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Rupture in AFL-CIO

More labor unity key to fight bosses

By Milt Neidenberg

July 25—"We're not trying to divide the labor movement—we're trying to rebuild it," said Andy Stern, president of Service Employees International Union (SEIU), at a media conference the day before the 50th anniversary AFL-CIO convention.

Will these words be translated into deeds? Only if there is a reversal of past practice.

"We" refers to the Change to Win Coalition, which consists of the International Brotherhood of Teamsters; the United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW); the Union of Needletrades, Industrial, and Textile Employees, which merged with the Hotel Employees and Restaurant Employees to form UNITE/HERE; the Laborers International Union-North America (LIUNA); and the United Farm Workers (UFW).

On the morning of July 25 when the convention began, Andy Stern and Teamsters President James Hoffa, Jr., announced they had split from the AFL-CIO and would set up a loose federation. UFCW and UNITE/HERE boycotted and threatened to split before the four-day convention ended. LIUNA and the UFW agreed to attend it.

At a packed media conference, Stern explained the split: "We believe in fundamental change, not incremental reform."

Not entirely true, if history is any judge. At issue between the two groups are strategy, tactics and timing, combined with a top-down bureaucratic power struggle among mostly male, white leaders. Even as they announced the split, they adopted conciliatory language indicating that Stern and Hoffa hoped to continue cooperating with the AFL-CIO on working with the Democratic Party.

The Change to Win Coalition wants dramatic and immediate changes in the structure of the federation and the allocation of funds to meet new organizing goals. They want to replace the Sweeney leadership and impose a merger on a number of smaller affiliates to achieve a vague "density" formula.

Sweeney, the consummate consensus builder, had been willing to negotiate some modest counter-proposals. But his basic strategy was to get reelected and protect the posts of the majority of the Executive Council members, which would have been swallowed up by the Stern proposals. These were nonnegotiable issues for the rival camps.

Sweeney took over the AFL-CIO in 1995. He will be elected to a fifth term in spite of a 10-year trail of retreat. He had been Stern's mentor and had turned over the powerful SEIU to him. The two officials have conflicting ambitions.

The split has no precedent, no previous practice or lessons to draw on from the AFL's 108-year history, beginning with its birth in 1886. Certainly not the 1938 split, when the Congress of Industrial Unions broke from

Million Worker March Movement Statement Racism & Sexism: Major pillars of the crisis in the U.S. trade union movement

By Clarence Thomas and Saladin Muhammad

Black workers make up 30 percent of the total union membership in the AFL-CIO. People of color and women workers are a large percentage of the membership of the non-affiliated "independent unions."

Yet, despite the major divisions among workers caused by institutionalized racism and gender discrimination that weaken the unity of workers and the power of the trade unions, the struggles against racism and sexism in the labor movement are not taken up as priorities. Nor are they viewed by either camp reflecting the current major divisions within the AFL-CIO as major sources of labor's crisis.

Racism and sexism have been the two major pillars of business unionism. They are fundamental to the lack of rank-and-file union democracy and to labor's weakness in organizing the unorganized, especially in the U.S. South. Labor's greatest compromises with capital have been around issues

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SEPTEMBER 24
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Heatwave exacerbated by capitalism

By Larry Hales
Denver

While it is proving to be a blistering summer for U.S. imperialism, the exceedingly hot temperatures across the country are also leading to many deaths, especially for the homeless, and especially in the Southwest.

Farm workers in California and undocumented workers trying to cross the border have died as well. The arduous journey across the deserts of the Southwest is fatal for many migrants coming into the country to seek work year-round. Add to that temperatures soaring into the triple digits and it becomes that much more perilous.

Throughout the country there have been numerous heat warnings as temperatures have gone into the 100s. Over 200 cities across the West have recorded record high temperatures. Las Vegas has peaked at 117 degrees Fahrenheit. In Phoenix alone, 24 people have died because of the heat wave; most of them have been homeless. In California, four farm workers have died from heat-related injuries.

A global warming trend has been well documented over at least the last 10 years. It means that many, and especially the homeless and poor, swelter in the hot weather. Those who have air conditioning may escape, but they suffer through high utility bills. That many are left exposed to the elements

any time of year can be attributed to capitalism.

It is indeed a shame that in the richest and most technologically advanced country in the history of the world, so many are homeless and without relief from the blistering heat. What's more, the changing global climate is because of capitalist production. The capitalist class seeks to increase profits and cares nothing of the environment it is destroying.

Whether the destruction comes from corporate dumping of toxics into our water, air and land, or from imperialist war, the bottom line for the ruling class is the bottom line: profits must go up and costs come down, and its class must control the resources of the world.

In small socialist Cuba—poor in resources as it is—no one is left homeless and no one exposed. When nature ravages, as it will, Cuba mobilizes to move all from harm's way, and when homes are destroyed and lives lost, Cuban society moves to rebuild and provide for all its citizens.

As the antiwar movement begins to regain the momentum of two years ago, before the war started, the capitalist class must become more exposed for its brutality, because relief from the elements—from war and destruction of the environment—will come through the overthrow of capitalism. □



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Campaign launched against women's jail

By the Women's Fightback Network
Boston

Members of the Massachusetts Statewide Harm Reduction Coalition (SHaRC) and supporters held a media conference at the State House July 13 to announce a statewide campaign demanding a moratorium on all jail and prison construction in Massachusetts—including a proposed \$27-million women's jail in Chicopee, located in Western Massachusetts.

"The U.S. has the highest rate of incarceration in the world," said Holly Richardson of Out Now, a SHaRC member. "We are calling for—at the very minimum—no further increase in the number of people going into prisons or jails, and no increase in prison beds."

Many emphasized the systemic racist character of the prison-industrial complex, especially the increasing incarceration of women of color, the fastest-growing population in jails and prisons.

Solobia Hutchins, a SHaRC organizer, said, "Women should get the services they need while incarcerated, but the truth is that I don't want women to be imprisoned in the first place. The truth is that there's almost no low-income housing in Western Massachusetts, drug treatment beds have been cut by 60 percent and there are no real living-wage jobs. At the same time, we're locking up more and more poor women and women of color for economic and health-care reasons. We don't need 200 more prison beds for women. We don't need jail expansion."

Iris Wallace, of the Springfield-based Arise for Social Justice, explained, "Often when women are put behind bars families are torn apart; children get cut off from their families, and many end up in the Department of

Social Services. Sometimes women are left to wait more than a year for their day in court because they have no money for bail. There are many better ways to spend money. How about helping women make it out here, instead of setting us up for failure?"

Other speakers included Boston City Councilors Chuck Turner and Felix Arroyo; ACLU-Massachusetts Executive Director Carol Rose; the family of Kelly Jo Griffen, who died from lack of medical care while in prison; Susan Mortimer, a long-time anti-prison activist whose severely disabled brother is experiencing ongoing medical, mental and physical abuse in the Massachusetts prison system; Keith Harvey, executive director of the New England Regional Office of American Friends Service Committee; Judith Roderick, community activist and resident of District 7 in Boston, and Robert Dellelo, AFSC.

The young women of Reflect and Strengthen provided creative political expression.

After the media conference SHaRC members delivered petitions with more than 2,000 signatures of Massachusetts residents in support of a moratorium to Gov. Mitt Romney. SHaRC is asking that supporters call Romney at (617) 725-4005 to oppose the Chicopee jail and all new jail and prison construction in Massachusetts.

Declared Wallace, "We need to keep up the fight We need affordable housing, health care for all, public transportation, better schools, real childcare and social services, summer youth employment programs and so much more."

For more information on the SHaRC prison moratorium campaign, visit www.stopchicopeejail.org or call (413) 348-8234. □

WW CALENDAR

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'Homeland Security' rescinds plan to deputize vigilantes

By Ruth Vela
San Diego

Customs and Border Protection Commissioner Robert C. Bonner told the Associated Press in a recent interview that his agency was looking to promote "citizen involvement" in assisting the Border Patrol in securing the country's southern border.

According to Bonner, the idea came after noting how eager volunteers were to stop illegal immigration. "It is actually as a result of seeing that there is the possibility in local border communities, and maybe even beyond, of having citizens that would be willing to volunteer to help the Border Patrol," Bonner said, referring to the people who converged on the Arizona-Mexico border as part of the vigilante Minuteman Project that was initiated there in April of this year.

Currently underway in Campo, Calif., a small town just east of San Diego, is "Operation Border Watch." This group, initiated by former Minuteman James Chase, has announced plans to "patrol" the area through Aug. 7.

A progressive coalition of San Diego groups called Gente Unida has also been present in Campo to protest the project since the arrival of the vigilante group the weekend of July 16 and has plans to

remain in Campo throughout the racists' stay.

Border Patrol officials have generally criticized civilian efforts to police borders, saying that it was the job of trained law enforcement officers. But in San Diego the Border Patrol has given credit to Chase's group for the apprehension of two undocumented immigrants on July 24, although Chase says his group reported more.

Chase said he called the Border Patrol July 24 after he picked up a man and a woman hitchhiking. Although the border watchers are only supposed to report "illegal" activity, Chase said he was tired and didn't realize they were undocumented immigrants when he picked them up. He said he became suspicious and notified the Border Patrol once they were in the car.

Also suspicious is the recent shooting of two immigrants attempting to cross the border with a group of eight people, two of them children. When the group was about 20 yards south of the fence, they were approached by a man who had his face covered. They tried to flee but the assailant shouted at them in Spanish not to run, and fired.

"If he were a bandit, he would have grabbed us and taken everything," said Rivera, one of the victims, adding that he was not robbed. "He only shot at us and ran."

When asked for his opinion on the

groups of civilian volunteers suggested by Bonner, Enrique Morones of Border Angels—a San Diego group that gives water to migrants who cross the California-Mexico border—and a member of the Gente Unida coalition, stated, "It's a recipe for disaster. ... You'll have all of these unqualified yahoos being given license to promote hate."

Bonner characterized the idea of an auxiliary as "an area we're looking at," and a spokeswoman said it hadn't been discussed yet with top Homeland Security officials.

But a day later, his superiors at the Department of Homeland Security made the following statement: "There are currently no plans by the Department of Homeland Security to use civilian volunteers to patrol the border."

Despite this statement, the DHS has helped to spread this racist movement, even to places with no discernible international borders, like Tennessee.

At least 40 anti-immigration groups have popped up nationally, inspired by the Minuteman Project.

In addition, the Minuteman Project has generated chapters in 18 states—from California to Utah, Minnesota and Maine. The Tennessee group and others like it have no direct affiliation, but share a common goal of promoting hate. □

By Mumia Abu-Jamal from death row

Babykillers in Black and Blue



July 17—In recent days, the armed stand-off in Los Angeles, Calif., gripped the heart, especially when it was learned that one of the two slain in the hail of police bullets was an adorable toddler, 19-month-old Suzie Peña.

Within hours of the deaths, police rushed to the mike to proclaim the murderer of the child was her dead father, Jose Raul Lemos, who traded gunfire with cops as he held his baby in his arms.

When a coroner's report uncovered the fact that the baby was slain by police fire, the story became, "He *made* us do it."

A man driven to the very precipice of madness, *made* cops fire over 90 shots, with semi-automatic weapons, killing himself and his child.

I thought of the recent incident in northern California, when police, acting on an erroneous tip, fired at a motorist, who, it turned out, was unarmed, and (thankfully!) only wounded and not killed by the storm of bullets.

Invariably, after incidents like these, police mouthpieces are trotted out to report that the officers involved followed departmental policy.

"Don't worry," they seem to be saying, "no policy was violated when we shot over 100 bullets into this ghetto neighborhood." I wondered, what's "policy"?

Policy is what the department says it's okay for them to do.

They set policy for themselves!

Remember when the little Black girl in grade school was handcuffed by cops?

Policy. Nothing personal ... just policy.

In L.A., Police Chief William Bratton bum-rushes the mike, to take a few digs at the dead. "He used drugs," Bratton assured us. "He was a bad guy." And one wonders, from whence comes Bratton's expertise, other than the abysmal record left in New York City, like the deadly police strangulation of Anthony Baez; or the doorstep slaughter of Amadou Diallo, shot [at—WW] 41 times by Bratton's minions—and then it dawns, this is indeed expertise, of a sort.

(Perhaps New York *can* teach L.A. a thing or two!)

Abner Louima ... Patrick Dorismund.... yeah, these guys are experts.

The late Black revolutionary, Malcolm X, didn't bite his tongue when he said:

"If we're going to talk about police brutality, it's because police brutality exists. Why does it exist? Because our people in this particular society live in a police state." (Quoted in Jill Nelson's "Police Brutality: An Anthology," N.Y.: Norton, 2000, p. 206.)

We are looking at cowboys. Wild racing, gun toting, choking (remember [former LAPD Chief] Daryl Gates' reference to how choke holds didn't kill "normal" people?), bombing, and a hundred shots, in a residential neighborhood, at an innocent motorist, on a false stolen-car report.

Cowboys just being cowboys. Policy.

This very weekend, a man took to the roof of his estranged wife's suburban Pittsburgh home, armed with a small-caliber pistol. He rolled around on the roof, and appeared to be under the influence of something powerful, repeatedly pointing his pistol firmly against his temple.

This went on for about four hours, and not a shot was fired before the husband calmed down, and came down.

Oh, yeah—I almost forgot—this was a white guy.

Activist-writer Kristian Williams, in the book, "Our Enemies in Blue: Police and Power in America" (Brooklyn: Soft Skull Press, 2003), reminds us that today's police had their genesis in the monstrous brutality and violence of American slavery. What were once called "searchers," then "alarm men," then "slave patrols," and then "paddyrollers" by Black captives, in time became "police."

Those days have bled into these, and with it, violent hatred by the lie, "Serve & Protect."

One thing for sure, it ain't "serve" or "protect" us. □

CUBA CARAVAN: Don't mess with the little yellow school bus!

By Cheryl LaBash

A little yellow school bus sits in the hot summer sun in Hidalgo, Texas, near the border with Mexico. On that bus are computers similar to others confiscated by the Commerce Department from the 16th Friendship Caravan organized by Pastors for Peace.

The little yellow school bus is now the focus of an international campaign to force the U.S. government to return the seized electronics and allow all the aid to continue to its rightful destination: the children of Cuba.

The caravan has gathered 140 tons of humanitarian aid, of which 90 percent, along with 130 travel challengers, have successfully passed through the border,



Caravanistas in Sacramento, Calif., July 10.

arriving in Cuba on July 24. Once again, determined caravanistas defied U.S. government harassment by hand-carrying aid across the border.

An e-mail, phone and media campaign turned back U.S. government threats to tow away the brightly painted school

buses. The sides of the buses feature the Cuban Five.

These five Cubans tried to monitor U.S.-based right-wing terrorist attacks against their island nation. As a result, they have been imprisoned in the United States on trumped-up charges.

'Our message is being heard!'

Pastors for Peace explained the purpose of the caravans this way: "With your support IFCO has brought broad-based public attention to the mean-spirited blockade against Cuba. Every time the U.S. Treasury Department backs down in the face of our challenge, and allows one of our caravans to cross the border with unlicensed aid for Cuba, we know that our message is being heard at the highest level."

Continued on page 4

Community fights police brutality

The Latin@ & Black community took to the streets of South Los Angeles on July 23, marching to the police department responsible for the killing of 19-month-old Susie Peña and her father Jose Peña. Led by the Coalition for Community Control Over the Police, demands were non-negotiable: Chief Bratton must be fired, the police commission must be disbanded, federal charges of civil rights violations must be filed against the police, and there must be community control over the police—because the police cannot police themselves. The killing of baby Susie has hit the community of Watts hard, and police excuses for the deaths will never be accepted. The community is demanding to know why the police did not negotiate with the distraught father to save their lives.

Other families of those killed by the LAPD were present, continuing their struggle for justice for their loved ones. While police loomed from roof tops and guarded the doors, community members let their anger be heard. The message of unity between Black and Brown was strong, proving that they did not fear the police and would not tolerate one more killing at the hands of the LAPD.



—Story and photo by J. La Riva

Union activists demand increased diversity in leadership

By David Sole
Chicago

July 24—Hundreds of union officers and members gathered here on July 23 for a “National Summit on Diversity in Our Union Movement” sponsored by the AFL-CIO. More than 800 activists registered for the weekend, often filling the Sheraton Ballroom during the various sessions.

The large majority of those at the event, which was held for two days prior to the start of the National AFL-CIO Convention, were not delegates to the full convention.

Many of the participants were active in six “constituency groups” sanctioned by the AFL-CIO: the Coalition of Black Trade Unionists (CBTU), Pride at Work, Asian Pacific American Labor Alliance, Conference of Labor Union Women, the A. Philip Randolph Institute and the Labor Council for Latin American Advancement.

The looming struggle inside the AFL-CIO, which might result in a boycott or even a split in the federation, was clearly on everyone’s mind. But the representatives from all the various unions in the



Student activist Felicia Ricks addresses the Diversity Summit.

WW PHOTO: DAVE SOLE

weekend summit showed that labor activists are unified in their desire to broadly increase diversity in the union leadership and vastly increase organizing among the 88 percent of the workforce that is not unionized.

AFL-CIO President John Sweeney and Executive Vice-President Linda Chavez Thompson both spoke at the summit. They stressed pledges that the AFL-CIO International Executive Board would add

more women and representatives of color. It was also announced that the 2009 AFL-CIO national convention would seat only those union delegations that represented the diversity of their membership.

But in some frank remarks later in the day, Bill Lucy, secretary treasurer of the CBTU, told the crowd that it was only with the threatened split in the federation that “we suddenly got a lot of friends” and promises to increase diversity in the top leadership.

Many panels of speakers were presented. Floor discussion was limited. Several groups intervened on the important questions of war and Pentagon spending by distributing written statements to summit participants.

The Million Worker March Movement distributed a statement to participants emphasizing that, “The AFL-CIO’s opposition to support the Million Worker March in 2004, once again sends a message to the corporate rulers, that labor-management cooperation and collaboration with the two corporate parties,

including U.S. foreign policy of war and empire, is at the heart of labor’s strategy for survival and ‘growth.’”

Organizers for the National Conference to Reclaim Our Cities handed out 700 copies of a brochure entitled “Money for our cities, not for war!” The event, to be held in Detroit Nov. 11-13, 2005, links the crisis of the cities directly to the bloated Pentagon budget and calls for a national fight-back campaign to “Feed the cities, starve the Pentagon.”

Hundreds of union representatives also had a chance to read an informative leaflet from the International Action Center about the U.S. government’s attempt to undermine the pro-worker government of Hugo Chávez in Venezuela. It exposed the AFL-CIO’s collaboration with the Bush administration, the CIA and the National Endowment for Democracy, calling for the AFL to break with these right-wing agencies.

Workers World newspaper, with a special appeal to the AFL-CIO convention to “Organize, don’t split,” got into the hands of hundreds of unionists and was well received. □

More labor unity key to fight bosses

Continued from page 1

the AFL. That resulted from an upsurge that shook the very foundations of capitalist exploitation.

The AFL-CIO and “Change to Win” are now on uncharted territory with unmarked pitfalls.

Strengthening labor from below

A review of recent years might shed some light on the differences between the struggles of workers and the actions of the bureaucratic leadership of the AFL-CIO.

In 1998 then-Teamster President Ron Carey won a stunning victory against the mighty United Parcel Service. In a 15-day strike, he shook up the corporate rulers when he mobilized the ranks and built unity between the full-time, part-time and temporary workers. He forced a no-concession contract from UPS and secured 2,000 permanent full-time jobs per year for part-time workers.

Three years earlier, he was instrumental in getting Sweeney elected president of the AFL-CIO. Following the UPS victory, the government framed him and James Hoffa played a key role in the election campaign to replace him, with the support of the government. Carey was betrayed by both camps.

In October 2002, the West Coast longshore bosses, represented by the Pacific Maritime Association (PMA), locked out the International Longshore and Warehouse Union for refusing to sign a concessionary contract.

Military and consumer goods were frozen in place. Ships laden with cargo were stuck in the harbor. The docks were buried under containers, and trucks were backed up for miles. The PMA 10-day lockout shut down 29 West Coast ports.

The Bush/Pentagon administration jumped in to force the ILWU back to work under a Taft-Hartley injunction, even though the union wasn’t on strike. A federal court upheld the illegal injunction.

The AFL-CIO, which included SEIU and its current allies, did not back up the ILWU. They did not mobilize their members to keep the ports shut down and to

resist the illegal use of Taft-Hartley during a lockout. It was a Bush/Pentagon misuse of power, but a great opportunity for united labor action was lost. The 1947-Taft-Hartley, the most oppressive anti-union law in U.S. history, is still on the books.

In October 2003, when the UFCW grocery workers struck supermarket giants led by Safeway, Albertson’s and the Kruger-owned Ralph’s stores, the chains locked out their workers. For four months the grocery workers fought back against the united grocery chains. Where were Sweeney and Stern? Nowhere to be seen.

Teamster-driven trucks did not leave the warehouses when these low-paid, multinational workers, primarily women, blocked the warehouses and supermarkets. Many of them were arrested. Isolated except for some support from the community and from anti-war forces, these workers accumulated large debts and were forced to settle for a two-tier wage structure.

Finally, there was the AFL-CIO debacle that cost the affiliates over \$100 million—more than \$40 million from SEIU alone—to elect John Kerry. They mobilized millions of members to knock on doors and get out the vote.

Compare this support for Kerry, with an all-out mobilization of both the Sweeney and Stern camps, with the minuscule resources and solidarity from the AFL-CIO for the heroic resistance from rank-and-file members during the aforementioned strikes. There is much soul searching to be done by the rival federations to match words with deeds.

Walk the walk!

Sweeney, in his keynote address to the convention, talked about plans for the future, not the lessons of the past. “The labor movement belongs to all of us—every worker—and our future should not be dictated by the demands of any group or the ambitions of any individuals.” So empty of meaning. So full of rhetoric!

Will this top-down power struggle that has led to a split energize 13 million organized workers? Will the split accelerate the unrelenting attack by the government, Wall Street and “Corporate America,”

which currently have momentum for further attacks?

Were the union sisters and brothers who spend 24/7 trying to make ends meet even aware that a split was taking place? Were they informed of the issues before the split happened?

After a decade of retreat by the AFL-CIO leadership, the multinational, low-paid, women, immigrant and service-oriented segment of the work force is looking for a fresh perspective and a new direction. Will this split meet those expectations?

Both rival factions are on trial. Both need to walk the walk. Forget talk the talk. If they had any concern for fundamental issues, they would call for the immediate end of the U.S. occupation, that has diverted billions from desperately needed social services. They would demand, “Bring the troops home now. End the death and destruction hurled at the Iraqi and Afghan people. Stop the tragic stream of U.S. dead and wounded.”

They would open an attack on capitalist institutional racism and national oppression and open the doors of their ingrained white male leadership to women, Black, Latin@ and other workers of color.

They would break from the foreign policy of this declining imperialist empire and from repressive immigrant bashing. Break with the National Endowment for Democracy, a CIA front, which bribes the AFL-CIO Solidarity Center to support counter-revolution, particularly against Venezuela.

A united front in the making

The millions of unorganized and poor represent a work force whose labor power produces the goods and services that create wealth and profits for a parasitical few. Their labor power has no boundaries. It is international. Exploitation and the high-tech revolution have bound them together globally, and the potential for a unified class-wide struggle is within their grasp.

This is especially true during this period of disastrous, unrelenting cuts in living standards, compounded by racism and national oppression. The top-down split has obscured this vision. But only for a historical moment.

Wall Street and “Corporate America,” and their executive committee in the White House and the legislative and judicial institutions, have restructured monopoly capitalism along class lines.

Unity and struggle, not bureaucratic divisions, are necessary. The 13 million organized workers have no loyalty to either faction. The homogeneity of the AFL-CIO leadership has been broken. The dilution of bureaucratic power can open the door for rank and file members to run the unions in their own interests.

The AFL-CIO and Change to Win are at the crossroads. The crisis needs the intervention of the oppressed, multinational working class, in unity with the nationally and socially oppressed people’s movements and communities, to organize for major battles in the days to come. □

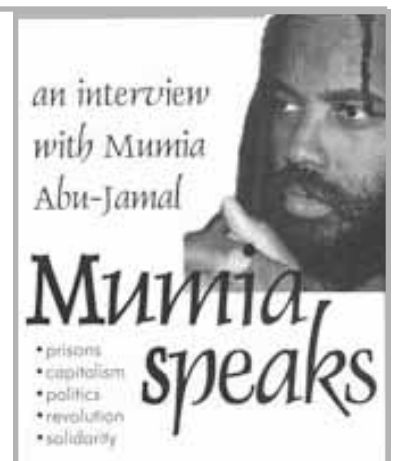
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MWMM on racism & sexism in AFL-CIO

Continued from page 1

of improving conditions of wages, training, promotions and job classifications for Blacks, workers of color and women workers.

The failure to organize the South, a low-wage region which has been used historically by the corporations to force billions in concessions from organized workers and tax abatements from cities and states throughout the country by their threat of plant closings and runaway shops to the South, stands out as a major indictment of labor's failure to struggle against racism.

Organizing labor in the South, especially during the 1950s and 1960s, meant taking on the struggle against legal segregation and white supremacy. It meant aligning with the Black civil rights movement and broadening the character of labor organizing and representation from being a narrow economic movement to a movement for social and economic justice.

Today, even with the employer and government offensive against labor, too few labor leaders have been willing to acknowledge the issue of white supremacy, racism and sexism in and outside of the unions. They have not addressed the policies and practices of organized labor that perpetuate the lingering and crippling effects of institutional racism. How can labor defend against corporate-driven attacks when its ranks can easily be divided against itself?

Blacks, Workers of Color, Women and Oppressed Groups Must Have Democracy and Power to Drive and Guide Labor's Structural Changes!

The struggles against racism on the job and in the unions had to be pushed forward by organizations of Black workers. This has been true beginning with the formation of the Colored National Labor Union in 1869, which called for the "Unity of workers without regard to color"; the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters in the 1920s, who led the call for a March on Washington in the 1940s against racism in the defense industries; the National Negro Labor Congress in the 1950s; the League of Revolutionary Black Workers; and DRUM in the Detroit auto plants in the 1960s, who called for Black workers to take the lead; the Coalition of Black Trade Unionists in the 1970s, calling for Black leadership at the highest levels of the unions; and Black Workers For Justice in the 1980s, calling for Organizing the South.

These struggles were able to bring about some changes in labor, including the election and appointments of a few Blacks to leadership positions and the recognition by the AFL-CIO of Black and other constituent groups which they sought to control and direct as top-down organizations loyal to labor's bureaucracy.

Today, as the AFL-CIO faces a major split in its ranks, the main proposals for restructuring and solving labor's "crisis" indicate that the organization and representation of Blacks and other worker con-



Clarence Thomas, center and Saladin Muhammad, right at Black Workers for Justice event in Raleigh, N.C., April 3.

WW PHOTO: MONICA MOOREHEAD

stituency groups are no longer needed to strengthen the labor movement. This is a direct signal to the bosses that once again labor is willing to sacrifice and compromise around the interests of Blacks, Hispanics (or Latin@s), women and other workers of color.

Representation of constituency organizations in the AFL-CIO must be defended. However, "diversity" without the empowerment of Black workers and other constituency workers cannot challenge the racism and sexism in the trade unions or be a force to push forward the trade unions in struggling against the racism and sexism of the employers. Black workers and other constituencies must be empowered from the bottom as well as the top to struggle against racism, sexism and all the other forms of discrimination.

The government and corporate attacks on labor during the Reagan period exposed the tremendous weaknesses in U.S. labor's solidarity. This contributed to business unionism's acceptance of labor-management cooperation and increased support and funding for the Democratic Party as an alternative to a rank-and-file fight-back movement based in national and international labor solidarity.

Black workers and the Black-led poor people's movements have called on labor to unite with them in a fight-back movement against corporate and government attacks. Labor has constantly rejected those calls for unity.

In 1967, Dr. King called on the leadership of the AFL-CIO to support the Poor People's Campaign (PPC). While some local unions and a couple of national unions endorsed the PPC, the AFL-CIO refused to endorse it. King saw the Poor People's Campaign as becoming a focal point of a Black-Labor Alliance linking the

struggle of unionized workers with the struggle to organize the unorganized in the South; to help increase the power of Black people to demand enforcement of the right to vote and other civil rights that were won during the 1960s benefiting women and other sectors of the working class.

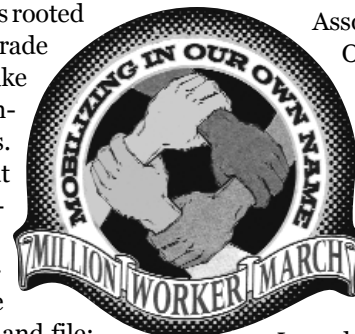
In 1995, when close to 2 million Black people, largely working class, came to Washington, D.C. for the Million Man March, labor refused to support Black workers in raising their working class demands at the March.

Today, labor continues its history of trying to solve its crises without a fight-back movement. The AFL-CIO's opposition to support the Million Worker March in 2004, once again sends a message to the corporate rulers, that labor-management cooperation and collaboration with the two corporate parties, including U.S. foreign policy of war and empire, is at the heart of labor's strategy for survival and "growth."

Rank-and-file democracy

The union movement is rooted in the principle that the trade union leaders can only take action based on the mandate from the workers. Trade unionism is about accountability. The proposals outlining the main directions addressing the crisis of labor have not come from the rank and file; and certainly not from Black workers and others hardest hit by the demands and conditions of the employers.

The current leadership is in denial as to the importance of confronting racism and acknowledging the important role Blacks have played and continue to play in the trade union movement. When organizing



efforts involve a large number of Black workers, history has proven there's a greater likelihood of success. This begs the question, why doesn't labor officialdom utilize Black trade unionists for organizing?

Organized labor needs greater unity, strength and independence at a time when the corporations wield unprecedented power and influence in both political parties. Blacks, workers of color, women and oppressed groups are essential in building the labor movement in the 21st century.

If we want to build a real fight-back movement that challenges the abuse of capital and mobilizes the rank-and-file to fully participate in resolving labor's problems, we call on labor to build on the efforts of the Million Worker March.

Million Worker March Mobilization

Union members from across the United States and Haiti, Japan and South Africa gathered at the steps of the Lincoln Memorial on Oct. 17, 2004, making a passionate call for workers' rights. Thousands stood at the foot of the Memorial and alongside of the Reflecting Pool calling for: universal health care; protection of social security and pensions; a right to strike without replacement; an end to the war in Iraq; repealing corporate free trade agreements; a national living wage; stopping the dismantling of public education; stopping off-shore North American jobs; amnesty for all undocumented workers; slashing the military budget; tax release for the working class; preserving and restoring the environment; enforcement of all civil rights; stopping corporate greed, and repealing the Taft-Hartley.

The active support and endorsement of Black, Hispanic and Latin@ workers' organizations—from the Coalition of Black Trade Unionists, the Teamsters National Black Caucus, Black Workers For Justice, the Immigrant Rights Association and the Farm Labor Organizing Committee—played a leading role in the mobilization.

The March was initiated by the International Longshore and Warehouse Union (ILWU), Local 10 in San Francisco. Local 10 is the most racially diverse Longshore local on the West Coast.

It was also the local of the legendary labor leader, ILWU founder and human rights activist, Harry Bridges. Brother Bridges was in the vanguard of all North American trade union leaders of his generation on the question of race. Brother Bridges said "discrimination is a tool of the bosses." He wrote in ILWU's newspaper, the *Dispatcher*, on February 15, 1938, which featured a series of articles on "The Economics of Prejudice":

"Prejudice means profit for the Boss. ... For the worker—Black and White—it means lower living standards, humiliation, violence, often death."

Thomas and Muhammad are leaders of the MWMM. Thomas is also an executive board member of Local 10, ILWU, and Muhammad is national chairperson of Black Workers For Justice based in Raleigh, N.C. This statement was distributed in Chicago at the July 23 "National Summit on Diversity in Our Union Movement: A Voice for Every Worker," sponsored by the AFL-CIO and Labor Coalition for Community Action. Thomas, national co-chair of the MWMM, presented it to both AFL-CIO President John Sweeney and Secretary-Treasurer Richard Trumka. Thomas also presented Sweeney with the official Oct. 17, 2004, MWM rally DVD.

Cuba Caravan

Continued from page 3

els in Washington—and that even Washington understands that its blockade of Cuba is indefensible." (www.ifconews.org)

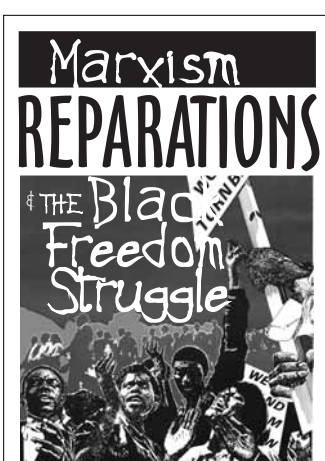
Washington is the only government in the world that restricts travel to and trade with Cuba. Recently tightened Treasury Department rules go so far as to define what constitutes family members for Cuban-Americans and allows visits only once every three years for specified relatives. The restrictions violate both constitutional and human rights.

The caravanists will return from Cuba through Texas on Aug. 1. On the same day, travel challengers from the Venceremos Brigade, U.S./Cuba Labor Exchange and Women's Challenge will re-enter the

United States through the Peace Bridge in Buffalo, N.Y. Supporters will gather there in Front Park at 8:30 a.m.

In 1993, during the Second Friendshipment, a little yellow school bus was seized by Treasury officials. The 13 caravanistas on board refused to leave the bus. They began a hunger strike that lasted 23 days until the bus was released to travel on to Cuba. Support demonstrations, phone calls and faxes forced the U.S. government to give in.

Today, more than ever, support is needed for all the activists who defend our rights by exercising them. The latest information on the caravan can be found at www.pastorsforpeace.org and caravan16.blogspot.com. □



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Lenin's 'Imperialism' and the Downing Street Memo

By Fred Goldstein

Prime Minister Tony Blair is carrying out a campaign of racist repression in Britain and trying to pretend that the London bombings had nothing to do with the war in Iraq.

The British ruling class has a long and bloody history. Millions of oppressed people over the centuries of the British Empire suffered colonial justice. They have been invaded by British armies, their cultures have been trampled and destroyed; they were meted out summary execution, imprisoned and whipped; they endured forced labor and were captured and sold into slavery—from Egypt and the Sudan to South Africa and Kenya, from India (including what is now Pakistan and Bangladesh) to Afghanistan, from Iraq to Palestine.

The war in Iraq is the latest in a long series of British colonial crimes.

To put things in perspective, the people of Britain, who are understandably grieving and in shock, should recall the blazing headlines of a month ago about the Downing Street “memos” leaked to the world press.

In these documents are found a cynical, Machiavellian series of schemes secretly devised by the British government to frame up Saddam Hussein, conjure up a legal justification and political strategy to deceive the British public, and carry out a brutal colonial war against a sovereign Middle Eastern nation under the leadership of U.S. imperialism.

All this was done while the Blair regime was pretending it was seeking to avoid war.

Intelligence was fixed

The principal memo is a recounting of a secret cabinet meeting on July 23, 2002, in which: “C reported on his recent talks in Washington. There was a perceptible shift in attitude. Military action was now seen as inevitable. Bush wanted to remove Saddam, through military action, justified by the conjunction of terrorism and WMD. But the intelligence and facts were being fixed around the policy.”

This problem did not faze the Labor Party cabinet. Defense Secretary Jack Straw said, “We should work up a plan for an ultimatum to Saddam to allow back in UN weapons inspectors. This would also help with the legal justification for the use of force.”

The memo gives the conclusion of the group: “We should work on the assumption that the UK would take part in any military action. ... The CDS (Chief of Defense Staff) would send the Prime Minister full details of the proposed military campaign and possible UK contributions by the end of the week.

“The Foreign Secretary would send the Prime Minister the background on the UN inspectors, and discreetly work up the ultimatum to Saddam.”

The following was stated in an earlier meeting of the Overseas and Defense Secretariat Cabinet on March 8: “A legal justification for invasion would be needed. Subject to Law Officers advice, none currently exists. This makes moving quickly to invade legally very difficult. We should therefore consider a staged approach, establishing international support, building up pressure on Saddam and developing military plans. There is a lead time of about six months to a ground offensive.”

The memo later continues: “Of itself, REGIME CHANGE has no basis in international law. ... In the judgment of JIC

there is no recent evidence of Iraq complicity in terrorism. There is therefore no basis for action against Iraq based on action in self-defense.”

It ends by calling for “sensitizing the public: a media campaign to warn of the dangers that Saddam poses and to prepare public opinion both in the UK and abroad.”

Memo after memo shows the conspirators planning war and figuring out how to put it over while concealing their fundamental role as colonial aggressors.

Leaked memos reveal and conceal

These memos have a two-fold character. On the one hand, they are very revealing about the lying and the conspiracy to go to war. They are meant to expose Blair for concocting the case for war in order to justify an invasion that Washington and London were determined to carry out. As stated in the memos, their goal from the beginning was the overthrow of Saddam Hussein and the establishment of an Iraq compliant with imperialism.

But these memos are both a political revelation and an economic concealment. They are carefully targeted and they are limited in their content. They are significant for what they say and what they don't say. The leaked part is obvious. But the un-leaked part is equally glaring.

The memos are silent on the overriding unanswered question. Why would the British ruling class, its government and its media all decide to support Washington in its adventure in Iraq, in defiance of world opinion and public opinion at home, and risk isolation and condemnation? A million people demonstrated in London on Feb. 15, 2003, trying to prevent the war. And the Blair government saw the military and political difficulties far more clearly than the Bush administration.

The answer is that what has not been revealed is the secret agreement between the Bush administration and the Blair administration about the division of Iraq and its oil between the stronger and weaker imperialist robbers.

Certainly Blair would not risk blood and treasure in Iraq out of a mere desire to be in the good graces of Bush and the U.S. ruling class. It could hardly be cultural affinity that drew these imperialist robbers into this joint venture. The British ruling class is as ruthlessly profit-hungry and as calculating as the U.S. ruling class—only weaker.

The subservience of the Blair government, and its use of cunning and ingenuity in helping to make the U.S.-imperialist-led war effort succeed, can only be explained on the basis of a secret arrangement to give London a significant cut of the spoils.

Lenin, imperialism and the Sykes-Picot treaty

The British participation can be correctly understood on the basis of Vladimir Lenin's analysis of imperialism in his ground-breaking book “Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism.”

This work was written at the height of World War I in 1916. Millions of workers and peasants were dying in a conflict unleashed for what Lenin explained was the re-division of the world, its territory and resources among the profiteering transnational monopolies.

In his book Lenin demonstrated by overwhelming statistical analysis that capitalism had advanced from the stage of competitive capitalism to its monopoly stage—the domination by banks that had

merged with industry to create capital in all the major capitalist countries of Europe, Japan and the United States. These countries and their ruling classes had completed the division of the world by the time of World War I. Virtually the entire globe was under the rule of one imperialist power or the other.

Lenin wrote: “[T]he characteristic feature of the period under review [1860 to 1899-F.G.] is the final partition of the globe—final not in the sense that a repartition is impossible: on the contrary, repartitions are possible and inevitable—but in the sense that the colonial policy of the capitalist countries has completed the seizure of the unoccupied territories on our planet. For the first time the world is completely divided up, so that in the future only re-division is possible ...”

Even as Lenin was writing this book, unknown to him and to the world the British and French imperialists were entering into a secret treaty, known now as the Sykes-Picot Treaty of 1916, that confirmed his analysis. The secret treaty divided up the Middle East between the two powers, giving Iraq and Palestine to the British and Syria and Lebanon to France, among other provisions.

The two powers were dividing up the remains of the Ottoman Empire behind the backs of the workers, who were dying on the battlefields thinking that they were fighting against the dictatorial Kaiser of Germany. In fact, Germany, which had few colonies, was fighting for re-division also.

This treaty would not be known at all but for the fact that the Bolsheviks, after seizing power in Russia in 1917, published all the secret treaties entered into by the tsarist government—including the Sykes-Picot treaty, which had given Constantinople to tsarist Russia.

The Bolsheviks published all the treaties in the first days of the revolution. They made them into pamphlets so that the workers could see the machinations of the class enemy and would understand, by reading the very words of the imperialist diplomats, the class character of war and diplomacy under capitalism.

Redivision through re-conquest

Lenin wrote his book before the rise of the socialist revolution and the national liberation movements. But these developments did not alter his analysis at all.

The grip of the imperialists on the globe was loosened by these struggles. But the battle among the imperialist powers to re-divide the globe has continued. Except that now the re-division of the globe was combined with the attempt to re-conquer territories lost because of socialist revolution and the bourgeois national liberation struggles, such as those in Iraq, Iran and Libya.

Fast forward to 2002: The USSR, which had been an ally of Iraq and a counterweight to U.S. imperialism, was no longer in existence. The relationship of forces on a world scale, and in the Middle East in particular, had changed in favor of Washington. The first Bush administration had tested the waters with the first Gulf War in 1991.

By 2002, Bush the younger and his right-wing neo-cons were in the saddle and, like all imperialists, were eager to take full advantage of the new relationship of forces. This drive to re-conquer Iraq was also part of a struggle to re-divide the wealth in the Middle East.

The huge diplomatic and political tug-of-war among the French, Germans and

Russians on the one hand, and the U.S. and British on the other, was part and parcel of that inter-imperialist struggle.

Displacing German, French and Russian corporations

The 2003 Security Council debate in the United Nations between France, Germany and Russia on the one hand, and Washington and London on the other, about establishing “authority” in Iraq was in reality a continuation of the pre-invasion struggle that split these powers over whether to support the U.S.-led war.

Workers World newspaper analyzed this internecine rivalry at that time: “In the political sphere, this is a struggle by the leading imperialist powers of continental Europe to contain Washington in its drive to strengthen its absolute world domination, as outlined in the Bush National Security Strategy document of September 2002.

“In the economic sphere, where the tensions are the greatest, the resistance in the Security Council to the war was really a resistance by French, Russian and German transnational corporations to being displaced or shut out by U.S. corporate power, enforced and protected by the Pentagon.” (Workers World, Oct. 9, 2003)

French oil giant TotalFinElf had a \$4-billion contract to develop an Iraqi oil field in Majnoon. Russian oil companies Lukoil and Zarubneft had spent years working out drilling agreements for contracts in the tens of billions of dollars. In addition, Iraq owed Russia between \$7 billion and \$12 billion.

German companies had \$350 million in two-way trade annually between Iraq and Germany and \$1 billion through third parties. In addition, Germany was going to get a prime spot at the Iraq trade fair of 2001 in which 101 German companies would be represented. And, according to documents obtained by UN weapons inspectors, German corporations were the market leaders in supplying Iraq, even in the decade after the first Gulf War. Over 80 German firms supplied weapons and industrial devices.

The only hope these imperialist rivals had to execute their agreements and recoup their loans was to have the U.S.-led United Nations sanctions lifted.

However, the Workers World article explained, once the Pentagon moved in and overthrew the Iraqi government, “the U.S. authorities would take control of Iraq's oil and finances and would inevitably cut down or totally exclude their rivals.”

British ride back on Washington's coattails

Compare this with the situation of the British imperialists. They had been driven out of Iraq in 1958 by a militant, bourgeois nationalist revolution. The British-backed monarchy was overthrown and eventually the Iraq Petroleum Company and the Basra Petroleum Company, both British-owned, were nationalized.

The anti-colonial hatred for London, which ruled Iraq from 1920 to 1958 and whose forces used bombs and poison gas to put down a mass anti-colonial uprising in 1920, has made the British distrusted and unwelcome in Iraq—which has the second-largest oil reserves in the world.

It was entirely in London's imperialist interests to grab onto Washington's coattails and slide back into Iraq at the expense of the French, Germans and Russians.

The British wanted to participate in the re-conquest of Iraq in order to regain a

Continued on next page

LONDON

New police powers plus racial profiling lead to execution

By Deirdre Griswold

When the British Empire morphed into the British Commonwealth, it was with the promise that the colonial oppression of the past would be replaced by a free association of mutual benefit to all—hence the word “commonwealth.”

Some of the former “colonial subjects”—especially those with the money to do so—would have access to Britain’s universities and, if they decided to settle there, would find it easier to immigrate than people from countries not in the Commonwealth.

The British population gradually became more multinational, attracting people from South Asia, parts of Africa and the Caribbean.

But the wave of anti-immigrant bashings since the July 7 London bombings, followed by the police execution of a young Brazilian who reportedly ran away from undercover cops into a subway car, has illuminated the special problems faced by people of color in Britain. And these problems will grow worse once new laws now being instituted are put into place.

Continued from preceding page

minor position in the re-division of that country’s oil wealth. Perhaps, if there were victory in Iraq, Washington might even carry them further on to Iran in the next stage of the war.

No one can say with certainty what modern version of the Sykes-Picot Treaty was struck between Washington and London. But the military deployment once the invasion began might be a clue. During the joint invasion from Kuwait, the Pentagon forces marched straight to central Iraq and the Baghdad region and towards the Kirkuk oilfields in the north. The British went straight to the southern region and took control of the Basra oilfields and the port area.

Whether or not this reflects a secret agreement between these two robbers cannot be known yet.

Sam Marcy, the late chairperson and founder of Workers World Party, made clear in an illuminating 1990 article on the first Gulf War: “We don’t know any more about the secret agreements being made today than the people during World War I knew about the Sykes-Picot Treaty. But we do know about the greed of the imperialists—whether in the U.S., Japan, West Germany, France, Britain or even Denmark.

“None of them would gratuitously join a naval armada out of humanitarian instincts. They would do it only for what is called in imperialist diplomacy ‘a consideration.’ And the division of oil is an enormous factor in getting their cooperation. The hows we may not know, but we know the whys.” (Workers World, Aug. 23, 1990)

The same may be said of the British participation in the war, and the motive behind the collaboration reflected in the Downing Street memos. There was a dirty deal made in secret.

The whole episode reveals that Lenin’s thesis on imperialism, monopoly capitalism and the inevitable struggle among the banking and corporate monsters to re-divide the globe, peacefully at times but primarily by force, is a law that will remain in force until imperialism, and capitalism upon which it rests, is destroyed. □

First, there is the danger of violence from the state and the far right, which is all too real.

When Jean Charles de Menezes, 27, an electrician who moved to Britain from Brazil three years ago, realized he was being followed by a group of white men on July 22, he had every reason to be frightened. In the days following the July 7 bombings, hundreds of attacks on immigrants had been reported.

Most were directed at Muslims, but racists also went after many other people of color, like de Menezes, who were not from the Middle East and not Islamic.

The tabloid press had helped whip up a frenzy. When concerns about the consequences of arming more London police became an issue, the Daily Express had a front-page headline: “Shoot All Bombers.”

Menezes was chased into a subway station by what turned out to be a squad of undercover police. They said later he looked suspicious because he was wearing a large coat.

The young man dashed into a subway car and fell. The squad pounced on him and fired into his head and torso, killing him instantly.

A shocked eyewitness told the BBC: “They pushed him onto the floor and unloaded five shots into him. ... He looked petrified.”

Had he really been carrying a bomb, what would have happened to the people on the subway as bullets raked his body? How could this police atrocity be regarded as helping secure “public safety”?

Police Commissioner Ian Blair’s first statements, however, were totally in support of his underlings. Menezes was “dir-

ectly linked” to the earlier bombings, he said.

If Menezes had been from the Middle East, maybe the police could have made this false assertion stick. But when his identity became known, they had to admit it had all been a “mistake.”

One day after he was gunned down, an unnamed Metropolitan Police official told The Times that Menezes was “not believed to be connected in any way to any of the London bombings.”

Even then, however, the police refused to make a formal apology. Nor have they admitted that he was the victim of racial profiling—a technique begun in the United States that doesn’t catch “criminals” but does focus the armed might of the state on people of color.

After the July 7 bombings, the initial reaction of London Mayor Ken Livingstone, a left Laborite who had gained office with much support from the oppressed communities, wasn’t much better. He immediately endorsed a new police “shoot to kill” policy. It was evidently under the new police guidelines that Menezes was shot to death.

Now the British capitalist state wants to use the issue of terror to implement much more repressive laws—ones that could be used against supporters of national liberation movements and anyone who says the oppressed have a right to fight back.

Many of these laws and new policies echo the repression put in place by the Bush administration over the last few years.

For example, the British police are seeking the right to hold “terror suspects” in jail for three months without charge.

The British Guardian reports that Prime Minister Tony Blair is likely to allow them 28 days.

A new banking regulation says that banks have to turn over to the government information on any cash transfers involving foreign banks, no matter how much money is involved. Many immigrants send or receive cash from their families abroad.

The Sunday Times reported on July 17 that “Charles Clarke, the home secretary, is reviewing his powers to deport foreigners and impose specific conditions on asylum seekers. A separate consultation is just ending on whether imams coming to Britain should have a professional qualification and understand English.

“A counter-terrorism bill due in the autumn will create a new offense of ‘glorifying or endorsing’ terrorism. Two further offenses being drawn up by the Home Office will mean extremists who provide or receive terrorist training would face prosecution, as would those committing ‘acts preparatory to terrorism,’ such as fund-raising or providing safe houses.”

None of these measures address the underlying problem, and are doomed to fail. The revived aggression of British imperialism in Iraq and Afghanistan, in partnership with Washington, and its support for Israel against the Palestinians, are deepening the antagonisms begun during colonialism. But everything today is global and the ensuing struggle cannot be confined to the oppressed areas of the world.

The key to any real solution lies with building an anti-imperialist movement that combines the solidarity of the multinational working class with the struggle against war, racism and oppression. □

Anti-war group protests NYPD searches

By Monica Moorehead
New York

The Troops Out Now Coalition (TONC) called an emergency demonstration on July 26 to protest the recent announcement by billionaire New York Mayor Michael Bloomberg that the NYPD would make random searches of riders’ bags on the subways, buses, ferries and the commuter rail system. The demonstration was held outside the Union Square subway station in Manhattan during rush hour.

The new procedure was announced following the July 7 bombings of London subways that killed over 50 people. A 27-year-old Brazilian electrician, Jean Charles de Menezes, was shot five times in the head at point-blank range on a crowded London subway by the police on July 22. The chief of police there justified the killing by claiming that Menezes looked and acted “suspicious.” He also stated that this kind of “mistake” could happen again as part of the so-called war on terror.

TONC activists and their allies explained to the press and bystanders that the searches by the NYPD are illegal because they are a violation of the Fourth Amendment of the Constitution. This amendment states, “The right of the people to be secure in their persons, houses, papers, and effects, against unreasonable searches and seizures, shall not be violated ...”

These searches are also acts of racial



Timothy Stansbury, above. Amadou Diallo with his younger brothers Ibrahim, Addoul Salam.



profiling because largely disproportionate numbers of people of color—especially those perceived to be South Asian, Muslim or Arab—will undoubtedly be singled out by the NYPD. This kind of racist police intimidation is not new to the Black and Latin@ communities.

Protest signs featured photos of Menezes, Amadou Diallo and Timothy Stansbury. Diallo, a West African vendor, and Stansbury, an African American youth, were killed by the NYPD for similar reasons as Menezes—“acting and looking suspicious.”

TONC issued a statement that read in part: “The climate created by these oppressive police tactics do not make anyone safer. ... It is vital that progressive and

antiwar activists rally in solidarity with targeted communities and against unchecked police repression. ...

“There are 4.5 million riders on the subway everyday. There is no way that the NYPD can search even 1 in 20 riders. So who will be searched? It won’t be yuppies carrying briefcases on their way to Wall Street.

“In a country where racism is a pervasive fact of life—28 percent of all Black men will spend time in jail at some point in their lives and institutionalized lynching persists in the police killings of Black youths—more police power doesn’t make anyone safer. It only reinforces and strengthens a racist and repressive environment.” □

VENEZUELA

Peasants organize for people's power

By Berta Joubert-Ceci

On July 11, thousands of poor peasants from 10 Venezuelan states arrived in the capital, Caracas, for an event they called "Zamora toma Caracas" (Zamora takes Caracas). They were armed only with their dignity, the knowledge of their rights under the Bolivarian Constitution, the 2001 Land Laws and the newly acquired awareness of their own power.

The event was called by the Ezequiel Zamora Peasant National Front (FNCEZ), named after a 19th-century Venezuelan general who fought for the rights of peasants and the poor, under the slogans "free land and men" and "respect for the peasantry."

They went directly to Miraflores, the presidential residence, carrying concrete demands addressing their long-standing suffering and exclusion, among them an end to impunity in the murders of peasants and the inclusion of the peasant masses into the legal framework of the National Land Institute (INTI). The INTI was created in January 2002 to put into practice the land reform laws decreed by President Hugo Chávez. Many peasant leaders complain that counter-revolutionary elements from past administrations still hold some of the institute's posts.

The Land Laws, a first step by President Chávez to empower peasants and develop agriculture to avoid reliance on imported food—which at the moment supplies 70 percent of Venezuela's consumption—have put the interests of the oligarchy and transnational corporations on a collision course with the interests of the peasantry, bringing to the surface the contradictions inherent in a revolution that is developing where the capitalist state is still in existence and where the oligarchy has much

power and property.

One of the consequences has been the assassination of at least 138 peasants by hired guns at the service of big landowners. Just last month, on June 23, MVR (Movement for a Fifth Republic) representative Braulio Álvarez, a well-known peasant leader from the FNCEZ and member of the Yaracuy State Legislature, was wounded, narrowly escaping death when he was shot twice while on his way to a meeting with peasants.

The "Zamora takes Caracas" event, therefore, was a crucial step in the deepening of the revolution. Workers World spoke with Roberto Viera, an FNCEZ representative from Sur del Lago, about the outcome of the July 11 action.

Viera was pleased with some of the results, although he cautioned that they still have much work to do. He explained that they were able to gain access to nomination of candidates to the INTI. "The agreement," he said, "is that the rank and file of the FNCEZ from now on will be able to determine who will lead the INTI, the Ministry of Agriculture and Land, and FONDAFA, the fund for agriculture investment." He explained that the problem until now has been that "many in the agrarian administration are reformists, who have put into place an anarchic and bureaucratic system inaccessible to the small farmers, who cannot then get information nor services."

In regard to peasants being murdered with impunity, Viera told WW that the National Office of the Prosecution will nominate 34 prosecutors to investigate those crimes and pledged to pay retribution to the victims' families, adding that "If they do not respond as promised, we will act, since we have decided to be in permanent mobilization."

He made the point that they are deter-



Peasants in Yaracuy taking over a farm.

mined to succeed, giving as an example a recent event where 7,000 peasants went to Caracas without help from the government. "This was subsidized by ourselves, we brought food from the countryside, and we are ready for a larger action if they do not honor the commitment."

Viera highlighted the support received by several organizations and institutions, among them many working-class neighborhoods of Caracas; the National Association of Community, Free and Alternative Media (ANMCLA); and the Bolivarian University of Venezuela.

He stated that the "Zamora takes Caracas" action was "a demonstration that we are taking responsibility to defend our government by all means. We protest against any interference with our sovereignty. ... Our revolution is unique in the world, we are transforming society in a peaceful way. In contrast Bush's policy is to dominate through the help of weapons, to conquer the planet to bring more poverty, more misery."

WW asked Viera what he thought of President Chávez's recent statements about socialism. He said, "I think that socialism is the most exact formula for

humanity," adding that political awareness cannot be developed overnight. "We do not agree with the neoliberal, capitalist system that has endangered countries, particularly Third World countries."

Lending insight to the internal organizing in Bolivarian Venezuela, Viera told WW that FNCEZ holds popular assemblies in communities. "We talk with the people about the need to create a new society, of building a new country. These are our workshops, this is how we get cadres. We have to go to the countryside, to the mountains, where our compatriots live. Popular assemblies where we explain about the system, about the new state policies toward the agrarian system—we talk about building the new society, the new political consciousness. We don't have a school; we talk touching their hearts. We do not ask to get paid nor to be fed, sometimes we go without eating and return without eating. We do not even ask for coffee.

"We are creating political consciousness, forming the basis to construct a real people's power where the power is held by the people; that is what we are fighting for." □



Demonstrations protest massacre of Haitians

San Francisco—Led by members of a trade union delegation that recently returned from Haiti, nearly 100 demonstrators rallied and marched July 21 to protest the recent massacre of at least 23 people in Haiti's Cité Soleil neighborhood. Organizers of the protest announced that Father Gerard Jean-Juste, a leader of the Lavalas movement, had been severely beaten and imprisoned earlier that day after attending the funeral of well-known journalist Jacques Roches. According to the Haiti Action Committee, the organizers of the protest, Cité Soleil has been the focus of attacks by both UN forces and the Haitian police because it is a stronghold of support for the democratically elected President Jean-Bertrand Aristide, who was kidnapped and exiled last year by U.S. authorities. Coordinated demonstrations were held in 13 U.S. and Canadian cities.

Above, Pierre Laboissiere, founder and leader of the Haiti Action Committee, urges the crowd to redouble their efforts to end the U.S./UN occupation of Haiti and restore democracy in that country.

—Photo and story by Judy Greenspan

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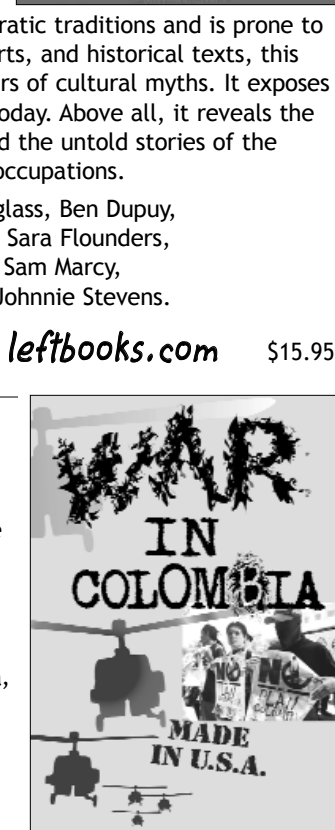
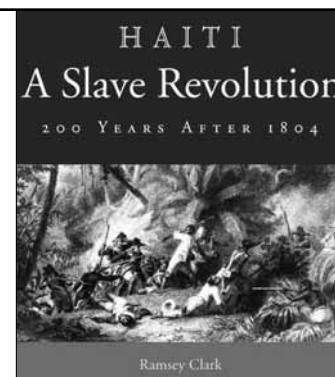
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PUERTO RICO

Truck drivers strike, force gas stations to close

By Tom Soto
San Juan, Puerto Rico

The governor of Puerto Rico, Aníbal Acevedo Vilá, appeared before the media on July 19, showing off newly purchased and highly expensive police helicopters. He personally explained how the helicopters were loaded with new high-tech equipment and cameras, capable of identifying a suspect miles away.

The governor, however, did not mention that in the previous days, his administration had rejected a simple proposal calling for an increase in the rate that truckers charge for moving cargo. Neither did he mention that the drivers, who transport gasoline and other vital products from Puerto Rico's ports and docks, had decided to strike because of the intransigence of the government.

At 4:00 a.m. on July 20, heavy transport trucks began lining up at entrances to the major ports and docks in San Juan, Puerto Nuevo, Yabucoa, Ponce and other cities. Teamsters Local 901 and the United Front of Truck Drivers issued a call to all transport drivers not to deliver any cargo.

By that evening, the media were reporting that truckers from the Teamsters and the United Front had successfully blocked access to the major ports and docks, where gasoline and other merchandise was beginning to pile up. As the media reported that deliveries of gasoline were not being made to gas stations, a rush to the pumps by motorists developed.

Economic activity and transportation in Puerto Rico are highly dependent on gasoline. In 2004, 800,000 containers were transported from Puerto Rico's Port of San Juan alone. Another 800 million pounds of cargo were transported from the island's airports. And additionally, in a population of 4 million, more than one person in three drives a vehicle. Public mass transportation on a par with cities in the U.S. has not been established.

By July 21, the media were reporting that of 1,450 gas stations in the country, 500 had already run out of fuel. Motorists were shown on television forming long lines at the gas pumps to obtain whatever fuel was left. American Petroleum, Shell, Texaco, Caribbean Petroleum (Gulf), Esso Standard Oil and Peerless Oil & Chemical, who together take in the lion's share of oil and gasoline profits on the island, announced they could not guarantee deliveries of gasoline.

Governor mobilizes police, National Guard

That same day, July 21, Gov. Acevedo—surrounded by the superintendent of police, the secretary of justice, the director of Puerto Rico's Port Authority and an entourage of cabinet members—announced to the media that the government would not be “held hostage” by the truckers. He said that he had broken off all negotiations until the truckers returned to work and that he had ordered a mobilization of the police and activated National Guard units to guarantee the delivery of goods and gasoline. He claimed that truckers were waiting to deliver gasoline, if protected by the police and the National Guard.

That afternoon, the distribution companies—Horizon Lines of Puerto Rico, Trailer Bridge, Sea Star Lines, International

Shipping Agency and others—announced they had gone before a federal court judge and obtained an injunction against the strikers, requiring them to remove their trucks from roadways where they were blocking the entrances to the docks.

On receiving notice of the governor's and the distributors' actions, Victor Rodríguez, speaking for the strikers, said: “We cannot be obligated to work. ... We will not permit the National Guard to remove our trucks. ... We have a democratic right to free speech and assembly. ... We are not blocking anyone's access to the docks, and we are declaring ourselves in permanent assembly. ... Does the government want a civil war?”

Germán Vazquez of the Teamsters called on the government to continue negotiations.

Leadership stands firm

Faced with multiple pressures—a federal injunction, an extensive mobilization of the police and National Guard, and the bourgeois media whipping up a hysteria against them—the strike leaders would not budge.

That evening police reports circulated that a scab truck had been set on fire and that incidents involving firearms had occurred. Leaders of independent truck drivers' cooperatives advised their drivers not to break ranks and explained the dan-

gers inherent in the situation.

Fellow labor organizations such as the Electrical Industry Workers Union (Unión de Trabajadores de la Industria Eléctrica) and the Puerto Rican Workers Council (Central Puertorriqueña de Trabajadores) denounced the actions of the government as “abusive and repressive” and threatened solidarity actions in support of the truckers.

Associations representing private enterprise publicly began voicing concerns: “If the strike continues the economy of Puerto Rico could shut down, generating great financial losses.”

Francisco Del Valle, first vice president of the Association of General Contractors (Asociación de Contratistas Generales), told the press: “The situation is affecting us greatly. We don't have sand, rock or cement at our construction sites.”

Drivers stand together

As Thursday passed to Friday, Efraín Reyes, president of the Association of Gasoline Retailers, gave probably the clearest picture of the situation when he explained: “No significant amounts of fuel have been delivered, even with the intervention of the police and National Guard.”

Gas stations throughout the country were shut down. Drivers, union and non-union, would not lend themselves to

breaking the strike.

That evening the government suddenly announced an agreement with the truckers to hold the necessary public hearings within weeks so as to raise cargo rates.

Truckers have vowed they will continue their struggle if the government does not comply with the settlement.

For more than a year, the truck drivers who deliver goods across this island nation have been carrying out measured public protests, on the highways and in front of the Capitol building where the Puerto Rican legislature is housed, holding press conferences and lobbying to remind the government that the price of gasoline and of other vital products and services was skyrocketing, and that the cost of operating transport trucks was becoming unbearable.

While there are many independent drivers, Puerto Rico's 5,000 truckers are organized into independent cooperatives. Twelve hundred of the drivers are represented by the Teamsters, which has a militant history of struggle and whose discipline and flexibility during the strike did not go unnoticed.

Seventy-two hours after the initiation of the strike by this relatively small but strategically important group of workers, business leaders throughout the island had feared that all economic activity might come to a halt. □

Yemenis rebel against high oil prices

By Monica Moorehead

Subsidies were suddenly lifted on the prices of all oil products throughout the Arab country of Yemen on July 19. This resulted in dramatic price increases of 100 percent in oil, 200 percent in diesel fuel and 50 percent in gas. Two days later, 13 people had been reportedly shot dead during spontaneous rebellions in Yemen's capital Sana'a and several towns.

These price increases dramatically impact on transportation, food preparation and the heating of homes for the Yemeni population. These inhumane increases did not originate from the Yemeni government, although the Yemeni police repressed the demonstrators. They were implemented by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank, whose

policies have enslaved the economies of the world's developing countries. These policies or structural agreements have caused unimaginable and deepening poverty, suffering and gross underdevelopment.

These agreements force governments to take out millions of dollars in loans from the IMF and World Bank with very high interest rates. In order to pay back just the interest on the loans, local economies are undermined and sometimes destroyed along with devastating cutbacks in education, health care and other vital services—all in the name of “cutting the budget deficit,” which is an illusion.

The irony is that Yemen is rich in oil resources, but these resources are controlled by Big Oil transnational corporations based in the rich capitalist countries. Yemen is one of the poorest countries in

the world. It has a population of close to 22 million people, 11 million of whom live below the poverty line. One in five Yemenis are malnourished and the Gross Domestic Product annually is \$510 per person, compared to more than \$40,000 in the U.S. (IPS, July 21)

The 2004 foreign debt crisis for Yemen was over \$6 billion. The 2003 unemployment rate for Yemen was 35 percent. (www.aneki.com)

The Yemeni people have the right to fully develop their economy using their country's resources, especially oil. This can only be done without the interference of the greedy, parasitical imperialist banks who suck the developing countries' resources dry to make investors super-rich with profits. Cancel the debt! Reparations now! □

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China 'threat' or threat to China?

After three months of inner struggle and delay, the Pentagon has issued a belligerent report on China. The report, which raises the prospect of the so-called "China threat," is itself a threat—to China.

This report comes at a time of growing anti-China political currents in Washington. Belligerent trade bills aimed at China's exports into this country are sitting in Congress. A number of bills aimed at blocking the prospect of the purchase of the Unocal oil company by the Chinese National Offshore Oil Company (CNOOC) are making their way through the legislature.

The Pentagon report stokes the anti-China fires building up in the political and military establishment.

The report warns that the balance of power in the Taiwan Straits is "shifting towards Beijing" and declares that "current trends in China's military modernization could provide China with a force capable of prosecuting a range of military operations in Asia—well beyond Taiwan—potentially posing a credible threat to modern militaries operating in the region."

It accuses China of spending \$90 billion on the military, three times the figure China announced this year.

First of all, China has clearly stated its intention to keep the renegade province of Taiwan from permanently separating itself from China. Taiwan was set up as a U.S. dependency after U.S.-backed counter-revolutionary forces were driven from the mainland in 1949. Since then, Washington and the Pentagon has used Taiwan independence as a threat against China. China has never deviated from this position. The present report warns, "China must fear U.S. military intervention in any conflict over Taiwan."

Second of all, regardless of inflated Pentagon estimates of the Chinese military—which are aimed at getting more money from Congress for the Pentagon budget—China has every right and need to modernize its armed forces to cope with "modern militaries operating in the region." Those "modern militaries" belong to Washington and Tokyo, two imperialist predators bent on dominating the region. Both have long histories of aggression against China.

Third of all, as the Chinese People's Daily has pointed out, Chinese defense spending amounts to \$25 billion while U.S. military spending is \$455.9 billion or 17.8 times larger than China's. On a per capita basis, it is 77 times greater than China's. After all, China has one-fifth of the human race.

This report is timed to coincide with Pentagon requests for military spending. With all the emphasis on the so-called "war on terrorism," there is the danger that hugely expensive and highly profitable weapons systems designed for large-scale warfare will come up short.

According to the Los Angeles Times of July 20, a senior defense official said, "You look at the Air Force's briefings, and they are all China, China, China ..." The hundreds of billions for aircraft and high-tech destroyers need a "threat" to aim at.

This potentially earthshaking conflict that is developing has been low-keyed in the big business media. But the anti-war movement and the working class movement must take careful note of this growing bellicose attitude at the highest levels of the Pentagon and U.S. imperialist strategic planning. No one should fall into the anti-China trap.

The threat to the peace in Asia and everywhere else in the world is right here in the White House and the Pentagon. □

Judge John Roberts

'No record' nominee hostile to all things progressive

By Naomi Cohen

President George W. Bush's nominee to the Supreme Court was said to have "no record" to speak of. But Judge John Roberts, it turns out, has a long record of hostility not only to women's rights and civil rights, but to labor rights, environmental protection and separation of church and state. This corporate lawyer-turned advocate for the Reagan right-wing agenda authored a long string of reactionary, sexist, racist, anti-worker court briefs in years of loyal service to the Reagan administration and both Bush administrations.

While in private practice—in between defending Fortune 500 corporations against suits by injured workers, unions and environmental groups—Roberts did the dirty work of the Bush 2000 campaign in Florida, where he was the personal private counsel for Gov. Jeb Bush. More recently, according to the Wall Street Journal of July 20, "Judge Roberts helped hand the Bush administration a signal victory as part of a unanimous three-judge panel ruling that so-called enemy combatants being held at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, have no rights under the Geneva Conventions and can be prosecuted before military commissions that lack due process protections."

In an attempt to further hide Roberts' sordid record, the Bush administration announced it would not release some crucial documents written by the nominee while he was the Deputy Solicitor General under Kenneth Starr in the Bush Sr. administration. But a number of public interest, legal and women's organizations have quickly posted important information about the Roberts record and cited cases where his legal briefs clearly reveal the character of his political thinking.

Roe v. Wade and choice targeted

The website of NARAL Pro-Choice America cited several examples of Roberts' legal arguments against women's reproductive rights as protected under Roe v. Wade, including a call to overturn Roe entirely.

"As Principal Deputy Solicitor General, Roberts argued in a 1991 brief before the U.S. Supreme Court that '[W]e continue to believe that Roe was wrongly decided and should be overruled. ... [T]he Court's conclusion in Roe that there is a fundamental right to abortion ... finds no support in the text, structure, or history of the Constitution.'"

In that same case of 1991, *Rust v. Sullivan*, Roberts appeared on behalf of the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) to argue for a gag rule to bar doctors working in family planning programs that received federal funds from even discussing abortion options with patients. This case not only further deprived women of their right to choose, but also targeted in particular the poor women who use publicly funded clinics.

According to NARAL, in 1993, "Roberts, again as Principal Deputy Solicitor General, argued for the United States in support of Operation Rescue and six other individuals who routinely blocked access to reproductive health care clinics, arguing that the protesters' behavior did not amount to discrimination against women, even though only women could exercise the right to seek an abortion. ... Here (*Bray v. Alexandria Women's Health Clinic*) the government chose to involve itself in a case in support of those who sought to deprive women of the right to choose through massive, often violent, blockades."

Voting rights, civil rights attacked

During confirmation hearings for Judge Roberts to the U.S. Court of Appeals for the D.C. Circuit in 2001, the Alliance for Justice wrote a 14-page report in opposition to the confirmation. They cited Roberts' role in weakening the Voting Rights Act under the Reagan administration.

"After a 1980 Supreme Court decision, *Mobile v. Bolden*, dramatically weakened certain sections of the Voting Rights Act, Roberts was involved in the administration's effort to prevent Congress from overturning the Supreme Court's action. The Supreme Court had decided ... that plaintiffs claiming certain violations of the Voting Rights Act, such as minority vote dilution, had to prove that the discrimination was intentional rather than just having a discriminatory effect." The former is obviously much harder to prove.

In 1990, in *Oklahoma City Public Schools v. Dowell*, Roberts co-authored the amicus brief, seeking to weaken the standard and limit the time-line for court-enforced desegregation decrees in the nation's schools. (Moveon.org) Roberts argued in a number of cases for an expanded role for religion in the public schools, holding that the Supreme Court should allow prayers at public school graduations. (*Lee v. Weisman*, 1992)

Perhaps most infamous among Roberts' cases is *Hedgepeth v. Wash. Metro Area Transit Auth.* (2004) According to the website of People for the American Way, this case grew out of an incident in which a 12-year-old girl in D.C. was arrested for eating a single French fry on the Metro during a "zero tolerance" crackdown by transit police. "The child was searched, handcuffed, her shoelaces were removed, she was taken away in a windowless police vehicle, fingerprinted, and held for three hours until she was released into her mother's custody."

The mother brought a civil rights action on behalf of the child. Judge Roberts affirmed the district court's ruling against the mother, dismissing the serious concerns raised by the use of police power in the case.

While Roberts' record on gay/lesbian rights has not been tested publicly, it is clear that the attack on privacy for women in *Roe* and his attempts to force prayers on public schools would translate into oppressive anti-gay attitudes as well.

Anti-worker, anti-environmental

To round out the picture of this thoroughly reactionary nominee is Roberts' choice of corporate clients and arguments against workers' rights. He represented Toyota Motor Manufacturing in 2002 in its successful petition against a worker with carpal tunnel syndrome. He argued that she was not protected under the Americans with Disabilities Act, even though she was fired for an injury acquired on the job.

In 2001 Roberts filed a "friend of the court" brief for the National Mining Association before the Fourth U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals in a case that involved a West Virginia community hurt by the practice known as mountaintop removal mining. In 2002 he represented Fox Television, the network owned by Rupert Murdoch, in its challenge of governmental regulations. In 2004 Roberts supported developers trying to overturn a ruling protecting an endangered species of toad on the grounds that the protection did not involve interstate commerce.

Fightback needed

While Roberts' record is universally reactionary, advocates of women's rights are particularly concerned that a Justice Roberts on the Supreme Court could provide the swing vote to overturn *Roe v. Wade*, which would be a huge step backwards not only for women, but for all civil and workers' rights.

Meanwhile, few Democrats in Congress have raised any concrete objections to Roberts' record, and the Judiciary Committee may be poised to go through the motions of holding hearings to rubberstamp this Bush nominee. The only thing that can jolt the "representatives" in Congress to stand up to the Bush appointment process is a united struggle in the communities and in the streets to oppose this nomination. □

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Iraqi women and the right to self-determination

By Minnie Bruce Pratt

As fierce resistance to the U.S. occupation of Iraq continues, both the Bush administration and liberal Democrats continue to use the excuse of “democracy” to justify invasion, the murder of tens of thousands of Iraqis and installation of a puppet government.

Now it appears that progressive laws which had guaranteed women’s rights for decades may be wiped out of Iraq’s new draft constitution as a direct result of U.S. violation of Iraqi sovereignty. The progressive laws, instituted after the Iraqis overthrew British colonialism in 1958, granted women the right to choose their own husbands and to have divorce cases heard by a judge, among other freedoms.

The laws, based on liberal interpretations of Shariah, or the Muslim legal code,

stayed in effect throughout Saddam Hussein’s national government.

Iraqi women had also received material as well as legal support during those years. Free education through the university level encouraged families to keep daughters in school and not pull them out for early marriage. The government guaranteed jobs for women who wanted to work, as well as equal pay for equal work. Health care was free and mothers had pre- and post-natal care. Working women were guaranteed six months paid maternity leave. Subsidized daycare was available in most work places. Basic food and housing were subsidized. (Yifat Susskind, MADRE)

Fifteen years of U.S. sanctions and invasions left this system in a shambles. Now even the minimal legal guarantees for women may fall.

The Bush administration touted Western-style capitalist democracy as the solution to women’s oppression in justifying war on Iraq, as well as Afghanistan. Now, after the U.S. war launched on both countries, daily life for women has dramatically worsened. (2004 UN Human Development Index)

This devastation of Iraq, and the hunger of its people to choose a national destiny determined by themselves alone, fuels the continued resistance against the U.S.

A senior U.S. Army intelligence officer concedes: “They’re being replaced quicker than we can interdict their operations. There is always another insurgent ready to step up and take charge.” (New York Times, July 24)

According to the U.S. Central Command, there are at least 70 attacks by the resistance daily. (Boston Globe, June 10)

The Bush administration has attempted to smear the resistance with accusations of religious extremism—a hypocritical attack by a capitalist government so closely associated with right-wing Christian fundamentalism.

But the right of the Iraqi people to self-defense and self-determination was affirmed recently by the Istanbul International Tribunal, held from June 23-27. A 17-member jury heard testimony about the illegality of the war and related war crimes.

The jury’s verdict supported “the right of the Iraqi people to resist the illegal occupation of their country and to develop independent institutions,” and affirmed that “the right to resist the occupation is the right to wage a struggle for self-determination, freedom and independence.” □

Iraq Tribunal says

‘Occupiers out; resistance is justified’

By John Catalinotto

After two years of documenting the guilt of the U.S. and UK governments in carrying out an illegal aggression against the sovereign state of Iraq and a criminal occupation of that country, a worldwide people’s organization has met in Istanbul, Turkey, and delivered its verdict.

Veteran anti-war spokespeople from around the world—from Japan to the United States—plus former United Nations officials and Iraqis themselves gave testimony and reports from June 24 to 27 at the culminating session.

Essentially, a world body with popular roots found that the U.S. and UK were guilty of war crimes, that the occupation of Iraq must be ended, and that the Iraqi resistance was completely justified.

The World Tribunal on Iraq (WTI) had opened in April 2004 in Brussels, Belgium. After that, anti-war activists and legal experts in the United States, Germany, Portugal, Japan, Italy, Mexico, Denmark, India, South Korea, Sweden and Spain, among others, held tribunal sessions to review different topics related to the war crimes of the occupying powers in Iraq.

On June 27, Arundathi Roy of India, who chaired the Jury of Conscience from 10 different countries, announced the jury’s conclusions at a news conference at the Hotel Armada in Istanbul.

The jury defined this war as one of the most unjust in history: “The Bush and Blair administrations blatantly ignored the massive opposition to the war expressed by millions of people around the world. ... The Anglo-American occupation of Iraq of the last 27 months has led to the destruction and devastation of the Iraqi state and society.

“Law and order have broken down completely, resulting in a pervasive lack of human security; the physical infrastructure is in shambles; the health care delivery system is a mess; the education system has ceased to function; there is massive environmental and ecological devastation; and, the cultural and archeological heritage of the Iraqi people has been desecrated.

“[T]he jury has established the following charges against the governments of the U.S. and the UK:

“Planning, preparing and waging the supreme crime of a war of aggression in contravention of the United Nations Charter and the Nuremberg Principles.

“Targeting the civilian population of Iraq and civilian infrastructure.

“Using disproportionate force and indiscriminate weapon systems.

“Failing to safeguard the lives of civilians during military activities and during the occupation period thereafter.

“Using deadly violence against peaceful protesters.

“Imposing punishments without charge or trial, including collective punishment.

“Subjecting Iraqi soldiers and civilians to torture and cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment.

“Rewriting the laws of a country that has been illegally invaded and occupied.

“Willfully devastating the environment.

“Actively creating conditions under

which the status of Iraqi women has seriously been degraded.

“Failing to protect humanity’s rich archeological and cultural heritage in Iraq.

“Obstructing the right to information, including the censoring of Iraqi media.

“Redefining torture in violation of international law, to allow use of torture and illegal detentions.

“The jury also established charges against the Security Council of the United Nations for failing to stop war crimes and crimes against humanity, among other failures, against the governments of the Coalition of the Willing for collaborating in the invasion and occupation of Iraq, against the governments of other countries for allowing the use of military bases and air space and providing other logistical support, against private corporations for profiting from the war, against the major corporate media for disseminating deliberate falsehoods and failing to report atrocities.

Kevin Benderman on trial

Anti-war groups mobilize for July 28

By John Catalinotto

Army Sgt. Kevin Benderman is scheduled to face general court-martial July 28 in Fort Stewart, Ga., for charges of desertion and missing movement. These charges stem from his principled refusal to return to Iraq and take part in the war and occupation there. His supporters are organizing to be present at his trial.

Benderman faces up to seven years in prison.

Military Judge Col. Donna M. Wright threw out charges of larceny against Benderman on July 22. The Army had based the larceny charges against this war resister on an Army accounting error that resulted in Benderman receiving an extra \$2,922 in combat pay.

Last May officers used the threat of an additional 10 years in prison to try to get

Benderman to waive his right to a new investigation of the desertion charges.

Army mechanic Sgt. Benderman is a 10-year Army veteran. He and his spouse, Monica Benderman, have been equally active in speaking and writing against the war on Iraq. Their writings can be found at www.bendermandefense.org.

Benderman has been among the most outspoken of the military resisters of conscience.

Others who have refused Iraq duty include Marine Pvt. Steven Funk, Army Staff Sgt. Camilo Mejia, Navy Petty Officer Third Class Pablo Paredes and National Guard Sgt. Carl Webb.

Army Pfc. Jeremy Hinzman and Pvt. Brandon Hughey have chosen to go to Canada rather than to Iraq.

Support resisters!

These individuals deserve the support of the anti-war movement. They are a tiny conscious vanguard expressing a much more widespread discontent

“The jury also provided a number of recommendations that include recognizing the right of the Iraqi people to resist the illegal occupation of their country and to develop independent institutions, and, affirming that the right to resist the occupation is the right to wage a struggle for self-determination, freedom and independence as derived from the Charter of the United Nations, we the Jury of Conscience declare our solidarity with the people of Iraq and the immediate and unconditional withdrawal of the coalition forces from Iraq.”

For more information on the WTI and the evidence behind these damning conclusions, and to help publicize the findings, which have been severely underreported in the corporate media, see www.worldtribunal.org.

Catalinotto helped organize the August 2004 session in New York, held by the International Action Center, and participated by video in sessions in Portugal and Japan.

among U.S. rank-and-file troops about the war in Iraq.

An Army report released July 20 writes that a majority of troops in Iraq say “morale is low,” especially among National Guard and Army Reserve troops.

“Low morale” means the troops don’t want to fight in Iraq and want to get home as soon as possible. This may be a sign of growing political consciousness as well as war-weariness.

Since he finished his one-year prison sentence for refusing to go to Iraq, Camilo Mejia has become an activist with the Iraq Veterans against the War (IVAW). He has now written a letter asking anti-war forces to support Sgt. Benderman at his court-martial.

“The best way to show your support,” writes Mejia, “is by attending the trial and participating in any rallies and/or activities in support of the Bendermans. But also by announcing the trial and requesting support through your websites and publications.” □

LOS ÁNGELES

Un padre y su infante ultimados por la policía

Por John Parker
Los Ángeles, California

En el funeral de la pequeña de 19 meses de edad, Suzie Peña, una persona resumió el sentimiento de muchos de los que acudieron cuando gritó: “¡La policía es asesina!”

Suzie y su padre, José Peña, fueron ambos ultimados el 10 de julio en Watts cuando su padre, con la niña en brazos, intercambiaba disparos con el equipo SWAT del Departamento de Policía de Los Ángeles, hiriendo a un oficial en el hombro. En vez de calmar la situación, la policía decidió que ni Peña ni la niña se merecían más tiempo de negociación—aunque la familia lo pedía—y decidió disparar contra un hombre desesperado que sostenía un arma y un bebé.

Los médicos han determinado que la bala que mató a Suzie es del equipo SWAT—uno de 90 tiros que la policía disparó contra los Peñas. Aunque el Departamento de la Policía de los Ángeles, (DPLA), trató de ocultar el reporte médico, hasta el Jefe de la Policía William

J. Bratton pensó que el DPLA mató a la niña. Sin embargo, él culpó al padre, llamándole un “asesino a sangre fría,” aunque no hay ninguna evidencia de que Peña haya matado a nadie.

Pero por otra parte, Bratton sí tiene un historial de muchos casos de brutalidad policial y asesinatos bajo su supervisión en Los Ángeles. Y del 1994 al 1996, cuando Bratton era jefe de la policía de la Ciudad de Nueva York, 75 personas fueron asesinadas en esa ciudad por la policía.

En vez de mostrar remordimiento por la muerte de Suzie, Bratton insultó a la familia Peña diciendo que ellos estaban distorsionando la verdad. “Este padre no era el padre del año, como la familia esta tratando de describirle,” dijo Bratton poco después de la tragedia.

Lorena López, la esposa de Peña, ha dicho que el punto es la irresponsabilidad del DPLA al poner en peligro las vidas, y está pidiendo justicia por la muerte de su esposo y de su hija.

Según el periódico Los Angeles Times, López y su hija mayor llamaron a la policía

buscando ayuda porque Peña les había amenazado y también amenazó con matar a Suzie. Ellas comunicaron que él estaba bajo la influencia de drogas y alcohol. Lo que ellas querían era que la policía les protegiera, especialmente a la niña.

Cuando la policía llegó, la familia pidió participar en las negociaciones con Peña. Pero el equipo SWAT del DPLA rehusó. Cuando un oficial fue herido, ellos decidieron igualar por mucho la balanza.

“Ha sido muy cruel lo que le pasó a mi hermano,” dijo Germán Peña a Los Angeles Times. “Ellos no tuvieron ninguna paciencia, ninguna, sabiendo que mi sobrina estaba con él, que él era padre.”

Este fatal incidente sucede dos meses después de que dos alguaciles del Departamento del Sheriff del Condado de los Ángeles dispararan 120 veces a un vehículo contra un hombre desarmado en una vecindad residencial. ¿Su razón? Él no se detuvo y los llevaba alrededor de la cuadra a una velocidad de — 35 millas por hora. El chofer recibió cuatro disparos y muchas balas alcanzaron a las casas vecinas.

Activistas locales destacan que esta clase de comportamiento racista e irresponsable de parte de la policía no ocurre en las comunidades adineradas como por ejemplo en Beverly Hills, donde viven muy pocas personas negras y latinas.

El recién elegido alcalde de Los Ángeles Antonio Villaraigosa ha rehusado condenar directamente a la policía por el asesinato de los Peñas. En vez de eso, ha pedido al jefe de la policía y a la familia hablar del asunto en un tono más moderado.

Dado el incremento en la brutalidad policial y los asesinatos en el Sur de Los Ángeles, una respuesta más apropiada sería la demanda por justicia expresada militantemente y en voz alta durante las manifestaciones organizadas por la familia en el lugar del suceso.

Muchos creen que un paso adicional importante sería despedir y luego encarcelar al jefe de la policía Bratton como cómplice en las numerosas matanzas de negros y latinos por parte de la fuerza policial que él encabeza. □

Surge movimiento popular para detener el reclutamiento militar

Por Dustin Langley

Es imposible leer los reportes diarios sobre el aumento de la resistencia en Irak sin darse cuenta de que el plan de Bush y Rumsfeld para una guerra rápida de alta tecnología es un completo fracaso.

En respuesta, líderes políticos del Partido Demócrata, incluyendo a Joe Lieberman, Hillary Clinton y John Kerry, han urgido por un incremento de 100.000 soldados en las Fuerzas Armadas, con la esperanza de aliviar algo la fatiga producto de un ejército sobre extendido. En enero de este año, el Proyecto por un Nuevo Siglo Americano llamó a un incremento en el tamaño del ejército de por lo menos 25.000 soldados cada año.

Pero cualquier plan de expandir el ejército ignora el hecho de que los jóvenes están rehusando inscribirse para participar en una guerra de conquista y ocupación.

El Ejército está siendo incapaz hasta de lograr su meta de reclutamiento actual. El general de más alto rango del ejército dijo al Congreso a fines de junio que el ejército está en “alto riesgo” de no poder alcanzar sus metas de reclutamiento para el año.

Un alto oficial del Pentágono dijo que el ejército ya se había dado cuenta de que no iba a alcanzar su objetivo de reclutar 80.000 nuevos soldados este año —la única pregunta era por cuántos miles iba a quedar corto. Actualmente está corto por 7.800 reclutas, faltando tres meses para reclutar en el año.

En reuniones de juntas escolares, asociaciones de padres y maestros y gobiernos estudiantiles a través de los Estados Unidos, padres y estudiantes están orga-

nizándose. Los reclutadores han identificado a los padres como el obstáculo más grande para lograr sus cuotas.

San Francisco: ‘¡Colegios no combates!’

En San Francisco, padres y activistas en contra de la guerra prepararon un referendo local el 11 de julio que, si es aceptado, pondría a la ciudad oficialmente opuesta a la presencia de reclutadores militares en las escuelas secundarias públicas o en las universidades públicas.

L@s organizador@s están trabajando para conseguir firmas suficientes para poner la iniciativa, llamada “Colegios no Combates”, en los comicios de noviembre. Ésta alentaría a los oficiales docentes a negar el acceso a los reclutadores, incluso si esto significara la pérdida de fondos federales. La iniciativa también propulsa la creación de becas y programas de entrenamiento para ofrecer una alternativa al incentivo que ofrece las Fuerzas Armadas a los jóvenes con menos ventajas.

Una de l@s organizador@s, Ragina Johnson de la Organización Socialista Internacional, dijo, “No vemos a las hijas de George Bush firmando para hacerse soldadas. Es la gente pobre y de la clase trabajadora que necesita empleos y educación, a la misma vez que miles de millones están siendo gastados en esta guerra.”

La Asociación de Padres y Maestros de la escuela secundaria Garfield en Seattle tomó un paso decisivo en mayo cuando votó 25 a 5 para adoptar una resolución que dice, “Las escuelas públicas no son un lugar para reclutadores militares.”

“El propósito de la Asociación de Padres

y Maestros es proteger y defender a los chicos,” dijo Amy Hagopian, una madre de tres cuyo hijo es un estudiante del último año en Garfield. “No está limitado sólo a cuestiones de educación— lo cuál explica por qué la Asociación aboga por la salud de nuestro@s niño@s, contra la violencia, y trata otras cuestiones graves.”

Ella agregó, “Ellos están gastando \$4 mil millones al mes en Irak, pero nosotros tenemos que eliminar la clase sobre las relaciones raciales, la cual cuesta \$12.500. Esa es una clase importante para nuestros hijos.”

Steve Ludwig, cuyo hijo está en su último año en Garfield, dijo algo con lo que much@s en la Asociación están de acuerdo: Garfield no permite organizaciones que promuevan actividades ilegales ni que recluten a estudiantes para hacer esas actividades; tampoco permite organizaciones que practiquen discriminación basada en raza, género, origen nacional, ni orientación sexual reclutar en el campo de la escuela.

Ludwig le dijo al periódico Christian Science Monitor, “Planned Parenthood, que yo sepa, ni aboga ni hace actos ilegales. El ejército estadounidense sí lo hace.” Dijo que no se opondría si representantes del ejército estadounidense vinieran a Garfield para debatir sus ideas sobre la tortura o la guerra de agresión. “A lo que me opongo es a que vengan aquí para reclutar a estudiantes para realizar esos actos,” dijo. “No tiene nada que ver con el derecho de hablar libremente.”

El Manual de Reclutamiento del Ejército para las Escuelas Secundarias —obtenible en el portal de Ningún Servicio

Militar Obligatorio, de Ninguna Manera (www.nodraftnoway.org) — dice que la meta de los reclutadores es “posesión de las escuelas”. Pero los padres, l@s activistas de las comunidades, y l@s estudiantes están trabajando para negarles esa propiedad.

¡Ayude a quitar a los reclutadores militares de las escuelas!

La organización “No Draft, No Way” (Ningún Servicio Militar Obligatorio, de Ninguna Manera), como parte de su ofensiva de otoño contra el reclutamiento militar, está produciendo miles de paquetes de información para activistas.

Éstos incluirán un libro de 120 páginas, “No vamos — una guía para el contra-reclutamiento y la resistencia al servicio militar obligatorio,” que incluye capítulos sobre las mentiras de los reclutadores militares, la ley “No Child Left behind” (Ningún niño que quede atrás), cómo retar a reclutadores en el campo escolar, cómo organizar una campaña de “optar que no”, cómo quitar al ROTC del campo, y cómo organizar una protesta frente a la estación local de reclutamiento.

Además del libro habrá un DVD de dos horas. Este incluye presentaciones hechas por jóvenes, activistas de contra-reclutamiento y veteranos que charlan sobre el reclutamiento militar y cómo organizar para retarlo. El DVD incluye también peticiones, carteles, volantes, y hojas de información que se pueden bajar de la computadora para que activistas por todos lados puedan ver el DVD e inmediatamente puedan usar la información. □