while Sarkozy announced new deportations of undocumented workers.

Lessons for the left

What lessons can the progressive left draw from the victory of the "no" vote?

First, that the vigilance of the rank and file of the trade-union and pro-working-class organizations is essential to impose a democratic policy on their leadership, who are influenced by neoliberal pressures from the bourgeoisie. This already happened when militants in the General Confederation of Labor (CGT), the leading union of the French workers and close to French communists, mobilized and reversed the line of their leadership from "yes" to "no" on the referendum.

The second lesson is that when the leadership of a trade union or workers' organization again becomes what it should never have stopped being—that is, progressive and combative—that leadership can sometimes quickly regain the confi-

dence and support of its rank and file. The leaders of the French Communist Party (PCF), after resuming their positions defending the interests of the working class and opposing the rightist drift of social democracy, made the right choice in supporting the "no" vote, and 98 percent of their membership agreed in the referendum. This 98 percent was the strongest proportion of all the parties.

The Socialist Party (PS) had a much different result. To give the appearance of internal democracy, its leaders held a vote of party activists, and manipulated this vote so that 55 percent voted "yes" under pressure from the top leaders. But at the referendum itself, 59 percent of those who identify with the PS voted "no" when they were released from the pressure coming down from on top.

Third, the rebuilding of a radical left at the service of its activist rank and file will have to focus on organizing to defend the program that is commonly supported, while accepting differences.

In the French situation, the PCF was the decisive organizational and logistic center of the "no" vote during the campaign. Without the local and material support the PCF brought to the other progressive supporters of the "no" vote, the victory undoubtedly would not have been possible.

Thus a historical opportunity has

SOUTH KOREA

12,000 protest at U.S. base

By John Catalinotto

Some 12,000 residents of Pyeongtaek, South Korea, joined with farmers and anti-war activists from all over the country July 10 to protest U.S. plans to expand Camp Humphrey, a nearby U.S. military base. Over 200 people were hospitalized following a brutal attack from thousands of riot police. Hundreds of demonstrators were arrested.

Photos released by the demonstration's organizers show women and even high-school-age children from Pyeongtaek trying to physically stop some of the 6,000 police from entering their village. This courage in the face of much superior forces and arms was itself proof of broad popular support for the movement. Young

demonstrators carrying bamboo sticks also fought police wielding heavy batons.

After a rally protesting the U.S. military's plan to expand its base, thousands formed a human chain surrounding Camp Humphrey. Some demonstrators cut wires and pulled down parts of the fence surrounding the base. Among the protesters was a large delegation from the Korean Democratic Labor Party.

The July 10 action is part of a year-long concentrated effort among Koreans to "Get U.S. bases out of Korea in 2005," a campaign enormously popular among ordinary South Koreans. This year is the 60th anniversary of the liberation of Korea from Japanese rule, the 55th anniversary of the Korean War, a bloody conflict in which the U.S. sent hundreds of thou-

sands of troops to Korea in a failed attempt to overthrow the socialist government in North Korea, and the 25th anniversary of the Gwangju Uprising, when residents of Gwangju, South Korea, fought heroically against the military government there before being massacred.

The demonstrators' statement explained the context of current developments in South Korea: "As part of the U.S. military's strategic global realignment plan, the role of the U.S. military in South Korea now encompasses all of East Asia. To support its new military role, the U.S. military plans to expand its bases in South Korea in addition to building a number of Patriot Missile Bases along the west coast of South Korea targeting China."

Pyeongtaek's residents have struggled

against the U.S. military base as well as this unilateral base expansion, which would grab up their farmlands. For 310 days before July 10, they held candlelight vigils calling for "No base expansion! U.S. troops out of Korea!" and "No Korean war!"

"As part of the agreement signed by South Korea and U.S., purchase of the land has to be concluded by end of the year and the Pyeongtaek residents and people in South Korea are engaged in all-out struggle against this plan," reads their statement.

On May 15 over 15,000 South Koreans had protested against the planned U.S. Patriot missile bases. The overall mobilization will continue throughout the year. □

France

Continued from preceding page

opened for a popularly supported union of the left. It is vital not to waste this opportunity—in particular by excessive criticisms or regressive alliances.

One type of error would be if the PCF again makes an electoral alliance with the pro-"yes" leadership of the PS. Another would be if the Revolutionary Communist League (LCR) makes an alliance with those in the PS who supported the "no" vote but have rallied to the side of party leader Laurent Fabius, who is lined up with the U.S. There is no certainty that the left forces will avoid these pitfalls.

Consequently, it would undoubtedly be advisable today to widen and deepen the discussions and the struggles that led to the victory of the "no" vote, to increase solidarity in action among workers on the ground, to accentuate the pressures against the neoliberal attack while supporting the mobilizations of other peoples of Europe and to counter the reactions of the elites, who have decided to subordinate the European people to the rule of big finance capital and the warlike strategy of the U.S. government.

That would go along with reclaiming our revolutionary language and making a critical rereading of the history of our struggles, while reinforcing the communication and exchanges among workers' organizations in the North, along with a rebirth of solidarity with the people of the South in struggle—Cuba, Venezuela and Palestine, for example. We must transform our criticism of neoliberalism and the war into proposals for a break with capitalism and imperialism.

The current situation in France and Europe requires a rupture, an alternative to neoliberal and pro-U.S. policies, a choice to defend democratic rights and social gains. To recognize that neither France nor Europe is on the verge of a revolution does not mean it is necessary to give up the objective of a revolution, let alone that of building socialism in this country and on this continent.

It is a question of enlisting in the fight for socialism on a worldwide scale, a long-term struggle in which the participation of the progressives in the United States will be fundamental.

Rémy Herrera is a researcher at the National Center for Scientific Research (CNRS) and teaches Economics of Development at the University of Paris—Panthéon-Sorbonne.

China: 134 million potential union allies

By Deirdre Griswold

Why isn't the AFL-CIO, the central labor organization in the United States, extending a hand to China's unionized workers in a collaborative effort to demand better wages and working conditions from the transnational corporations that are trying to play the workers of both countries off against each other?

There are 134 million Chinese workers in the All-China Federation of Trade Unions. That's more than 10 times the number of unionized workers in the United States.

They are organized into 1.713 million locals. Chinese trade unions have established relations with more than 400 national trade union centers in over 130 countries. Why isn't the AFL-CIO one of them?

Many of the same corporations that exploit workers here are trying to do the same in China. For example, Motorola has opened plants in China. Its workers in the U.S. are not organized, but in China they are members of the ACFTU. Wouldn't it be helpful to the Motorola workers here if the U.S. labor movement could pursue a joint strategy with China's unions to make sure that every Motorola employee was organized and enjoyed union wages and benefits?

Almost all of China's workers in the state sector are in unions. But, in addition, one third of the foreign-owned companies in China are now organized. Even Walmart, which spurns any union organizing in the United States, has had to agree that if its workers there vote in a union, it will recognize it. That's the law in China.

The ACFTU's web site says that "Trade unions in overseas-funded [companies] do whatever it takes to protect workers, actively coordinate labor relations, help the development of enterprises and seek benefits for workers. However, trade unions still face a lot of difficulties in organizing workers in overseas-funded enterprises. Some multinational companies defy the country's laws and refuse to allow trade unions in their enterprises using one pretext or another. Their defiance has prompted public outrage in China."

It should prompt outrage here, too, among unionized workers. It's to our benefit that these corporations be forced to

respect China's labor laws.

China has been struggling for decades to overcome underdevelopment. In recent years, it has opened its doors to foreign investment. Many U.S. corporations flocked to China to take advantage of the low wages in such a large but undeveloped country. Nevertheless, as China's economy continues to grow, wages are rising and workers are able to demand, and get, more for their labor.

The position of the U.S. government toward China, however, is one of hostility. It has surrounded China with U.S. military bases. It supports a separate government on Taiwan, the off-shore island that is recognized everywhere as part of China. It foments a separatist movement in Tibet. All this reflects the strong anti-communism and desire for world domination on the part of the corporate ruling class here.

It is important that workers' organizations in this country recognize that the corporate agenda for China is no more friendly to the workers there than it is to U.S. workers, who sell their labor time each day in the most anti-union environment in the whole industrialized world.

Labor has no stake in China-bashing by any U.S. administration, be it Republican or Democratic. Unionists have no place sitting side by side with corporate executives in committees to decide policy toward China.

The reason is very simple. Their interests are directly opposite. The corporations promote policies that would weaken China's sovereignty and allow the corporate sharks free rein to gain control over the economy for the purpose of maximizing their profits.

The workers here, however, are interested in preventing these same corporations from running all over the globe in search of cheaper labor. They want to keep their jobs and their benefits, which have been achieved over decades of labor struggle as the economy grew more productive.

This great rise in U.S. productivity, however, has accrued mostly to the benefit of the bosses. They have a huge pool of capital—which they extracted from the labor of U.S. workers—that they want to invest wherever they can get the biggest

return. China is a huge country, and they want to exploit it. But they want to keep it weak and poor, which is against the interests of both U.S. and Chinese workers.

China-bashing by U.S. big business, which has been rampant ever since its socialist revolution in 1949, is restrained today only because these bosses hope they can penetrate China's economy and carry out a complete capitalist counter-revolution. But lately they have had to contemplate another possibility: that China will grow strong enough that their dreams of swallowing it up will turn into dust. China's new economic strength can be seen in its huge trade surplus with the U.S. and its ability to invest billions into infrastructure projects that lay the ground for its future progress.

Yes, there are capitalist bosses in China. And the dynamic working class there needs strong unions to fight for labor's rights. But unlike here, the Chinese government still reflects its revolutionary origins and last summer passed legislation spurring on union organizing in foreign-owned businesses. When was the last time that Congress here passed any significant pro-labor legislation?

The point is this: U.S. unions should get past the cold war mentality that has pitted them against workers in other countries, especially those where revolutionary change has antagonized the transnational corporations.

It's time to build real solidarity with workers abroad and reject the phony "solidarity" that has allowed U.S. unions to be used as a cover for CIA-type operations. Already, there is a movement among progressive trade unionists to reject funding from government groups like the National Endowment for Democracy, which promoted a coup against the popularly elected government of Venezuela.

It will be a great breakthrough when U.S. unions also reject those forces pushing an imperialist agenda toward China and cooperate with Chinese workers and their unions in the struggle to get the upper hand over the arrogant transnational corporations that are trying to transform the whole world into one big sweatshop. □

Supremacist court Why Bush's pick must be stopped

On July 15, Judge John Roberts gave the Bush administration a judicial victory, joining a unanimous three-judge panel to rule that the prisoners of war being held at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, have no rights under the Geneva Conventions. On July 19, the former lawyer, who once represented Fox Television, became Bush's choice for the Supreme Court.

There is no doubt among the far right that Bush has fulfilled his promise to choose someone who is "like" Justices Antonin Scalia and Clarence Thomas. The Rev. Louis P. Sheldon, chair of the Traditional Values Coalition, says Roberts is an "all-star" on key social issues such as abortion and same-sex marriage. (Los Angeles Times, July 20)

Roberts, the son of a manager at Bethlehem Steel in Buffalo, N.Y., has been a right-wing activist since "he became interested in conservative politics after seeing—and not liking—anti-war sentiment on the [Harvard] campus" when he was a student in the 1970s. (Chicago Tribune, July 20) In the early 1980s he became a clerk for William Rehnquist and a member of the Federalist Society. Self-described as a "right-wing cabal" (Associated Press, July 18), the society is an activist organization aimed at ridding law, the courts and Congress of "liberal bias." Its members include Scalia, Thomas and Robert Bork.

NARAL Pro-Choice America was among the first to respond to the nomination: "We are extremely disappointed that President Bush has chosen such a divisive nominee for the highest court in the nation."

That's probably because in 1991, he wrote a high court brief arguing that Roe v. Wade "was wrongly decided and should be overruled." Also, his spouse, Jane Marie Sullivan, has served as executive vice president of an anti-abortion group, Feminists for Life. (Philadelphia Inquirer, July 19)

Roberts' sordid record speaks for itself.

* Roberts was the personal private counsel for Gov. Jeb Bush during the 2000 presidential elections, advising him at the time when the votes of the Black population of Florida were being stolen and Jeb's brother George was given the presidency by the U.S. Supreme Court. (Washington Post, July 20)

* Roberts, according to a report by the Alliance for Justice (www.allianceforjustice.org), has compiled a staunch record of hostility to civil rights. He has consistently opposed affirmative action and he was actively involved in the effort by the

Reagan administration to overturn the Voting Rights Act.

One of his rulings as a federal court judge was against a 12-year-old girl who had been shackled and arrested on the Washington, D.C., Metro train because she ate a single French fry. Roberts found that her rights had not been violated.

* Roberts as a lawyer for Toyota won a Supreme Court ruling to deny disability benefits to an assembly line worker who had been fired because of her carpal tunnel syndrome. (Alliance for Justice)

Roberts is on the Legal Advisory Council, a group that is hostile to "environmental and worker protections" and committed to "an ultra-conservative" agenda, reports the Alliance for Justice. In addition, the alliance says, "Mr. Roberts states in his Senate Judiciary Committee questionnaire that he 'regularly participate[s] in press briefings sponsored by the ... Washington Legal Foundation,' a rigidly right-wing legal organization that litigates on behalf of corporate interests and wealthy property owners challenging environmental and other regulations."

Roberts himself is reported to be worth more than \$6 million. (Chicago Tribune, July 20)

He has regularly complained in the media that the Supreme Court is not "conservative." At the end of the 2000 Supreme Court term, Roberts, then in private practice, was interviewed by the Baltimore Sun: "The conventional wisdom is that this is a conservative court," he said. "We have to take that more skeptically. On the three issues the public was most interested in—school prayer, abortion and Miranda rights—the conservatives lost on all." (Los Angeles Times, July 20)

So what is with the top leaders of the Democratic Party, not one of whom has said they will oppose Roberts' nomination? They've quickly put out an official stand that Roberts has no record, that his years as a lawyer don't count because then he was only a "hired gun," as if a hired gun does not choose who to work for.

The fact is, it would have been hard for Bush to have found anyone more right-wing. Roberts stands against the working class, against women, against civil rights and against all that is progressive. He should be opposed unequivocally.

The Democrats certainly aren't doing that. It will take an independent rank-and-file upsurge to put the brakes on the runaway right-wing train that is in control of the White House, Congress and Supreme Court. □

Rove, Bush & the crisis of empire

Continued from page 9

bandits, both enemies of the Iraqi people, the people of the world, and the working class and oppressed people right here at home. These bandits do not want truth or legality. They are trying to find a way out of their crisis—one that has impeded the imperialist plunder of Iraq, the Middle East and Latin America and is sure to spread.

The working-class movement, the anti-war movement, should take advantage of

this split to expose them all and use the opportunity to mobilize, particularly for the Sept. 24 anti-occupation demonstration at the White House in Washington, D.C.

That is the proper reaction to the Rove controversy: to have no confidence in either camp in this dispute. Only the independent mobilization of the people can make any progress—against the war or against the attacks on living standards at home. □

UN resolution confirms injustice against Cuban 5

By Teresa Gutierrez

A significant breakthrough in the case of the five Cuban political prisoners held in the U.S. occurred recently.

The United Nations Working Group on Arbitrary Detention ruled May 27 that the detention of the Cuban Five is arbitrary and in violation of international law.

Antonio Guerrero, Fernando González, Gerardo Hernández, Ramón Labañino and René González are being held in five federal prisons throughout the U.S. They were convicted in 2001 of espionage and murder in a case that had to do with their monitoring of far-right terrorist groups in Miami that had a known record of violence against Cuba. Their sentences range from 15 years to life.

The ruling adds weight to the view that the five are innocent but could not get a fair trial in Miami, where they were tried and sentenced.

Despite the fact that this remarkable case is one of the most historic and significant political cases of our time, it rarely makes news in this country. A virtual whiteout of news on the case predominates, even though it has to do with a very critical foreign policy issue of U.S.-Cuban relations.

The UN ruling is a crucial breakthrough that adds international weight to the call for justice. It also helps in the struggle to expose the case and its unfairness.

The ruling states that the Cubans were denied access to the totality of the evidence against them. Their lawyers were also denied access to the information needed to defend their clients adequately.

The AP reported the findings of the

panel. The panel determined that "the trial did not take place in the climate of objectivity and impartiality which is required in order to conclude on the observance of the standards of a fair trial."

Furthermore, legal procedures were incompatible with international agreements signed by the U.S. government. These agreements guarantee that "each person accused of a crime has the right to exercise, in full equality, all the facilities" necessary to prepare her or his defense, stated the panel.

Those deficiencies are so serious, concluded the UN Working Group, that "they confer an arbitrary character to the privation of liberty of those persons."

The UN panel of five lawyers requested that the U.S. government adopt the necessary steps to remedy the situation. Its ruling is not binding, however.

Their finding reinforces what supporters of the Cuban 5 have pointed out from the beginning—that these men are innocent. The five were held in solitary confinement for 17 months with no access to documents to prepare their case or to their lawyers.

Leonard Weinglass, noted civil rights attorney and one of the lawyers for the five, points out that he had to review 118 volumes of court transcripts to present an appeal last year. Yet the 11th Circuit Court of Appeals gave the lawyers for the five only three minutes each to present their case.

The ruling confirms that the case of the Cuban 5 is a highly political trial that was thoroughly unfair and unjust. The struggle to win their freedom must continue and should be escalated. □

Defend your right to travel to Cuba



Travel Challenge delegation rally in Buffalo, N.Y., July 2004.

If you didn't make it to Cuba for the Travel Challenge this year, you can still help defend your right to travel and associate with the Cuban people. On Aug. 1 a spirited rally will welcome the Venceremos Brigade, Cesar Chavez Challenge/U.S.-Cuba Labor Exchange, the Women's Challenge, and the Juan Rius Rivera Brigade when they walk across the Peace Bridge into Buffalo, N.Y. Supporters will gather at Front Park at 8:30 a.m. on Aug. 1.

The Pastors for Peace Caravan will cross from Mexico into Texas on the same day.

For more information and regional transportation, contact: LASC Task Force of the WNY Peace Center, (716) 894-2013, or Buffalo/WNY International Action Center, (716) 604-9515.

—Story and photo by Cheryl LaBash

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5,000 take to streets as

Haitian people resist UN occupation

By G. Dunkel

The word that best fits the mass resistance in Haiti to the UN/U.S. occupation of that country is heroic.

A sea of people from Cité Soleil came out into the streets July 9 for the funeral of Emmanuel "Dread" Wilme. Three days earlier, tanks from the United Nations occupation force had rolled into their community before sunrise and, with the support of at least one helicopter, killed Wilme, his wife and a child because Dread Wilme was a leader of Lavalas in Cité Soleil.

One resident of Cité Soleil explained the reasons for the UN massacre to the newspaper *Haiti-Progress*. "The foreigner assaulted the Cité to kill Aristide supporters. They can't kill us all. Even if they managed to, our children would take over the resistance. They killed Dread Wilme but we are still here to continue his struggle."

Dread Wilme opposed the coup that Washington organized, financed and implemented 18 months ago in Haiti. Wilme and his supporters—most of this extremely poor community—demanded the physical return of the democratically elected president of Haiti, Jean-Bertrand Aristide, along with justice and democracy.

According to estimates from a Labor/Human Rights Delegation that was in Port-au-Prince when this UN massacre took place, at least 23 people were killed.

George Honorat, a journalist with *Haiti-Progress* in Port-au-Prince, says the UN killed 80 to 100 people.

Seth Donnelly of the Labor/Human Rights Delegation was present at Wilme's funeral. Donnelly said, "Speakers expressed respect for Wilme as someone who embodied the hopes of the community, someone who attempted to stand up for and protect his community. They vowed to continue the struggle for the rights of the poor in Haiti to health care, education and democracy. In this spirit, they also vowed to fight for the return of President Aristide."

He continued, "One young female speaker stirred the crowd with her words affirming the dignity of the people of Cité Soleil and their right to be treated as human beings."

Twice rumors spread through the crowd at the funeral that UN tanks were coming back with their heavy machine guns. People fled, even though young men with rifles were present to provide security.

Lavalas supporters called a demonstration July 14 in Cité Soleil to protest this massacre. Around one or two in the morning UN forces, known by the acronym MINUSTAH, attacked again, killing three children in their homes. They also blew off the steel door of a local church. According to Honorat, they "certainly attacked the people to intimidate them in order [to get

them] not to participate in the demonstrations."

Honorat continued, "But the people threw bottles and rocks at the MINUSTAH so they had to drive back and the people cut the roads so the tanks could not enter Cité Soleil." Later 5,000 people came out and a peaceful rally was held from 10:30 to 12:30 at night.

Protest at UN headquarters

Another protest was held July 16 in front of the United Nations building in New York. There were chants, speeches, some music and signs, some graphically showing the deaths and disfigurement produced by UN troops. Protesters demanded that MINUSTAH be withdrawn and that the United States and France stop propping up the coup in Haiti and allow Jean-Bertrand Aristide, the democratically elected president, to return.

A Brazilian general heads the military part of MINUSTAH and Brazil has the largest contingent of troops. Representatives of Japan, Germany and India, as well as Brazil, are maneuvering to gain a permanent seat on the UN Security Council.

Some Brazilian trade unions have called for demonstrations July 21 to protest Brazilian participation in the occupation of Haiti. Support demonstrations in front of Brazilian consulates are planned in San

Francisco, Montreal, New York and Miami. These protests will point out that these massacres of Haitian people are "made in the USA" and the UN forces are a proxy force doing the dirty work for the U.S. government and their partners in crime.

Some right-wing commentators in the United States have belittled the demonstrations, saying that "only" thousands of Haitians have gone into the streets to demand Aristide's return. Of course, they don't point out that anyone who demonstrates for Aristide or against the current, de facto government in Haiti risks their life. Haitian cops break up demonstrations by killing participants.

But the de facto government has called for elections in October and November and now has been registering voters. Less than 5 percent of the eligible voters have signed up and it is expected that, at most, another 5 percent will sign up before registration closes in September.

The Haitian people are boycotting this election as a sham, a "selection" that can only pretend to be democratic.

The slogan Haitians adopted in their revolution against the French slaveowners two centuries ago was "Liberty or death." The protesting masses in Haiti have again put that slogan into practice and are putting tremendous pressure on their bourgeoisie and the UN/U.S. occupation of their country. □

VENEZUELA

Súmate put on trial as U.S. puppet

By Evan Sarmiento

On July 7, the National Endowment for Democracy's puppet organization in Venezuela, Súmate, was indicted on the charge of treason. According to Venezuelan laws, a non-partisan civil organization cannot either act as a political party, interfere with elections, or take foreign funds.

Súmate openly acquired \$53,400 from the National Endowment for Democracy to "conspire against the government," according to a Venezuelan judge. Furthermore, the leaders of Súmate, Marina Corina Machado and Alejandro Plaz, signed the infamous "Carmona Decree," the mandate created during the April 2002 failed coup against President Hugo Chávez. Rather than being a civil, non-partisan organization, Súmate had called for the removal of Chávez during a previous recall referendum.

Miseducating thousands by blatantly calling their popularly elected president a "dictator," Súmate was not enhancing the democracy of Venezuela, as its mission states—rather it represented U.S. interests to destabilize the Bolivarian Revolution.

Marina Machado received an invitation in May to meet with President George W. Bush in the Oval Office. Machado was the first Venezuelan to be received by Bush during his time in office. This fostered outrage in Venezuela that an already anti-Chavista organization, masquerading as a group to promote civil society, was taking funds and orders from the White House.

This crystallized the case against them as being thoroughly pro-imperialist and counter-revolutionary.

After the initial court date was set against Súmate, NED President Carl

Gershman made a visit to Venezuela in a vain attempt to derail the trial of Machado and Plaz, threatening the Venezuelan government with a cessation of aid money by the World Bank. The World Bank has been funding Venezuela's judicial reform process.

Due to the fact that the revolutionary government held firm, this aid has recently been revoked. This attempted bribe on the part of the NED has certainly not alleviated the crisis for the U.S. imperialist government, but has exacerbated it.

It has shown how the NED and Súmate are hired hands of the U.S. imperialists

NOW resolutions

Victory for gender defiance

Continued from page 4

tion issues and marriage equality.

Historically, NOW has lagged behind grassroots organizers in fighting the oppression of lesbians, bisexuals and transgender people. In 1969, Betty Friedan, then national president of the organization, denounced lesbian participation as a "lavender menace" threatening feminism.

Lesbian issues were not seen as "real" women's issues, and NOW expelled some openly lesbian members. Thus began a decades-long struggle to broaden the organization's narrow definition of who a "woman" is. (Barry Adam, "The Rise of a Gay and Lesbian Movement," 1987)

Recent grassroots initiatives by trans people of color have put pressure on more reformist groups to take action on transgender and people of color issues. On

and have close connections to the World Bank and IMF, whose structural policies are responsible for impoverishing Third World nations.

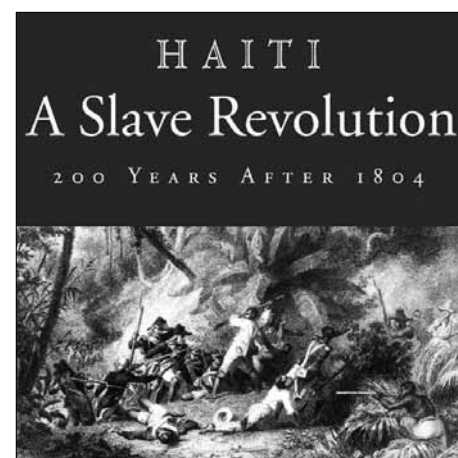
The NED has never been about "democracy." Following the April 2002 coup, the NED received a \$1-million grant for its "work in Venezuela." These millions pumped into the NED are pushed into Súmate, which funds groups and parties that consistently work against the mass organizations.

One example is the funding of an opportunist left-sounding group, Bandera Roja or Red Flag, which is responsible for

attacks against Commando Maisanta centers (election brigades), the state oil company PDVSA, and the Bolivarian Circles—grassroots organizations that implement social change.

Besides its operations in Venezuela, the NED has been a U.S. tool for destabilization of sovereign nations worldwide under the guise of promoting the "democratic" process. The NED played key roles in the "Orange" and "Gucci" revolutions, which were in reality imperialist interventions in the former Soviet Union and in Syria, respectively.

The Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela says it is perfectly acceptable and legitimate for civil organizations and non-partisan organizations to exist, as they strengthen revolutionary democracy, but not organizations that are a façade and a cover for U.S. imperialist interests and whose real aim is to derail the Bolivarian Revolution and achieve another right-wing coup. □



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DESPUÉS DE LOS ATAQUES

Un debate sobre Irak corre en Bretaña

Grupos musulmanes y contra la guerra convocan a una concentración de solidaridad

Por Deirdre Griswold

13 de Julio - Dos reacciones opuestas emergieron en Bretaña luego de los cuatro ataques coordinados en el sistema de tránsito de Londres el 7 de julio donde murieron más de 50 personas.

Mientras los trabajadores de emergencia y de tránsito continúan el arduo trabajo de recuperar los cuerpos destrozados de las personas que murieron en los tres trenes subterráneos y en el autobús de doble piso, el gobierno ha anunciado que cree que cuatro atacantes suicidas de la ciudad West Yorkshire del condado de Leeds son los responsables. Identificando a cuatro jóvenes de herencia pakistaní nacidos en Bretaña.

West Yorkshire es un área industrial en decadencia en el norte de Inglaterra con áreas muy pobres donde el Partido Nacional Británico, un grupo antiinmigrante de extrema derecha, ha estado tratando de culpar a los inmigrantes por las fallas causadas por el capitalismo.

La noticia de la policía fue precedida por grandes redadas en las comunidades árabes y musulmanas, especialmente en el norte. Unos 1,6 millones de musulmanes viven ahora en Bretaña. En su mayoría vienen de países de Asia y del Medio Oriente, países que una vez fueron colonias británicas y que aún son fuentes lucrativas para las corporaciones y bancos británicos.

El periódico The Guardian de Londres reportó el 13 de julio que por lo menos 300 incidentes de violencia identificados como “crímenes de odio” han sucedido desde los ataques—en otras palabras, ataques racistas contra personas que son percibidas como musulmanas o en algunos casos simplemente no blancas, incluyendo el “asesinato de un hombre en Nottingham después de que le hubieran gritado epítetos anti musulmanes.”

Este brutal racismo ha sido instigado por los periódicos sensacionalistas y por los pronunciamientos del gobierno de Tony Blair, el cual está usando la lógica de “buenos contra malos” y la retórica de la Casa Blanca de George W. Bush para caracterizar a esta terrible tragedia que ha caído sobre los trabajadores británicos.

La Reina Isabel puso su grano de arena al decir que los ataques no cambiarían “nuestra manera de vivir.” No estuvo claro si se refirió a la vida de la familia real, la cual recientemente gastó medio millón de dólares para enviar al Príncipe Charles en un viaje a Australia, Sri Lanka y Fiji.

Sin embargo, en contraste a todo esto está el análisis proveniente de los movimientos contra la globalización y contra la guerra. Ellos han podido reunir a cientos de miles de manifestantes en contra de la guerra y la ocupación en Irak y Afganistán tan recientemente como durante la reunión de los G-8 en Escocia, la cual ocurría al tiempo en que explotaban las bombas en Londres.

Varias concentraciones y vigiliadas grandes de protesta se han dado en Londres durante la última semana.

Oradores prominentes han llamado al movimiento a mantenerse firme frente a la tormenta de reacción política.

La Coalición Alto a la Guerra y la Asociación Musulmana del Reino Unido han llamado conjuntamente a una concentración política el 17 de julio “en solidaridad con las familias de los muertos y heridos y en oposición al racismo y la ‘Islamofobia’ que ha resultado desde los ataques del jueves”.

El 9 de julio, dos días después del atentado, una vigilia fue celebrada en el Jardín de Paz en la sección Euston de Londres. Una multitud de muchas nacionalidades participó. Según la Coalición Alto a la Guerra, “El mensaje contundente fue uno de solidaridad y simpatía con familias que habían perdido seres queridos en Irak y Afganistán y en los atentados terroristas en Londres, de estar hombro a hombro con la comunidad musulmana y de llamar al fin de la guerra de terror y a un compromiso a la paz”.

Uno de los oradores fue George Galloway, un miembro del parlamento que se retiró del Partido Laboral en disgusto sobre el apoyo del Primer Ministro Tony Blair por las invasiones y ocupaciones y quien fue re-elegido recientemente como candidato independiente en el Partido del Respeto.

Galloway ha experimentado una presión enorme de los medios de comuni-

cación del establecimiento británico por su oposición a la guerra.

Él dijo a la multitud: “Cuando las Fuerzas Armadas de los Estados Unidos, con sus espaldas protegidas por las fuerzas armadas nuestras redujeron a escombros la ciudad de Faluya, ni siquiera un susurro fue escuchado en la Cámara de los Comunes.

“Un pantano de odio hacia este país ha sido alimentado por la invasión y la ocupación de Irak, por la diaria destrucción de casas palestinas y por la ocupación de Afganistán. ...

“La única manera de salir de esta ciénaga es cambiando las políticas que nos han llevado a ella. Como el pueblo español nos enseñó el año pasado, la salida es retirando las tropas de Irak y rompiendo con la guerra de Bush contra el terrorismo. Es atender las quejas a través de la región, no contribuir a ellas apoyando a Ariel Sharon de Israel, y a los reyes y presidentes corruptos de Arabia”.

Otra voz prominente de la izquierda en este período ha sido la de Tariq Ali, un escritor, periodista y cineasta nacido en Pakistán, que dijo en un encuentro “Marxismo 2005” el 8 de julio:

“Tenemos que estar bien claros. Si matar a civiles inocentes en Londres es bárbaro, y lo es, entonces ¿cómo se define matar más de 100,000 civiles iraquíes?

“En la cultura dominante occidental

hay una creencia profundamente arraigada de que la vida de civiles occidentales de alguna manera vale más que la de los que viven en otras partes del mundo — especialmente aquellas partes que están siendo bombardeadas y ocupadas por el Occidente . . .

Si los medios en Bretaña dedicaran una cuarta parte de la cobertura que dieron a los bombardeos de Londres a lo que está siendo perpetrado a los civiles en Irak, habría un movimiento enorme e incontrolable contra la guerra.

“Hoy en día hay información disponible al público sobre soldados estadounidenses que han disparado contra presos iraquíes. Cuando se les pregunta por qué lo hicieron, ellos dicen ‘Estábamos siendo bondadosos con ellos, estaban heridos y les quitamos su dolor.’

“Ellos han humillado a presos en Abu Ghraib, lo cual es bien conocido, pero también tienen centros de tortura en Jordania, Pakistán y Egipto adonde mandan personas para ser torturadas por especialistas.

“Sabemos que ellos han promulgado la política de orinar y defecar sobre los presos para humillarlos.

“Así es como se portan los colonialistas. No saben otra manera porque no hay otra manera si se está ocupando el país de otra persona. Es la lógica de la ocupación colonial. Esta es la continuidad de lo que hacen los imperios.

“Yo recuerdo la ocupación francesa de Argelia. Los franceses llamaban a los argelinos terroristas sucios porque bombardeaban cafés en Argel.

“El Frente Nacional de Liberación Argelino solía responder, ‘Hacemos lo que tenemos que hacer para correrlos a ustedes de nuestro país. Si no quieren que bombardeemos los cafés donde ustedes y sus amigos se sientan, entonces por favor préstennos algunos aviones bombarderos y así podemos bombardear sus cuarteles.’

“A lo largo de la Guerra de Vietnam los Estados Unidos denunciaban a los vietnamitas por colocar bombas en la capital, Saigón. Pero la resistencia tenía que hacer eso para hacer el país ingobernable.

“No es una cosa bonita. Pero el carácter de la ocupación determina la forma de la resistencia — esto es cierto en cada instancia.

“Nosotros en el movimiento contra la guerra no debemos desesperarnos cuando ocurren acontecimientos como las explosiones en Londres . . . Hasta que no haya una solución política, el terror seguirá. . .

“Las ideas que hemos avanzado — la conexión entre las explosiones y la guerra en Irak — son más o menos las ideas encontradas en las calles de Bretaña. Personas a las cuales ni siquiera les gustamos están diciendo, ‘Si no hubiéramos ido a Irak, quizás no nos hubieran bombardeado.’

“Por eso la clase dominante se ha unido en torno a la idea de que esto no tiene nada que ver con Irak. Tenemos que estar claros — sí tiene algo que ver con Irak, y si no nos retiramos de allá, puede pasar de nuevo.” □

