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WW EDITORIAL

Hurricane Katrina U.S. gov't guilty of criminal neglect

Almost all of the death, injury, damage and destruction arising from hurricane Katrina is the result of the crimes of the Bush administration.

President Bush was criminally negligent in diverting funds that had been requested to protect the people of New Orleans for use in the criminal war of conquest in Iraq. The Bush administration did this in full knowledge of the impending danger. The highest government agency in

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A HISTORIC MEETING



PHOTO CREDIT: O'NEIL NANCO
Louis Farrakhan
& Chris Silvera

Leaders of Million Worker March & Millions More Movement

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VENEZUELA

Revolutionary communities, social missions 8

Oil for the people 8

Billions spent for Iraq war Relief for the rich, disaster for the poor Hurricane tragedy could have been averted

By Larry Hales

Aug. 31, 3:15 p.m. EDT—The mayor of New Orleans has just announced that hundreds, probably thousands, have been killed by Hurricane Katrina.

Last year in the midst of hurricane season, as Hurricane Ivan—a category 4 hurricane on the Saffir-Simpson scale, which categorizes hurricanes based on barometric pressure, winds and storm surge—was bearing down on New Orleans, the city set aside 10,000 body bags. Hurricane Ivan was to be the storm that forecasters were suspecting would level the entire city.

New Orleans is essentially a bowl. It is below sea-level and surrounded by water. New Orleans is flanked by Lake Pontchartrain and the Mississippi River. Levees and pumps keep the city dry.

A storm like Hurricane Ivan would have wiped the levees out, destroyed the pumps and have left parts of the city submerged under nearly 20 feet of water. The water would have grown stagnant, teeming with bacteria and the dead, and oil and gas would

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Global actions demand: Stop the execution of Frances Newton

By Gloria Rubac
Houston

RACIST DEATH PENALTY



Lena Baker
pardoned
too late
3

Support for Frances Newton grows daily. From every corner of Houston, the fourth-largest city in the country, people have been moved by Newton's case

—and have turned their disbelief and outrage at the injustice done her into action to stop her Sept. 14 execution.

From around the United States and the world people are responding to an email campaign on the FreeFrances.org web site and the iacenter.org web site. They are sending postcards to the governor and showing DVDs of Newton speaking.

Frances Newton, who has maintained her innocence, is scheduled to be put to death by the state of Texas for the 1988 killings of her husband Adrian, her 7-year-old son Alton, and her 21-month-old daughter Farrah. Her state appeal was denied in August. Her case is now in the federal courts.

She would be the first African American woman executed in Texas since 1854, when an enslaved Black woman named Lucy was hanged in Galveston.

In July, Newton's attorneys filed an addition to an application for a writ of habeas corpus when it was discovered Assistant District Attorney Roe Wilson, who handles all death row appeals from Houston, had admitted to a Dutch journalist what Newton's family had known for 18 years: There was another gun involved in the murders.

Frances Newton wound up on death row because she was forced to take court-appointed attorney Ron Mock, known for

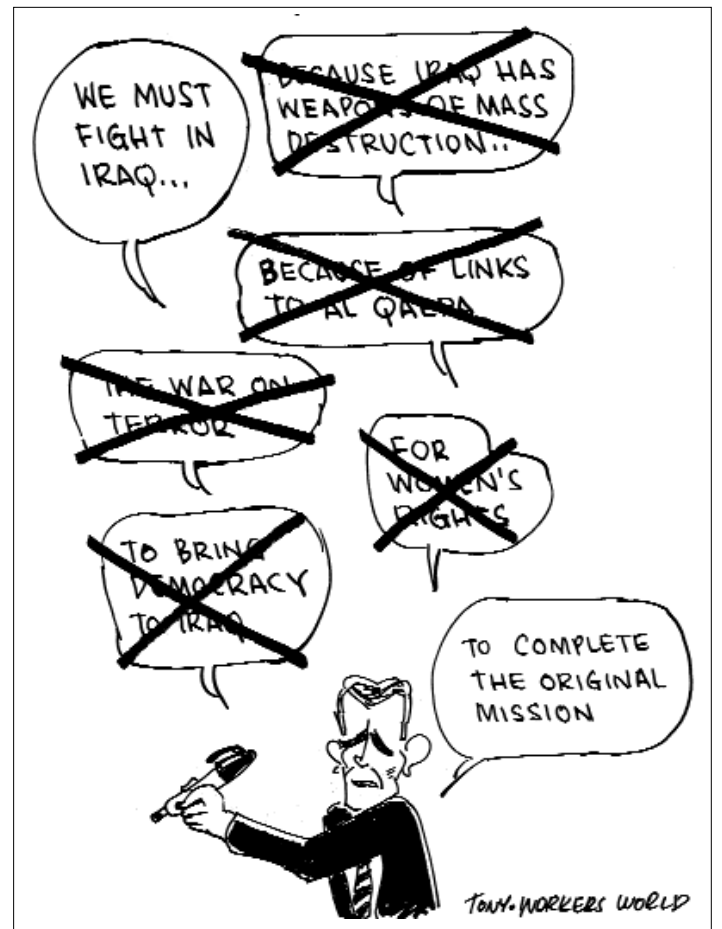
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This week ...

Mattachine victory sparks internal debate

By Leslie Feinberg

The successful defense of a Mattachine founder against criminal charges stemming from police entrapment in the summer of 1952 was a heady victory, expanding the membership at a geometric rate.

The campaign against police entrapment had successfully taken the organization's activist work into the public arena. However, the campaign itself had been organized in the name of an ad-hoc, single-issue committee, which provided greater freedom for mobilizing the grassroots effort.

Almost immediately this presented a crisis for Mattachine. New leadership was needed for the growing number of discussion groups. Unlike the small circle of founding members, who built a leadership based on a "consensus of principle," the gay men and lesbians who flocked to Mattachine now did so because it spoke to social needs that arose from their oppression. However, they did not necessarily share the political view of the founding leaders that homosexuals were an oppressed minority who needed to unite in collective political activism to bring about social change.

These new members wanted to know who the leaders were and where the direction for the discussion groups was coming from. During the frenzy and fear of the McCarthyite witch hunt, all such anxieties were directed against communists. And the founding members were communists.

The secret "underground" structure of leaders that protected the anonymity of the founding core—the Fifth Order—strained the need for above-ground political organizing. Same-sex love was still illegal, though, making the problem of creating a homosexual rights organization a thorny one.

Split in leadership

How could Mattachine reorganize to meet the needs of a burgeoning movement? This question split members of the Fifth Order almost immediately after the Jennings legal victory. The Fifth Order held an urgent weekend conference in February 1953 to hash out their differences.

Most of the inner group demanded the creation of an above-ground membership organization. Voicing the concerns of this grouping, Chuck Rowland wrote to Harry Hay. Rowland argued that the conditions under which the original underground organization was formed in 1950 had drastically changed, and that "a radical new approach" was needed.

Rowland stressed that the new Mattachine movement had opened up "a qualitatively new situation in which even our Junior Chamber of Commerce Laguna Group (the exact type of group the secrecy of the Society was designed to protect)" favored above-ground organizing.

Rowland concluded that he was going to put forward a motion at the next leadership meeting for a convention and draw up a constitution for a new organizational structure for the Mattachine Society. "Whether you like it or not," Rowland warned, "the subject of discussion for today is reorganization."

Hay was unwavering in his opposition to reorganization. He believed it would do irrevocable harm to Mattachine to open up the structure at a time when there was an influx of large numbers of new members who, his-

torian John D'Emilio relates, "had little if any sense of solidarity with other oppressed gays and no allegiance, Hay felt, to the long-term goal of building a powerful, militant mass movement for homosexual rights." ("Making Trouble")

Skittish professionals

In an attempt to create at least one flexible public organizational vehicle for movement building, the leadership did resolve in February to incorporate the Mattachine Foundation in California as a not-for-profit educational organization in order to take another step into the public arena. Left-wing lawyer Fred Snider handled the incorporation.

The Mattachine leaders hoped that an incorporated foundation could openly conduct research into homosexuality and use the findings to create mass education about homosexual rights. To do so, the foundation could reach out for heterosexual support—including professionals and public officials.

The foundation could also ease the fears of the mass membership in Mattachine about who the leaders of the organization were and who was organizing the discussion groups at a historical moment when such doubts always fanned the flames of anti-communism.

Chuck Rowland, a Mattachine founder, drew up a four-page pamphlet announcing the establishment of the foundation by a group of Los Angeles residents. Basing its arguments on Dr. Alfred Kinsey's study of male sexuality,

published in 1948, the pamphlet debunked many of the pejorative attitudes about homosexuality. "But homosexuals as such have only limited social and legal rights," the pamphlet emphasized, "in fact, our whole society is organized to keep them completely oppressed."

Mattachine founders asked prominent individuals to join the foundation's board of directors.

UCLA research psychologist Dr. Evelyn Hooker and novelist-screenwriter Christopher Isherwood both turned down the invitation, although each reportedly said they supported the aims.

Isherwood argued that he was not a "joiner," but he donated money to the effort and offered to spread the word about the foundation. Hooker, who had just opened up her study of male homosexuality, expressed concern that membership would open her up to peer scrutiny about her objectivity.

Wallace de Ortega Maxey did say yes to participation in the foundation's work. This pastor of the First Universalist Church in Los Angeles was known for his support of progressive political causes. San Bernardino physician Richard Gwartney also agreed to take part.

In general, however, the contradiction of approaching professionals and officialdom became immediately apparent. The Mattachine founders, all with communist backgrounds or influences, wanted to organize a grassroots movement that would fight for every right.

The public figures Mattachine was approaching, however, did not share its revolutionary outlook, or even a similar class outlook.

Hay charged that Isherwood was "rude and sneering" to Mattachine leaders. Hay stressed, "Isherwood made no bones about his contempt for our socialist mass-organization approach.

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PART 46
The entire Lavender & Red series, which explores the history of the socialist movement and the struggle for sexual & gender liberation, can be read online at www.workers.org.

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LOS ANGELES

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Sept. 8 IAC Forum: Ruth Vela and Justino Jimenez of San Diego FIST will give an eyewitness report from the World Conference of Students and Youth held in Caracas, Venezuela. Zola Muhammad and Page Getz will report from their IAC-LA sponsored solidarity trip to Camp Casey. 7:30 pm, 5274 W Pico Blvd #203, 323-936-7266

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Global actions demand: Stop the execution of Frances Newton

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his incompetence and arguably one of the worst defense lawyers in Houston. Sixteen of his clients, including Shaka Sankofa who was executed in 2000, were sent to death row. Only four are alive today.

Newton tried to have Mock replaced after her family finally scraped enough money together to hire a private attorney, but the trial judge refused to dismiss him.

The state says Newton killed her family. Her mother says it's impossible. "Frances adored her children," says Jewel Nelms. "Frances was a conscientious mother who took such care with her children, including their education. It is not possible she could have harmed them."

On Aug. 27, Newton's supporters from Houston and Austin marched on the governor's mansion to put Texas Gov. Rick Perry on notice that if he allows the execution to take place, he will have the murder of an innocent woman on his hands.

The Houston-based Committee to Free Frances Newton left early from the S.H.A.P.E. Community in Houston for the trip to Austin. On the bus, each person took the microphone and told what had gotten her or him involved in trying to stop this execution.

One of them was Karen Preston. She went to high school with Newton. "Every class reunion, we talk about Frances and how we can't believe she would ever harm her family. I have to step up and try to stop her execution."

Armed with banners and signs and an unstoppable spirit, the group was joined by anti-death-penalty activists in Austin.

After a march up Congress Avenue, the crowd rallied across the street from Perry's home. Speakers included Barbara Acuna, whose son Robert Acuna was the last juvenile sentenced to death in Houston before the U.S. Supreme Court outlawed the practice in October 2004. Also, Delia Perez-Meyers talked about her brother Louis Meyers, another innocent person on death row in Texas. Perez-Meyers presented Acuna with a beautiful drawing made by Gary Sterling, who had been executed two weeks earlier.

Speaking for Newton was Nelms, who thanked everyone for their commitment and activism on behalf of her daughter.

After the rally, Nelms left to go visit Newton. "She's doing really good and is so excited about what's going on in Houston and in Austin. Frances is doing well. She still has a wonderful, beautiful smile. Her spirits are high. She knows that the truth is on her side," Nelms said.

Nelms noted the next day: "All the things are finally coming out that Frances and I have been knowing for a long time. Like the D.A. finally admitting another gun was recovered from the crime scene.



PHOTOS: SOFIA HOLDER

Gloria Rubac speaking in Austin, Aug. 27.

"It's been a little frustrating with other people not knowing about what really happened when you know it is a fact. And when you know that those facts could change my daughter's life."

On the Aug. 27 bus ride back to Houston, activists mapped out plans for the next two weeks. There will be rallies and pickets and city council appearances. There will be a hip-hop program for the youth, and a tent at a community festival.

"I am so thankful for all the people coming together," said Nelms. "I am thankful for all the people who are coming forward and standing up and looking at the case and voicing their opinions."

Letters of support can be sent to: Frances Newton (#922), Mountain View Unit, 2305 Ransom Road, Gatesville, TX 76528. □



FREE FRANCES.ORG



Aug. 27 march to governor's house in Austin.



PHOTO: ROBERTO MERCADO

'Extradite Posada Carriles!'

Former political prisoner and Puerto Rican independence leader Antonio Camacho Negrón, left, spoke at a New York City rally on Aug. 29 to demand the extradition of known terrorist Luis Posada Carriles to Venezuela to face trial. On that day, Carriles faced an immigration court in El Paso to seek asylum from the United States. The rally was part of a national day of action initiated by the ANSWER Coalition.

—Anne Pruden

NEW YORK

'Free the computers for Cuba!'



Protesters in New York City rally on Aug. 24 demanding the release of computers and other equipment seized from the Pastors for Peace humanitarian aid caravan in July. The equipment was seized by U.S. Customs agents, acting on the orders of the U.S. Commerce Department, when the 16th "Friendship Caravan to Cuba" attempted to cross the border at Mexico.

—Story and photo by Anne Pruden

Justice for Lena Baker Too little and much too late

Millions of people had not heard of Lena Baker until the Georgia Board of Pardons and Paroles posthumously pardoned her on Aug. 15. Baker, an African American maid, was and remains to this day the only woman to die in Georgia's electric chair. The 19 other women executed in Georgia died by hanging.

Baker was convicted of the first-degree murder of E.B. Knight by an all-white, all-male jury during a one-day trial. Not one witness was called by her white court-appointed attorney in her defense. A mother of three children, Baker was 44 years old when she was electrocuted on

March 5, 1945.

Baker had been hired in 1944 to care for Knight, a white mill operator in Cuthbert, Ga., who broke his leg. Baker was sexually abused by Knight. She fatally shot him when he threatened her with a branding iron after she told him that she was quitting her job.

Black women being sexually exploited and raped by white men, especially in the South, was the norm not the exception, beginning with the days of slavery.

If there were real justice in Georgia back then, Baker would have been found innocent by reason of self-defense and



set free. If there were real justice in Georgia today, the GBPP would have not only proclaimed Baker's innocence, but abolished the racist, anti-poor death penalty once and for all to honor her memory.

—Monica Moorehead

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Notes from a conversation with Louis Farrakhan



MWMM talks to Millions More Movement about the working class

By Clarence Thomas
Co-chair, Million Worker March
Movement, New York

During Nation of Islam Minister Louis Farrakhan's keynote address on behalf of the Millions More Movement at the Teamsters National Black Caucus 30th annual banquet and educational conference in Chicago on Aug. 20, he publicly extended an invitation to the TNBC national chair, Chris Silvera, to have a meeting in order to include MWMM issues with the MMM platform. The NOI's chief of protocol, Sister Claudette Marie Muhammad, made arrangements with the assistance of Harlem's NOI Minister Kevin Muhammad, to set up the meeting in New York Aug. 27.

Silvera, an East Coast convener of the Oct. 17, 2004, Million Worker March, indicated to Kevin Muhammad that he wanted to have two other MWM East Coast conveners, Brenda Stokely, former president of District Council 1707, and Larry Holmes, co-director of the International Action Center, along with myself, at that meeting, which did occur on the evening of Aug. 27.

Farrakhan had traveled to New York to meet with various sectors of the community and movement regarding the upcoming Oct. 14-16 Millions More Movement events in Washington, D.C., to commemorate the 10th anniversary of the Million Man March.

He greeted the four of us individually

with an embrace and a handshake. Despite his hectic schedule, which included a flurry of interviews and other meetings, we were able to have a 45-minute meeting at his hotel.

Many trade union rank and filers have a misconception of who Minister Farrakhan is and his importance. While he is certainly an important historical figure in the struggle for Black liberation, we found him to be attentive, humble, full of great wisdom and gracious.

I presented the minister with MWM statements on "Rank and file unity and the AFL-CIO split" and "Racism and sexism: Major pillars of the crisis inside the U.S. trade union movement," and with an outline of how the MWMM would be doing broad outreach to workers, organized and unorganized, anti-war activists and others for the MMM. I also gave him a copy of the "War at Home—Economic Class War in America" book by Jack Rasmus.

Prior to the Aug. 27 meeting, a MWMM T-shirt, pin and Oct. 17 rally DVD had been presented to Minister Ishmael Muhammad, a Farrakhan assistant, during the July 23 AFL-CIO pre-convention activity at Mosque Maryam in Chicago. Chris presented the minister with a TNBC embroidered leather shoulder bag, T-shirt and history of the TNBC DVD.

In response to a request made by Chris, a verbal agreement was made that the MWMM will be one of the national co-conveners of the MMM representing labor, and that this agreement will be con-



Chris Silvera, Clarence Thomas, Louis Farrakhan, Brenda Stokely, Larry Holmes and Bashiri Silvera holding MWM t-shirt Aug. 27.

PHOTO CREDIT:
NATION OF ISLAM

veyed to Minister Willie Williams, the national executive director of MMM. Farrakhan told us that each of the local MMM organizing committees should have labor representation. These committees will be made aware of this recommendation along with the MMM executive body that meets regularly to discuss issues. Farrakhan told us that no one can speak for workers like workers themselves and therefore asked us to select a MWMM representative to speak on the issues of labor at the MMM Oct. 15 rally.

There was a mutual agreement on the plight of working people—organized and unorganized. Farrakhan mentioned that even though many of us in the trade union movement are facing this onslaught from not only the corporations but the government, still the plight of those who don't have jobs cannot be lost in all of this.

This includes those who don't have pensions, don't have livable wages and medical benefits, those who want a job and can't have one, and how those of us who do have jobs serve as buffers, superficial divisions, between the unemployed on the one hand and the corporations and the ruling class on the other.

Farrakhan made the point that there is a disconnection in many instances between those of us who are working and those who are not, as well as between those who have jobs that are unionized and jobs that are not unionized.

Brenda mentioned how the MWMM embraces those who don't have jobs because we call for universal health care, a national livable wage, affordable housing and education and that a worker—unemployed or a displaced—is still a worker. Farrakhan reminded us of the

Northwest strike

Support grows for cleaners & mechanics

By Cheryl LaBash
Detroit

Every day the local, national and international solidarity with the striking Northwest Airlines mechanics and cleaners becomes more visible. At the same time, Northwest is renewing demands for huge cuts in its contract negotiations with the unions representing pilots, flight attendants and other workers.

On the second Saturday of the strike, 1,000 supporters rallied at the Aircraft Mechanics Fraternal Association—AMFA—strike headquarters near the Minneapolis-St. Paul airport.

Speakers included Steel Workers District 11 Director Dave Foster.

One of 50 members there from the Machinists union told the crowd: "We are all the same. The company hates every one of us and wants to bust every single one of the unions on the property ... If we don't stand together, we are all dead. That's why I don't cross."

Elected officials who spoke, including the mayor of Minneapolis, pointed to the public interest in actions by a company that has received tax breaks as well as a monopoly at the airport.

The Strike Solidarity Committee plans additional actions, including picketing local hotels that Northwest uses to house "replacement mechanics." (www.workdayminnesota.org)

In Detroit, an Aug. 27 "ox roast" fundraiser was organized in only a few days by the network built 10 years ago during the



Minneapolis-St. Paul. PHOTO: AFMA LOCAL 33

1995 Detroit newspaper strike. The event brought in \$3,000.

After the Electrical Workers Local 58 had reluctantly pulled its hall, forced by an agreement worked out at the national level by the Machinists and Electrical Workers union, strikers and supporters filled the Anchor Bar and adjacent meeting room, overflowing into McCarthy's, another pro-labor watering hole down the street.

At the gathering, strikers, union officials and activists exchanged information and planned for Labor Day outreach and other strike support.

Northwest's attack on the mechanics and cleaners of AMFA resonates with workers in both the public and private sectors, who face the same cuts in jobs, pay and benefits.

Solidarity!

In an auto parts warehouse, UAW members collected a shop-floor donation. A delegation from that job site brought pizzas to the strike headquarters, and picketed at the airport in an Aug. 27 down-pour so heavy it backed up street drains.

In an Aug. 28 statement of support, Doro-Chiba, a railway workers' union in

Japan, noted the global character of NWA's attacks: "You attract the attention of many workers in Japan who face similar attacks ... The Northwest Airlines are depriving workers of the very right to live by coercing an extravagant concession. The deliberate preparation of scabs clearly shows that the attack is aimed at destruction of the very existence of the union ..."

"Also in Japan we face appalling circumstances. A criminal policy of privatization and deregulation resulted in a railway accident, which claimed the lives of 107 passengers at once. Union busting, massive casualization of workers, and destruction of wage, pension and health-care systems are rampant also in Japan. Therefore, an attack on you is an attack on all the workers in Japan. We will fight back any possible attacks and continue our all-out struggle in Japan in solidarity with your strike."

In its Aug. 21 support statement, representatives of the Netherlands-based Aircraft Engineers International said they are extremely concerned "about the mass redundancies [layoffs] of qualified mechanics at Northwest Airlines, and we are further concerned as this trend seems to increase everywhere... and the negative effect on flight safety in general."

The Central Labor Council of Alameda County, Calif., the International Longshore and Warehouse Union and the FAA Safety Inspectors' Union immediately supported the mechanics' and cleaners' strike.

UPS pilots said they would not fly Northwest cargo.

Northwest is now turning its knives on the Professional Flight Attendants Association, which represents 10,000 Northwest workers. The airline bosses' ultimatum would outsource more than half the jobs and cut pay an average of 20 percent.

In 2006 at the latest, NWA also wants to eliminate 1,181 pilots and cut pay by 22 percent. (Detroit Free Press, Aug. 30)

The AMFA strike at Northwest confirms what the Mission Statement of the Million Worker March Movement put forth last year. The MWMM pointed to the vast reservoir of potential support that can be mobilized to turn around the devastation on the job and in the communities:

"The vast majority of working Americans are under siege. Social services and essential funding for schools, libraries, affordable housing and health care are slashed and eliminated.

"Decent paying jobs are disappearing through outsourcing and privatization whose real purpose is to break unions and roll back the gains of one hundred years of struggle. Sweatshops and starvation wages are imposed on workers across the world and deployed against workers at home to undermine our jobs and our benefits. ...

"The time has come to mobilize working people for our own agenda. Let us end subservience to the power of the privileged few and their monopoly of the political process in America. ... Let us forge together a social, economic and political movement for working people. We are the many. The secretive and corrupt who control our lives are the rapacious few." □

forces that we were going up against and about the fear that the government has of retribution from the Black community based on the racism and white supremacy that we still face.

Farrakhan said that the only way that we are going to be able to realize livable wages and jobs for the unemployed is to make fundamental changes in the government, including the military-based economy.

He stated that the government has committed wrongdoing to the victims of "American foreign policy," and that government fear created an attitude of locking up Black folks before there is some kind of action taken by the Black community to the oppression that we've been under.

I underscored the fact that Farrakhan is the continuer of the legacy of the Honorable Elijah Muhammad and the ongoing struggle for economic and social justice. With all due respect to Jesse Jackson and Al Sharpton, Farrakhan has the moral authority to be able to make Black trade unionists respond and mobilize around the issues raised at the MWMM. Farrakhan's speech on Aug. 20 with regard to issues of the Black working class was in fact helping to carry forth the work of Dr. Martin Luther King with respect to the Black community, the working class or labor, the inter-faith community around issues of the right to a job, decent education and health care.

When we mentioned to him the issues of bringing the troops home, repealing anti-labor laws such as the Taft-Hartley Act, upholding workers' critical weapons like having the right to strike without replacement workers, ending all discrimination in the work place—be it based on race or gender—Farrakhan told us that he was not interested in just being able to rattle off statistics, but he wants to develop a perspective of what the working class is facing in order to feel their pain. He wants us to provide him with an additional perspective on issues put forward by the MWMM.

Farrakhan impressively recited the preamble of the Declaration of Independence verbatim in order to re-emphasize the point that when the government is not serving the needs of the people, the people have the right to change the government.

To quote from the Million Worker March Movement's Letter for a Millions More Movement Resolution: "Oct. 16th 2005 marks the 10th Anniversary of the historic Million Man March (MMM). This event was not only the largest gathering of African American people; it was also the site of the greatest mobilization of workers in a single demonstration in American History. However, there was no specific labor organization that participated in the MMM responsible for organizing a conscious Black worker presence with clear national working class demands.

"The Million Worker March Movement is issuing the call to Black workers (organized and unorganized) and the entire labor movement to endorse and mobilize for the 10th anniversary of the MMM, called the Millions More Movement on Oct 14th-16th in Washington, D.C.

"The present attacks on all workers have made the stakes for Black workers in particular and the working class in general much higher than they were when nearly 2 million workers elected to attend the

New York forum hears immigrant organizers

Leading organizers from immigrant worker groups in the New York-New Jersey area brought a message of struggle to the Workers World Forum in New York on Aug. 25. From the mostly Mexican and other Latin@ workers, the message was: "We are here for work because NAFTA has made it impossible to work for a living wage at home. We pay taxes. We work hard. We are organized and we will fight for our rights."

The speakers also reported on a conference of day laborers that took place at Hofstra University on Long Island, N.Y., from July 27-31.

Among the speakers were Brian Barraza, president of the Association of Mexican American Workers, active mainly in New York City; four leading members of Casa Freehold, a solidarity organization in Freehold, N.J., that has fought for and won concessions for the mostly Mexican-born day laborers (jornaleros) in central New Jersey; and Heather Cottin, who has written about and supported the protests of day laborers and other immigrant workers in and around Farmingdale, Long Island, N.Y.

Sharon Eolis of the International Action Center also spoke at the meeting about her recent trip to the Philippines. And Dustin Langley of "No Draft No Way" reported on his visit to Camp Casey in Crawford, Texas, now a center of anti-war activity.

The forum gave an opportunity for the immigrant worker movement to speak directly with pro-socialist activists and to increase solidarity in the struggle for workers' rights.

—Story and photo
by John Catalinotto

MMM and did not go to work on Monday, Oct. 16, 1995.

"The MWMM clearly recognizes that the labor movement cannot be absent from this next mobilization. We will be mobilizing workers to participate on Oct. 14th-16th around the demands put forward by the Million Worker March on Oct. 17, at the Lincoln Memorial in Washington D.C."

Our Aug. 27 meeting was a reconfirmation of what Minister Louis Farrakhan stated at the kick-off MMM news conference this past May in Washington, D.C.: "Millions More means that we are reaching for the millions who carry the rich on their backs."

Thomas is a member of the International Longshore and Warehouse Union Local 10 executive board in San Francisco, a past secretary-treasurer of ILWU Local 10, a current member of the executive committee of the Alameda County Central Labor Council, and a member of the Northern California chapter of the Coalition of Black Trade Unionists. Silvera is also secretary-treasurer of Teamsters Local 808 in Long Island City, New York. Stokely and Holmes are members of the Troops Out Now Coalition.



Freehold, N.J., activists speak Aug. 25 in New York.

THE CASE OF LYNNE STEWART

Justice Department attack on the Bill of Rights

"The Case of Lynne Stewart: A Justice Department Attack on the Bill of Rights." A National Lawyers Guild Publication. 37 pp. 2005

By Rosemary Neidenberg

The pamphlet contains incontrovertible proof of progressive New York attorney Lynne Stewart's integrity and innocence, and an unanswerable indictment of the U.S. Justice Department.

Shakespeare said, "Let's kill all the lawyers." Lynne Stewart says, "You can't put the lawyers in jail." The U.S. Justice Department says, "Terrify the lawyers." The government set out to do this through the prosecution of Stewart, who was appointed by a federal court to represent Sheikh Omar Abdel Rahman. Sheikh Rahman was convicted in 1995 of seditious conspiracy.

Stewart, who attempted to energetically appeal Sheikh Rahman's conviction and to alleviate his conditions of imprisonment, was charged with and convicted of "helping terrorists." Knowing what has happened to Lynne Stewart, an attorney considering representing a client slated for annihilation by the U.S. government must ask: "Should I risk my right to practice law? Am I up for hard prison time?" Only the most dedicated and courageous will take that chance.

The government says, "Terrify the jury." This was accomplished in more ways than one. It combined Stewart's trial with that of Ahmed Abdel Sattar, who was the liaison between Rahman, the legal team and his family and supporters in Egypt. In October 2000 Sattar had issued a "fatwa" in the name of the sheikh calling for the killing of Jews. What had this to do with Stewart? Nothing.

But the association was planted in the minds of the jury. The prosecution dropped the name of Osama Bin Laden more than once, and orated about the bombing of the USS Cole off Yemen, although they made no direct allegations that Stewart

had any connections with either.

Why did the wrath of the "patriot" gods strike Stewart?

Did she engage in violent acts?

Did she advocate violent acts?

Did she conspire to perform or advocate violent acts? No, no, and no. Did they accuse her of any of the above? No.

The basis for the prosecution was Stewart's June 2000 call to Reuters News Service with a news release—no conspiracy or secrecy here—from Sheikh Rahman. The release stated his withdrawal of support for a peace initiative involving the Egyptian government and an Islamic organization in that country, and expressed the view that the Egyptian people should make such a decision. No violence was advocated, nor did any result.

Sheikh Rahman's legal team, Stewart and Ramsey Clark, wanted their blind and ailing client, who did not speak or understand English, to be extradited to Egypt to serve his life sentence. Stewart believed that publicity would aid in this effort and the Reuters dispatch would serve that end. In better times, a minor violation like this would perhaps result in a 30-day suspension of her license. In this era of unending assaults on rights and liberties, Stewart, a 65-year-old long-time defender of the poor and defenseless, went through a slanderous trial and now faces a possible 30-year prison sentence.

Two constitutional issues, among others, are cited in the pamphlet: the right of the accused to private consultations with lawyers, and the right of clients and attorneys to execute defense strategy without governmental interference.

Stewart's sentencing is set for Sept. 23. Her defense team, refusing to be intimidated, will pursue all avenues of appeal. Check for court location and how to contribute, big or small, at www.lynnestewart.org or call 212-625-9696.

Come to court. Support Lynne Stewart. Help turn back the onslaught on long-established rights and liberties. □



book
REVIEW

MUMIA SPEAKS

An interview with Mumia Abu-Jamal from death row

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

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Camp Casey, Crawford, Texas

Everyone's in accord: 'Troops out now!'

By Eddie Boyd
Baltimore

Bulletin--Boyd sent the following message to WW on Aug. 29 that he has been threatened with termination from his housing for veterans. Boyd wrote, "As of today if I speak out on the war in any form my rental lease will be terminated and I will have to leave the property where I now reside."

Aug. 24—The first thing that hit me when I arrived in Texas was the heat. I have one word for it: intense. It was heat like no other, with very little shade. Texas is not for the fainthearted.

Then, as I looked to the side of the road, I saw the crosses lined up like soldiers in formation, all decorated; most have flowers. I slowed the car so I could take in what captured the attention of the entire world for such a long time. Each cross had the name of a fallen soldier.

We came to a fork in the road. On one side there was a group of folks draped in white and blue, and a large poster that read "We support our president." And on the other there were people, Black and white, women and men, and lots of children, playing and gathering items for the camp. The two parties were separated by a large plot of land, a sort of "no-man's land."

I got out of the car and was immediately met by my contact person: Dustin, a Navy veteran and spokesperson for the group Troops Out Now. Dustin introduced me to all the groups: Gold Star Mothers Against the War, NAACP, Code Pink. And then there were just people who had lost loved ones, and people who just cared about the issue at hand, and Cindy Sheehan. I was

soon writing about the different people on a note pad; one thing that everyone was in one accord about was that "WE WANTED THE TROOPS OUT NOW."

Around 2 p.m. a caravan of bikers roared down the road that faced the camp. I later found out that it was a group from the local VFW and very much pro-war. We were instructed not to confront the pro-war people—to really ignore them.

I began talking with a guy who looked as if he could have been one of the bikers who were passing through. He told me that he'd tried to talk with one of the pro-war guys because his grandmother told him to try and find out about the other side. As he began to ask the gentleman about his point of view, the guy looked at him and said, "Go to hell."

I could see the frustration in his eyes as he replayed the incident to me. He said: "He don't know but I am not only a vet but a Republican. I just don't agree with this war, and this is the treatment I get."

I left shaking my head. We have a president and administration that claim to be a uniter not a divider, but this country seems to be more divided than ever before.

I went through the camp checking the different people who were here—Black, white, men, women, children of all age groups playing. In particular were these two little girls, one Black, one white. The Black child looked to be around 7 and the white child seemed to be around 4 to 5, and they seemed to not have a care in the world. They just played and laughed; they seemed to be so close. I thought to myself, "The world really needs to see this."

Around 5 p.m. I took a ride to the second camp. This camp was closer to the president's ranch. We passed his church,

and began to hear the jokes about what and who he prays for when he goes to church. I just listened, not trying to get caught up in the mess.

We arrived at the encampment. Even though it was smaller than camp 1, it seem to be more organized; a large white tent that could easily protect over 500 people, but I noticed around 150. A woman with pink hair and a Code Pink button must have seen my disappointment. She said in an authoritative voice, "They'll be more people here by tonight."

I asked her what brought her here. She said: "At first it was Cindy, and I just wanted to support her. As I began to get involved in more activities, it began to give me peace of mind." I then asked her where was she from and she told me Tennessee.

Soon after that I met a couple from California, the wife a schoolteacher and the husband worked in the medical field. She told me about how she only sees the kids she teaches going off into the military because they have other issues that will keep them from college, like poverty, drug abuse and violence in the homes. She told about one child who would come to school because the only meal he would have each day would come from school, and of one child who came to school wearing the same thing every day until he was told that he smelled; he then took her to his house and she found out that his family had no running water or electricity.

Economics is the number-one reason people join the military—not freedom, not helping other countries, not spreading democracy.

Around sunset Jeff, a marine who wrote about his tour in Iraq and turned it into a one-person play that is playing on the

West Coast, played Taps on his bugle for all the fallen soldiers from Texas. It was followed by a song from a Black lady whose grandson is in Iraq. There was not a dry eye at the ceremony. By this time I said my goodbyes to the kind folks at camp 2 and got on the shuttle headed back to camp 1.

I got back to camp 1, and didn't realize how late it was, but I wasn't tired. I did know that I had to wake early in order to catch my flight, but Dustin asked if I could tell some of the group the reason I came.

I told them about the way this country is headed, how police brutality is running rampant, how this administration spends more money to build prisons than schools or hospitals. And I said that there are thousands of Cindy Sheehans in this country who want to ask the president why we are in a country that doesn't want us there, why children who can't read or write can be sent a fight a war, and why we can't take care of our elderly or the vets when they come back home.

I saw a sign that read "WHILE THE PRESIDENT GOES FISHING, 82 MEN HAVE DIED." Mr. President, we have spent almost \$300 billion on this war, a war that most of the world is against. WHY?

As I boarded my plane in Houston, headed back home, my thoughts went to my police blue lights, my bright lights that are just in the poor areas of town, to my elected officials who seem to turn their backs on the citizens, my city of police intimidation and corruption, to my city where I can see garbage piled up outside a school and underneath a sign that says "BELIEVE." I must ask WHY?

People, keep up the struggle. □

'It's women who will stop this war!'

"It's the women and only the women who will stop this war!" said William Smith as we sat together in the bright sun at Camp Casey Detroit the afternoon of Aug. 24. After meeting Andrea Hackett a few hours later—her daughter, a soldier who returned in January after a year in Iraq, is likely to be deployed there again since she has four more years to serve in the National Guard—I see what he is talking about. Cindy Sheehan isn't the only military Mom whom Mr. Bush had better watch out for: Andrea Hackett is definitely someone to be reckoned with.

It was Hackett's expressed desire to go down to Camp Casey in Crawford, Texas, that set in motion a 1-o-n-g van trip—24 hours each way—by eight Detroiters the weekend before.

The idea first came up at the weekly meeting of Michigan Committee Against War & Injustice on Wednesday, Aug. 17. By the next afternoon, David Sole, an indefatigable activist/organizer, had rented a van and called the eight folks who had said they'd like to go if it could be arranged. The van cost \$600 and he figured gas would cost another \$600. David started calling around to activist friends on Thursday and by Friday he'd collected the gas money. He figured, rightly as it's turning out, that the van rental money would come in through donations after they'd returned home.

So off they went—David and his wife Joyce, Andrea and her 16-year-old daughter Syria whose sister Tatjuana is in the military, Syria's boyfriend Tommy Carter, 2005 Barnard University graduate Isis Sushliela, Wayne State University student Violeta Donawa, and a young Detroit

worker, Kyle McBee. The ones who are now known as the Crawford Eight.

They drove through the night and arrived at Camp Casey—which now has three camps and over 1,000 people tenting next to Bush's ranch in Crawford—on Saturday morning at 10:30 a.m. They attended a big rally that night and David managed to get Andrea on the list of speakers. Her address was carried on Amy Goodman's "Democracy Now." David said she spoke with power and heart. Apparently many military mothers and fathers came up to Andrea afterwards and thanked her for saying what they wish they could have said. On Sunday afternoon the Crawford Eight got in their van and headed north toward home.

But instead of going to their homes when they hit the Detroit city limits at 1 p.m. on Monday, Aug. 22, these by-now-exhausted folks drove down to Grand Circus Park in the middle of downtown and set up Camp Casey Detroit—with the intention of keeping it going 24/7 until the huge anti-war mobilization on Sept. 24 in Washington, D.C. I know that Isis, for one, didn't get home until 3 a.m. Tuesday morning. And she was back a few hours later after having gotten a shower and a little sleep. Other members of MECAWI, notably Jessica and Derek—both of whom have 9-to-5 jobs—joined the Crawford Eight down at Camp Casey Detroit on Monday and have spent every night there since. They're down there as I write this on Aug. 24, sleeping in sleeping bags on lawn chairs. The tents that were set up on Monday only lasted seven hours before the police made them take them down.



WW PHOTO: CHERYL LABASH

Camp Casey Detroit.

So now Camp Casey Detroit is a couple of tables, some folding and lawn chairs, two coolers with signs duct-taped to them and water bottles staying chilled on ice when it doesn't melt as it did in today's hot sun, assorted bags full of snacks, and anti-war signs for rallies like we had tonight. The church across the street, Central United Methodist, has been Detroit's peace church for decades, so when the church is open their bathrooms are available for our use. And people have been generous about bringing food for lunches and dinners.

A military Mom who had seen Camp Casey Detroit on Monday night's TV news brought down ice and water for the camp on Tuesday. And yesterday morning, a man who has a restaurant up the street

stopped by and asked how many people are usually there. David said around six. So at noon, this man returned with lunch and drinks for six.

When I got to Camp Casey Detroit about 2 p.m. this afternoon, Abayomi Azikiwe, a highly respected independent journalist and longtime activist, was there with William Smith, William's daughter Isis, and Syria Hackett's boyfriend Tommy. By 3:30 p.m., Pat Lent and Jim Grimm (Veterans For Peace) had joined us, and David Sole and Kevin Carey (Workers World) showed up about 4 p.m. Several men from the neighborhood, among them Will and James, have been helping out too. While I was there, Will even gave out fliers about Camp Casey Detroit to

Anti-war activists pursue Bush back to D.C.

By Dustin Langley

As George W. Bush heads back to Washington, D.C., ending a five-week vacation at his Crawford estate, he will be pursued by busloads of activists and haunted by an anti-war movement that has gained new energy and enthusiasm from the efforts of Cindy Sheehan and thousands of organizers across the country.

Cindy Sheehan's encampment outside Bush's ranch began on Aug. 6, when she was joined by veterans and military families supporting her demand to speak to the president about the death of her son, Casey Sheehan, in Iraq.

Since then, thousands have made the trip to Crawford, camping out in tents or cars along a narrow road. Many were veterans or military families; some had never been to an anti-war event before.

Other visitors included the Rev. Al Sharpton, who joined hundreds near Bush's ranch for an interfaith service

Sunday. He said, "I feel that it is our moral obligation to stand and to be courageous with these families, and particularly Cindy, that have become the conscience of this nation."

American Indian Movement co-founder Dennis Banks presented Cindy a cloak on behalf of her fallen son.

'Phenomenal acoustics'

"We had no idea the ditch in Crawford had such phenomenal acoustics," said Nancy Lessin of Military Families Speak Out. "There's a momentum building across the country ..."

This momentum has inspired vigils, solidarity rallies and speakouts across the country. Many local activists set up "Camp Caseys" in their own towns. In New York's Union Square, organizers have maintained a continued presence at Camp Casey NYC since Aug. 15, despite police harassment and arrests.

This momentum will not end when the

president returns to Washington. On Aug. 31, the last day of the encampment at Camp Casey, the Bring Them Home Now Tour will launch three buses from Crawford, Texas. Each bus will carry military family members, Gold Star families and veterans.

They will follow three different routes across the U.S. for three weeks, stopping at meetings and rallies against the war. The buses will all converge on Washington, D.C., for the massive march on Sept. 24.

The example of Cindy Sheehan and of the thousands who have joined her demonstrate that it is the people, not the politicians, who will stop this war.

'Shut down the war!'

Organizers with the Troops Out Now Coalition are mobilizing to maximize the energy and inspiration coming out of this new phase of the struggle against the war. Noting that opposition to the war is growing, military recruiting is at an all-time low, and the movement is gearing up for a season of renewed mobilization, organizers say that now is the time to turn up the heat.

This spring, the Troops Out Now Coalition issued a call for a united demonstration in Washington, D.C., saying, "Nothing is more important at this moment than for all to walk together on the high road to unity. We believe that what we all do will be decisive. We must and we can stop the war and get every U.S. soldier out of Iraq. It is up to all of us to do whatever is necessary for our movement to rise to this challenge."

TONC is organizing hundreds of buses, cars and vans to travel to Washington from more than 50 organizing centers. TONC is also looking beyond September to continue the struggle against the war and occupation. The Millions More Movement events of Oct. 14-16 will be a massive and historic mobilization in

Washington on the 10th anniversary of the Million Man March.

On Dec. 1-3, TONC, along with other national anti-war, labor, and community organizations, will organize a series of national and local "Shut Down the War" events. This will be the 50th anniversary of the day that Rosa Parks refused to give up her seat on a bus to a white man. This act of defiance launched the modern Civil Rights struggle as a mass movement in the streets.

This anniversary is an appropriate occasion to take direct action to shut down the war; not just the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, but the war against working people and people of color here at home. TONC is calling on activists across the country to organize student walkouts, sickouts, boycotts and other direct action to say "Bring the troops home now, or we'll shut it down!"

Sept. 10 strategy meeting

To launch this busy season of activity and protest, the Troops Out Now Coalition will be holding a Strategy Meeting in New York City at the Lang Center at New School University in Manhattan on Sept. 10, from 1:30 to 6:00 p.m.

Labor organizers, anti-war activists, veterans, clergy, military families and community leaders will be coming from all over the country to plan and coordinate activities on a national level geared towards shutting the war down.

Sessions will include: updates and planning for Sept. 24-26, counter-recruiting and beyond Sept. 24; shutting down the war.

This national meeting of grassroots activists will be an important opportunity to assess the next steps to organize nationally to bring the troops home now.

Langley is a national organizer of the Troops Out Now Coalition.

MILWAUKEE:

Blow to recruiters

By Bryan G. Pfeifer

On Aug. 25 the Milwaukee School Board voted to increase awareness in the school district and provide more information to parents about the "opt-out" provision in the "No Child Left Behind" act. The administration also pledged to review military recruiters' activities. (www.jsonline.com)

The act dictates that the Pentagon automatically receives student information including names, addresses, telephone numbers and emails—unless parents, or a student 18 or older, submits an opt-out form.

As the vote took place, Riverside students and those from Wauwatosa and Shorewood high schools, which are not part of the Milwaukee district, hoisted "Education not Militarism" signs. These students and their allies are fed up with military preying techniques and the U.S. war on Iraq.

people on the buses that stopped near us. And then we had probably 40-50 people show up at tonight's rally.

One of the cool things about Camp Casey Detroit is the opportunity it gives folks to sit and talk with no sense of being rushed or having to run off someplace else. It feels like the olden days when people just sat around and shared their stories. Now, that's what I call peace!

I heard many powerful things today while sitting around talking and at the rally, but there is one statement that I will not forget. I was interviewing Andrea Hackett, knowing I'd want to write this day up in my journal and blog. As she was getting ready to leave, I said: "Andrea, there's one more thing. As we know, George Bush has changed his reasons several times for why we went to war against Iraq. His latest is to say that we must 'finish the task' so our fallen soldiers will not have died in vain. How does that strike you?"

With fire in her eyes, Andrea replied: "Because his war was premised on lies, their lives have already been lost in vain. That's why we're trying to bring them home, so no more will die in vain."

Yes, it is the women who will stop this war.

— Patricia Lay-Dorsey
Camp Casey, Detroit

Forty-four soldiers from Wisconsin, most between 18 and 30 and largely from formerly unionized industrial manufacturing areas, have died in Iraq.

The Milwaukee struggle takes place amid growing counter-recruitment activity across the country. In fact, this is fast becoming a central pillar of the anti-war movement.

Although the final board resolution was a watered-down version of one originally submitted by progressive board member Peter Blewett, it is a victory nonetheless. At the very least it's a move toward educating the wider public about the law's opt-out provision and about actual recruiting techniques.

Blewett's resolution would have limited recruiters to three days of visits per school year.

"One of our fundamental obligations is to protect the privacy of students and their families," said Blewett. He voted in favor of the final resolution along with the eight other board members present.

The final resolution directs the district leadership to make available to parents the opt-out information, and to outline all "cost-effective" means of providing this to parents. The school board estimates that currently less than 1 percent of students or parents in Milwaukee exercise their opt-out right, largely because they don't know they can.

Before the Aug. 25 vote, over 60 people attended the Aug. 23 Milwaukee School Board's Rules and Policy Committee and 18 testified in favor of restrictions on recruiters. No military recruiters or their supporters attended.

Students from the working-class and majority students-of-color Riverside High School testified about the recruiters' sexist behavior, and their aggressiveness and focus on recruiting African American and Latin@ students.

Because of the students' and their allies' actions, School Superintendent William Andrekopoulos said at the meeting that he would "investigate" the recruiters' activities in city schools.

It will now be up to the counter-recruitment movement to hold the board accountable and see to it that real action is taken. □

Bedford-Stuyvesant rally



A rally and speak-out with the theme "Community Under Attack, Building A Fightback" was held Aug. 27 in the Bedford-Stuyvesant area of Brooklyn, N.Y. The rally, organized by Harriet's Daughters, connected the issue of opposing imperialist wars abroad with the struggle for social justice at home.

Harriet refers to Harriet Tubman, a leader of the underground railroad who helped hundreds of slaves escape from the Southern slave states to the North in the decade before the U.S. Civil War. Harriet's Daughters—well-known and respected activists such as Nellie Bailey (at mike), Brenda Stokely, Rosemari Mealy, Joan Gibbs and Cleo Silvers—are carrying forth Tubman's fight-back legacy. Longtime freedom fighters Amina Baraka, Iyaluua Ferguson, Mae Jackson and Una Mulzac were honored during the rally.

Speakers included representatives from



the Million Worker March Movement, Jericho Movement, Al-Awda Right to Return Coalition, Harlem Tenants Council, Troops Out Now Coalition, December 12th Movement, International Action Center, ProLibertad, Malcolm X Grassroots Movement, Free the Cuban Five Committee, Free Mumia Abu-Jamal Coalition and many others.

—Story & photos by Monica Moorehead

Venezuela offers oil for the people – of Jamaica and the U.S.

By Berta Joubert-Ceci

While the Bush administration and friends continue their unrelenting campaign of lies, slander and hostility against Bolivarian Venezuela, President Hugo Chávez is working incessantly to find ways of using Venezuela's oil and energy wealth to bring hope and relief to millions of people throughout the Americas region, including the poor in the United States.

After the U.S.-backed oil sabotage during the winter of 2002-2003, Venezuela's oil production has greatly improved. This is because of the dedicated work of hundreds of Venezuelans identified with the Bolivarian process, among them oil and other industry workers, people in the community, pro-revolution members of the military and a loyal administration.

Soon after the sabotage recovery, the Revolution began to use the profits of PDVSA, the national oil industry, to finance special essential projects of education, health care, job and housing development called "Misiones" (Missions). These are aimed at elevating the people's standard of living, particularly the 80 percent of the population that has lived in poverty under the previous administrations, which were close allies of the United States.

The oil is now benefiting people not only within Venezuelan borders, but

beyond. Under President Chávez' proposal of ALBA - the Bolivarian Alternative for the Americas, a program of integration for Latin America and the Caribbean that emphasizes social aspects and economic cooperation while stressing solidarity - Venezuela's energy resources form the basis for this great initiative.

When leaders of Caribbean states met at the end of June in Venezuela in the First Energy Gathering of Caribbean Chiefs of State to ratify PetroCaribe, it signaled a profound change in trade relations in the region. PetroCaribe is an Energy Cooperation agreement that will help poor Caribbean countries overcome their terrible energy crises, a by-product of the high oil prices in the world market.

Despite a threatening letter from President George W. Bush to the participants, 13 leaders signed the agreement with Venezuela.

In late August in Montego Bay, Jamaican President James Patterson signed an agreement with the Venezuelan President Chávez, making Jamaica the first English-speaking country to sign on to the ALBA-PetroCaribe initiative. Under this accord, Venezuela will supply oil to Jamaica at a below-market price of \$40 a barrel. Besides paying low interest and through long-term loans, Jamaica can pay Venezuela with goods and services.

Other agreements were also signed. Among them is one that will allow Vene-

zuela to upgrade the capacity of production of a refinery from 30,000 barrels a day to 50,000.

The two countries deepened their partnership not only in terms of energy. Following the precepts of cooperation and solidarity of ALBA, Venezuela will set up a fund of \$60 million for socioeconomic projects on the island. Venezuela and Jamaica also initiated talks on cooperation in other areas like medicine, education, tourism, disasters response, science and technology.

Other parallel initiatives under ALBA are PetroSur and PetroAndina, both in South America. However, one such new initiative heads north to the United States.

During the weekly Aló Presidente TV and Radio program, President Chávez announced that Venezuela would like to provide discounted heating oil and free eye operations to people in poor communities in the United States. He said that Venezuela supplies the United States with 1.5 million barrels of oil per day and that "we would like to provide a part of this 1.5 million barrels of oil to poor communities.

"There is a lot of poverty in the U.S.," Chavez said, "and I don't believe that everything reflects the American Way of Life. Many people die of cold in the winter. Many die of heat in the summer, many are unemployed and die of starva-

tion." He added, "We could have an impact on 7 million to 8 million persons."

President Chávez told the Rev. Jesse Jackson, who was visiting Venezuela for three days during the commemoration of Dr. Martin Luther King's famous "I Have a Dream" speech, that he would like Jackson's organization to help identify communities in the United States. Plans include the distributing oil to poor households through Venezuelan PDVSA's CITGO stations in the United States.

According to the Venezuelan Bolivarian News Agency, President Chávez said that the Bernardo Alvarez, Venezuelan ambassador to the United States, has reported that the embassy has already received 140 oil requests. Chávez was quoted as saying that "the intermediaries, the transnational companies, are exploiting them; we are not going to lose a cent, we are only helping by supplying directly to those most in need."

President Chávez also included poor people in the United States in the "Miracle Mission." This is a health-care program run jointly by Cuba and Venezuela to provide free eye surgery to those in need. The operations will be performed in Cuba, and Venezuela will provide the transportation.

Chávez stated that 150,000 people from the United States could benefit from this program each year, and that those interested should contact the Venezuelan Embassy. □

Social missions and revolutionary neighborhoods

By Dante Strobino
Caracas, Venezuela

Members of social movements from all over the world recently convened in Caracas, Venezuela, for the World Festival of Youth and Students. Here we witnessed this country's revolutionary socialist process, and can now bring our observations and insight back home to continue the struggle for the liberation of the international working class and oppressed peoples.

The revolution in Venezuela is on the move, with missions and social programs developing mechanisms to promote full participation by the masses of people.

The neighborhoods are being organized, with women's leadership. A direct democracy responsible to the needs of the people is being created.

There are currently 11 social "misiones" being implemented throughout the country. One revolutionary program has brought doctors, mostly Cuban, to indigenous and Black people, children, women and the elderly who had previously never been given this level of medical attention. The program incorporates social security, free medical care, sports and education.

On Aug. 20-21 President Hugo Chavez traveled to Cuba to attend the ceremonies for the first graduating class of several thousand Cuban-trained Venezuelan doctors.

Mission Robinson promises thousands of previously uneducated people, young and old, an education through the high-school level. Subjects are determined based on the community's needs, for example sex-education courses. When we

asked Matilde Coromoto—whom everyone calls Mrs. Robinson because of her vital role in the mission—about the sex-education classes, she told us that there is an entire class dedicated to this subject throughout elementary and middle school. That's quite unlike the one-year courses given in the United States that often only teach abstinence.

Mission Sucre carries this education further, taking higher education to all corners of the country. Here in the capital city of Caracas, a Bolivarian University was established to defend the revolution. The Bolivarian University's classes, which charge no tuition fees, are based on "municipalization."

Municipalization allows students hands-on practice in the community, to more deeply develop their skills, rather limiting them to the theoretical, classroom-oriented education models the United States inherited from France and Russia.

Since these missions were implemented, illiteracy has been virtually eradicated. Unemployment has plummeted. Houses are being built for the working poor, giving people both houses and jobs in the public construction industry.

Another mission, Plan Mercal, promises to keep the people fed by providing stores with half-priced and free food. This plan has also brought "Casas de Alimentaciones" to the neighborhoods that need them most.

These facilities cook and serve hundreds of free meals every day. Often these same facilities are used for collectivized child care. While the parents work, their kids hang out and get fed.

One neighborhood—23 de Enero,

named for the date in 1958 when the territory was liberated from the reactionary rule of the president at the time, Marcos Perez Jimenez—has been fighting for years to maintain its autonomy.

In the late 1950s, Jimenez himself recognized the terrible living conditions, including "chozas" or huts made of wood and tin. He had entire neighborhoods rebuilt with more stable housing made of concrete and

then the people threw him out of power, a real example of how capitalist infrastructure can be reappropriated.

The original organizing in 23 de Enero was based on principles of eliminating crimes such as theft, drugs and violence. The people did this by becoming intimate and open with all family and community members. This openness and familiarity laid the basis for social cohesion and solidarity.

Recently 23 de Enero has been able to demilitarize slightly because its grassroots style of organizing is being recognized and emulated by other neighborhoods. They now can take off their masks and live in a beautiful, safe, free space.

The walls are covered in murals commemorating their revolutionary teachers such as Jose Marti, Che Guevara, Simon Bolivar and others such as Nestor who died in 1996 in armed struggle defending the neighborhood. On the perimeter is a

big mural of a bombed plane, which condemns the terrorism of the United States and specifically that of Washington-backed anti-Cuba terrorist Luis Posada Carilles.

In neighborhood Caricuao, we were told about the newly emerging structure of bottom-up decision making. The neighborhoods are organized so that they come together to form "parroquias" that consist of 250-400 households. Within these parroquias they establish issue-oriented committees. For instance there are committees on water, health, food, transportation, education, and so on.

Each parroquia has different committees based on its needs. If the mayor and the reigning government do not give them facilities or resources they need for some project, such as new roads or buses; then the committee can take out a loan from the national bank to carry out the needed improvements. The loans are given with no interest during the first two years and only 1 percent interest the following years.

If these parroquias decide on something collectively that should be defended, they themselves have the power to create enforceable laws. This is truly bottom-up grassroots participatory democracy.

Throughout Venezuela there are countless liberated and truly inspirational neighborhoods where class consciousness, women's power, equality and sense of unity provide evidence that a better world is possible. □



Iraq's constitutional quagmire shows Bush plan in shambles

By Fred Goldstein

For some time now it has been the strategy of the Bush administration to wage relentless war against the anti-occupation Iraqi resistance fighters while simultaneously trying to establish a stable puppet regime through a so-called "democratic," U.S.-orchestrated constitutional, parliamentary process. It is a strategy calculated to isolate and erode the resistance.

At the present juncture, the opposite has happened. The resistance is more powerful and widespread than ever. According to the Pentagon, insurgents launch 65 or more attacks on U.S. forces every day. Even by Pentagon accounts, it is more sophisticated and effective. Everyone associated with the occupation is at risk. No official or businessman can travel anywhere without being flanked by heavy security. Numerous military operations have been carried out in cities and towns to "clean out" the resistance. And after each operation, including the devastation of Falluja, the liberation forces re-emerge to strike at the occupation.

The political process, on the other hand, has degenerated. The counter-revolutionary exiles and domestic collaborators with the Pentagon, assembled by Washington, are at each others throats trying to grab territory, oil, and power—all backed up, of course, by F-16s, Abrams tanks, U.S. helicopter gunships and 138,000 U.S. troops—set to increase to 160,000 by December.

The latest announcement on Aug. 22 of an agreement, or lack of agreement, on a constitution shows that the Bush strategy is in shambles—Bush's claims that "democracy has triumphed" notwithstanding. The big-business media has repeatedly referred to these negotiations as between Shiites, Kurds, and Sunnis. This is calculated to both give the false impression that the power brokers assembled by Washington represent the mass of the people and also is aimed to sow division.

This already discredited agreement was made between a group of traitors to Iraq who have attached themselves to U.S. imperialism. They are using a U.S.-contrived constitutional process, drawn up under the Transition Administrative Law (TAL) dictated by Paul Bremmer, former U.S. viceroy of Iraq. Bremmer drew up the plans when the Bush administration finally realized it was facing a major resistance. Bremmer had appointed a Governing Council which was growing more discredited by the day. Washington tried to get by with the appointment of a provisional government, but finally had to agree to elections under pressure from Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani. Sistani, a the Shiite spiritual leader of the Supreme Council for the Islamic Revolution in Iraq (SCIRI). Sistani was under pressure from the masses.

Conspirators in the Green Zone

Among the forces that agreed to this constitution is Jalal Talabani of the Kurdish Democratic Party. The Talabani clan has had an off-again, on-again relationship with the CIA. His father worked with the CIA against the Iraqi Revolution of 1958 after it started moving to the left. Jalal, the son, collaborated with Washington against the Iranian Revolution after the overthrow of the U.S. puppet Shah in 1979.

Talabani's role during the war was to make available to the U.S. forces his army, the Peshmerga, as fighters in the north

after the Turkish government refused to allow the U.S. 4th Army to use Turkish soil to invade Iraq. Talabani's forces fought side by side with the U.S. military during the war and lent its forces for the invasion of Falluja.

Another moving force is Abdulaziz al Hakim, leader of the SCIRI, which refused from the beginning of the war to support the resistance. Its armed Badr Brigade never fired a shot against the occupiers and recently has opened fire on the forces of Mukkada al Sadr, who is opposed to the occupation. Al Hakim became a member of the original hand-picked Governing Council (after his brother, also a member, was assassinated) and the Provisional Government under Bremmer. He is the oldest son of Grand Ayatollah Muhsin al Hakim, who waged a relentless campaign against the land reforms, women's rights and communism after the 1958 revolution which ousted British colonialism.

Another mover is Ahmad Chalabi, a "secular" Shiite. Chalabi is an exiled banker, under indictment for embezzlement in Jordan and the original favorite of the Pentagon which accompanied him into Iraq with 700 troops before the war ended in April 2003. Chalabi was a CIA operative who tried to engineer an insurrection against Saddam Hussein in the mid-1990s. In the run-up to the war Chalabi supplied "intelligence" to the Pentagon and propaganda to the U.S. big business media about Saddam's non-existent "weapons of mass destruction." His mouthpiece was Judith Miller of the New York Times. Chalabi, deputy prime minister, reinvented himself as head of the so-called United Iraqi Alliance in the Jan. 30 elections.

Sunni leaders, such as Saleh al Mutlaq, Adnan Dulaimi and other Sunni members of parliament and the constitutional committee, who were brought in at the insistence of Washington, are now crying foul because the reactionary Kurdish forces under Talabani are trying to grab the oil in the north at Kirkuk and al Hakim of SCIRI is trying to grab the

oil in the south at Basra.

Back in July, when the resistance was struggling against the election, Dulaimi, the head of a major Sunni institution called the Sunni Endowment and a member of the present government, was preparing to issue a fatwah calling on all Sunnis to participate in the elections.

This entire process was overseen by Zalmay Khalilzad, U.S. ambassador to Iraq, who worked day and night, seven days a week for months to strong-arm this process. Khalilzad is part of the Cheney-Wolfowitz grouping of world conquerors going back to the first Bush administration. He had a hand in shaping the doctrine of enforcing U.S. world supremacy, which later became the Bush Doctrine. He was an adviser to the UNOCAL oil company when it was negotiating with the Taliban in Afghanistan for a pipeline. He was an architect of the war against Afghanistan and the creation of the puppet government of Ahmed Karzai. And he was an advocate of the war against Iraq.

The real issue

As the Bush administration's constitutional strategy disintegrates and the military is unable to subdue the resistance despite hundreds of billions of dollars spent, thinkers within and outside of the Pentagon and the State Department may very well begin to lean towards stoking the divisions that have emerged even further.

Divide and conquer through internal strife may be a political humiliation for the militarist, would-be conquerors in the Bush-Cheney-Rumsfeld camp. But strategic necessity may force them to foment division as a primary weapon. This would be a drastic retreat from all-out military victory. But they may regard this as far less humiliating than being driven out by the resistance. The mass sentiment against the occupation is likely to frustrate such devious efforts or attempts to engineer separate oil regimes in the north and the south that would be beholden to the U.S. oil barons.

For now the capitalist press is focusing

everyone's attention on the backroom negotiations between the conspirators in the Green Zone. The world is supposed to become engrossed and take sides as the various factions fight over centralism versus federalism, secularism versus Islam, etc. These are not issues that the worldwide movement should be preoccupied with.

For all those who support the resistance and who support sovereignty and self-determination for the Iraqi people the issue is not what is in the constitution of the puppets of Washington but the fact that the whole gang is tied to imperialism.

The Shah of Iran was a "secularist" and modernizer. But he was put on his throne by the CIA in 1953 and proceeded to suppress revolutionaries and progressives, institute torture, and give the oil wealth of the country to U.S. oil companies. The Saudi monarchy is clerical, feudal and repressive. Women are veiled and the royal family rules. They have been clients of the U.S. government and the U.S. oil companies since World War II.

The starting point for a position of international solidarity with the heroic Iraqi resistance is to brand this gang of "constitution" givers as collaborators with the occupation. They are accomplices in the attempt by Washington to reconquer Iraq.

Various anti-occupation forces within Iraq may feel it is necessary and helpful to their cause to utilize the parliamentary process in the struggle to unmask the occupation. Others may be firmly opposed to such maneuvers. That is the business of the Iraqi anti-occupation forces.

But the anti-war movement in the U.S. and around the world must give not an iota of credence to Washington's constitutional machinations and any other attempt to stabilize its rule and weaken the resistance.

The only way any constitution can possibly reflect the sovereignty and self-determination of the Iraqi people is when the occupation and all its hangers on have been driven out and the resistance organizes the new order in Iraq. □

'We are one!'

Unity soccer match between North, South Korea

By Fred Goldstein

"A crowd of more than 60,000 South Koreans erupted into cheers of 'We are one!' as a group of visiting North Koreans entered the World Cup soccer stadium here for a match celebrating liberation from Japanese rule," according to an article in the Aug. 16 Wall Street Journal, datelined Seoul.

This overwhelmingly favorable reaction to the North Korean delegation came at a "unity" soccer match between the North and South Korean soccer teams in which neither side displayed their national flag—only "unity" flags were flown.

This sentiment is partly the explanation for the growing rift between the South Korean government and the U.S. government on the question of the nuclear rights of the North.

The WSJ article reported, "South Korea's top official on relations with the North, Unification Minister Chung Dong

Young, said last week, 'Our position is that North Korea has a general right to peaceful use of nuclear energy, for agricultural, medical and power-generation purposes. In this our position differs from that of Washington.'"

But sections of the South Korean masses go much further than the Unification Minister. "Yoon Yong Wan, a 37-year-old repairman for Kia Motors in Seoul, said he hopes 'North Korea can build an [intercontinental ballistic mis-

sile] that can carry a warhead to the heart of Washington. It would be good for the balance of power.'"

The WSJ dispatch concluded, "While that is an extreme view, it isn't entirely uncommon. A poll in early August by Chosun Ilbo, a conservative South Korean newspaper, and Gallup found 66 percent of South Koreans age 16 to 25 would side with North Korea in a war between the U.S. and the North. Just 28 percent would side with the U.S." □

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U.S. gov't guilty of criminal neglect

Continued from page 1

charge of dealing with disasters, the Federal Emergency Management Agency, warned of the potential for disaster as early as 2001.

With the complete evacuation of New Orleans, tens of thousands trapped without food, water, or electricity, thousands of homes destroyed and the death toll mounting by the hour, this is a disaster of unprecedented proportion. It profoundly affects Black people, who are a major part of the population in Louisiana, Alabama, and Mississippi, and are suffering disproportionately because they are subject to racist discrimination—which leaves them in poverty and most vulnerable to such disasters. Seventy percent of New Orleans' residents are Black and live in apartheid-like conditions.

Some politicians are calling it "our tsunami." The tsunami last December also took an excessive toll of life because of criminal neglect. But a tsunami comes rarely. Hurricanes come to the delta region almost every year. This disaster was not only predictable but predicted. What seems like an inevitable tragedy caused by nature was foreseen long ago by scientists, engineers, government agencies, environmentalists and experts in disaster management.

The science writer for the Houston Chronicle wrote on Dec. 1, 2001:

"New Orleans is sinking.

"And its main buffer from a hurricane, the protective Mississippi River delta, is quickly eroding away, leaving the historic city perilously close to disaster. ...

"So vulnerable, in fact, that earlier this year the Federal Emergency Management Agency ranked the potential damage to New Orleans as among the three likeliest, most catastrophic disasters facing this country." The other two were an earthquake in San Francisco and a "terrorist attack on New York City."

The federal, state and local governments knew of the danger. They knew what caused it and how to deal with it. But they did little or nothing. They left the people of the delta region unaware and helpless to deal with the inevitable disaster.

Why did they do nothing? An Aug. 30 dispatch of Editor and Publisher revealed that "\$250 million in crucial projects" planned by the Army Corps of Engineers in the delta for shoring up levees and building pumping stations could not be carried out. "The Corps never tried to hide the fact that the spending pressures of the war in Iraq, as well as homeland security—coming at the same time as federal tax cuts—was the reason for the strain.

"The 2004 hurricane season was the worst in decades. In spite of that, the federal government came back this spring with the steepest reduction in hurricane and flood-control funding for New Orleans in history."

The Houston Chronicle's 2001 report cited a study by a consortium of government agencies several years ago. This consortium recommended that between \$2 billion and \$3 billion dollars was needed for projects that could rectify the problem. That is less than the cost of one month of spending on the Iraq occupation, which costs \$4 billion a month at the minimum! Certainly part of the \$300-billion-plus spent on the war could have been used to take preventive measures.

Of course, while Bush is the immediate culprit, it must not be forgotten that the Democratic Party voted for the war and every nickel spent on it. So the Democrats are also criminally liable for both the devastation in New Orleans and the illegal war and occupation.

Now that the capitalist authorities have let this disaster happen, Bush is taking a business-as-usual approach to dealing with the disaster. Just as during the tsunami, it took him days to disrupt his vacation and step away from his Crawford ranch.

The federal government is the only authority capable of mobilizing the resources necessary for the rescue mission and the reconstruction. It is said that a million people were evacuated from New Orleans and the surrounding parishes (counties) before the hurricane. Actually, the government did not evacuate anyone. The authorities simply declared a mandatory evacuation and then left it to people to get out. Now they are saying that "at least a hundred thousand people" were left in the city itself.

People have no place to stay. Many have no food. Their personal belongings are all gone. Medical care is cut off. Schools are inaccessible. Countless are homeless. The immediate crisis requires a national mobilization of medical personnel, social workers, rescue experts, hydraulic engineers.

Food, water and medical supplies should be immediately commandeered for the emergency from agribusiness, super-market chains, pharmaceutical companies. Wal Mart and

other retail giants should be required to ship, gratis, clothing and other necessities to meet basic needs. Government food storage supplies in warehouses throughout the Midwest and other regions should be made available.

Every form of transport—planes, helicopters, buses, ambulances, small boats—should be mobilized to the region. These and other measures should be immediately implemented by the federal government based on its emergency powers and responsibilities.

In other words, all of this society's material and human resources should be made available to the victims in this crisis. The corporations have control of these resources, but the workers who created them have every right to them.

Let the government and the bosses pay. Putting people—the suffering people of the delta—before profits should be the order of the day. The property restrictions of capitalism must be overruled in the interest of the masses.

Particularly, the oil companies should be forced to cough up billions of dollars for reconstruction out of the super-profits that they pump out of the delta region every day. ExxonMobil refines 493,000 barrels of oil a day in Baton Rouge; Chevron, 325,000 a day in Pascagoula, Miss.; ConocoPhillips, 247,000 a day, to name a few. All this wealth has been taken out of the region, not to speak of the wealth spent trying to conquer Iraq and its oil. And they should not only give back the profits they gouged from the people by raising gasoline prices to over \$3 a gallon—they should be forced to lower prices drastically.

In general, the giant multinationals should be made to ante up because of all the wealth and labor they have taken from New Orleans—through which so much of the wealth of this country flows—while the majority of people are left with just enough to survive.

As for the reconstruction effort, the authorities are taking a narrow approach. They are talking about months and years to recover. People with flood insurance can stand in line once they can get back to their neighborhoods. Poor people who have no flood insurance are on their own. Perhaps FEMA will give a few handouts to tide them over for a while. All the racist hysteria being whipped up about "looters" is a cover-up for the fact that the government has made no provisions to feed the people, and that so many Black people are living in dire poverty.

But the truth is, there is a much more rapid and comprehensive solution to turning the situation around right in front of the government's nose. There are millions of workers who can be mobilized to go to the region to help out.

Right now there is a "housing boom" where hundreds of thousands of construction workers are toiling away as real-estate developers race to make super-profits on the speculation in the housing market.

What is needed is a full-scale mobilization of the building trades, construction workers, hydraulic engineers, medical personnel, social-service workers and workers from all over the country to stop capitalist business as usual and mobilize to help the people of New Orleans, Biloxi and the delta region—fully funded by the government.

Millions of unemployed workers could be hired at union wages to pitch in. Organized labor could be in the vanguard of organizing the reconstruction effort.

With all their technology, the bosses are preoccupied with how they can collect damages from the insurance industry, how they can get their profitable refineries back on line, and how they can resume making profits in the area as soon as possible. The working class, in contrast, is concerned with the fate of the masses of people, especially the Black, Latin@, poor white and the exploited who suffer the most and will get the least help.

Once the reconstruction effort begins and communications become possible, unions, community organizations, and movement groups should set up independent channels by which they can give aid and assistance to the people of the stricken area.

Mass mobilization, putting people before property, is how reconstruction projects are handled in Cuba and under the socialist organization of society. The demand should be put forward that the government treat this as a national emergency crisis of the greatest magnitude. Measures should be taken in proportion to the extent of the crisis—measures such as giving extended unemployment insurance to everyone in the area. Personal property loss should be fully restored. And the government should subordinate all its efforts to giving effective short term and long term aid to the victims. But at the same time the working class in this country should try to find a way to get beyond the capitalist authority and bring whatever aid and assistance it can to the people of the delta. □

John Johnson

Why his death went unnoticed

By Monica Moorehead

When ABC newsreader Peter Jennings died Aug. 7 of lung cancer, the story dominated the air waves and electronic media for many days. Entertainment Tonight gave great prominence to this event.

Just the opposite happened when John H. Johnson died one day later on Aug. 8. Once his obituary appeared, he was all but forgotten by the big-business media.

Just who was John H. Johnson? Johnson was the 87-year-old African-American publisher of two of the most well-known Black-oriented magazines ever, *Jet* and *Ebony*.

Johnson grew up poor under segregation in Arkansas. His father was killed in a saw mill accident when he was 8 years old. There was no Black high school there, so as a teenager he and his mother migrated to Chicago where he lived until his death.

He founded Johnson Publishing Company back in 1942 and to this day it remains the number-one African-American publishing company worldwide. His first magazine, *Negro Digest*, led to the 1945 founding of *Ebony* magazine, which still comes out monthly and has over 1 million subscribers. *Jet* magazine began in 1951 and became the number-one Black weekly publication. In 1973, Johnson Publishers also created *Fashion Fair* Cosmetics, skin products that cater mainly to women of color.

If you are Black in the U.S., *Jet* and *Ebony* were at one time or another an important part of your social upbringing. Regardless of your economic status and political outlook, these two magazines covered politics, sports, entertainment, business, international developments, etc.—all from a Black perspective. *Jet* and *Ebony* helped to fill a huge void in terms of what the white-dominated media neglected to cover with the issues that directly impacted Black America.

Even though Johnson was a capitalist and politically conservative, his magazines covered the social issues of the day—from the civil rights struggles to the Black Power movement to developments in Africa.

The fact that someone like Jennings, a well-known white journalist, would get more attention than someone like Johnson, an African-American media pioneer, exposes once again the double standard that flows from racism—U.S. style. Certainly white media moguls, like Ted Turner and Rupert Murdoch, would never be treated in such a dismissive way if they were to pass away tomorrow. In fact, they would be treated like gods. □

Mattachine victory sparks internal debate

Continued from page 2

"He told us we were recruiting the wrong people—we should aim for the important people among the film colony, the queens with money and influence, not the workers, not the ribbon clerks."

Mattachine leaders arranged a sit-down with Dr. Alfred Kinsey in 1953 while he was in Los Angeles on his travels. But Kinsey couldn't make it at the last minute.

The cancellation may have been more than a scheduling problem. Kinsey may have wanted to distance himself from homosexual rights. Kinsey's scientific conclusion that human sexuality could best be represented as a spectrum helped equip homosexual activism. But it also made Kinsey the target of the red-baiting, lavender-hating ideologues of McCarthyism.

The Mattachine founders found themselves in the same crosshairs.

Next: Twisting the knife of anti-communism.

Bush 'morality' cuts funding for HIV education in Central America

By LeiLani Dowell

It would seem to be common sense that those who are members of a given community would know the best way to reach out to that community. This is exactly the approach that a program organized by Population Services International has used to tackle the crisis of HIV/AIDS in Central America.

This work could not be needed more. The World Bank reported in 2003 that four of the six Latin American countries with the highest prevalence of HIV/AIDS are in Central America. According to the Baltimore Sun, the rate of HIV among prostitutes in Central America is as high as 20 percent.

A report released in 2002 by the National University of Costa Rica cited irregular use of condoms by sex workers in Central America as a factor in the high risk of infection with the AIDS virus. Only one percent of the 1,600 prostitutes they surveyed throughout the region knew the proper way to use a condom. The report recommended an increase in educational outreach to sex workers, and that organizations "take into account the cultural differences of the population" when decisions are made about allocation of resources. (AFP)

Through the PSI program, former prostitutes use a two-pronged approach to

educating current prostitutes about the disease. One aspect is the organization of Loteria games, using the game's icons to explain aspects of safer sex and condom use. Loteria is a popular and well-loved game throughout much of Central America, and as such creates a comfortable setting for prostitutes to learn about these topics.

The other aspect is outreach in the brothels and bars where prostitutes work. The outreach specialists sit down with prostitutes and explain how to use a condom, and the importance of safer sex.

The Baltimore Sun reports: "Last year, PSI's program made contact with 422,000 people in high-risk groups and sold 14 million condoms in the region. In parts of Guatemala, where PSI has significantly expanded its work, HIV infections among prostitutes have fallen by a third."

Despite the success of this program, a U.S. senator has denounced the funding of PSI by the United States Agency for International Development. In a letter, Sen. Tom Coburn of Oklahoma belittled the organization of the Loteria games, writing, "There is something seriously askew at USAID when the agency's response to a dehumanizing and abusive

practice that exploits women and young girls is parties and games." And Coburn said that the Noches Vives program of going into the bars and brothels was a "misuse of funds to organize and sponsor parties and dance contests to exploit victims of the sex trade."

Other senators have denounced Coburn's letter, but only in the most chauvinistic terms. Larry Craig of Idaho said that "ignoring the problem by hamstringing proven programs is a disservice to U.S. citizens who are impacted by the wave of immigrants from these countries."

Both responses to an effective program completely ignore the base issue of HIV/AIDS in Central America. If these senators are really concerned with the "dehumanizing and abusive" practice of prostitution and the "wave of immigrants," they can focus their energy on the economic and political realities of capitalism—which not only force many women and men into prostitution, but also force many women and men to leave their families behind and seek work in the United States. But they should leave the fighting of a world pandemic to the medical experts on HIV/AIDS and members of communities that are most affected by it.

After Coburn's letter was released, USAID contacted PSI to tell them that future funding for the organization—almost half of PSI's budget—had been denied. The Sun reports that while decisions on contracts are usually made by USAID officials with expertise in the area being addressed, this decision was made by a "high-level political appointee."

This USAID ruling must be seen in the context of the larger push by the religious right to use "morality" to guide health policies. In 2003 Congress passed President George W. Bush's Global AIDS Initiative, which has not only siphoned money from realistic AIDS education programs to abstinence-only programs, but also denies funds to "any group or organization that does not have a policy explicitly opposing prostitution and sex trafficking." Last year, this requirement was extended from international to U.S.-based groups.

True morality lies within the hearts of the people who fight for their rights, including the right to accurate and reliable sex education for themselves and their communities; it is not dictated by a group of naysayers who place "family values" over the saving of lives. An intensified response on the streets is needed to combat the intensification of the right-wing attack on the lives of women and men worldwide. □



Hurricane tragedy could have been averted

Continued from page 1

have spilled into the water with the storm. Thirty-three percent of the United States' oil comes from the Gulf Coast.

Hurricane Ivan missed New Orleans. It veered to the east and New Orleans narrowly escaped what many call an inevitable disaster, the worst the country has seen yet.

On Aug. 28, 2005, New Orleans braced for Hurricane Katrina, a category 5 hurricane, but the kind of preparations necessary for such a hurricane had not been made.

Fears of the damage and death were evoked. Residents of New Orleans, other southern Louisiana counties and cities, and counties and cities along the Gulf Coast were told to evacuate. The highways out of the populated areas were clogged, but many—over 100,000 residents in New Orleans alone—have no means of escaping. Thousands more along the coast are in the same predicament; many of these poor are people of color.

The major news stations, in covering and tracking the storm, of course mentioned the people that would be stranded, but rarely the reasons.

Lines at the rescue stations, especially at the Super Dome—the stadium where the New Orleans Saints team plays—were blocks long. The Super Dome became the largest structure to house people that could not leave the city. At one point, an estimated 35,000 people waited to gain entrance to the stadium, but only around 9,000 were allowed to enter and others were turned away. Many were relegated to riding the storm out in their homes because they had no way out of the city.

When Katrina hit, the center of this storm also veered to the east of New Orleans, but New Orleans was hit by the storm, which had been downgraded slightly as it came ashore.

No one knows how many lives have been lost or the extent of the damage done by the hurricane. The Gulf Coast was pounded and entire buildings collapsed. One apartment building fell from the wind and surging water, and at least 30 people there are said to have been killed. Harrison county, in Mississippi, is counting at least 100 dead and expects the number to continue climbing.

Eighty percent of New Orleans is submerged, with some areas being covered by over 20 feet of water. Many people are stranded on their rooftops and in trees, and rescuers are said to have to push aside the dead to get to the still living.

A day after the hurricane, there were reports that at least 100,000 are stranded in New Orleans. People, desperate for food, without electricity and other means, after having lost everything, are relieving store shelves, as there is only scant emergency relief. Thousands are huddled in the Super Dome, with nowhere to go. By Tuesday, Aug. 30, food supplies had run out in the Dome.

The situation in New Orleans is especially tenuous. The levees have broken in areas and flood waters continue to rise. Hospitals are having to evacuate very ill patients, because as the waters rise, the generators have malfunctioned and valuable life support has been cut off. Also, the city's water supply is contaminated and much of the food in the city is unfit for consumption. Many more could become ill from the stagnant water, from the mosquitoes that carry the West Nile virus and from other diseases resulting from the contaminated water supply.

Loss of life could be averted

The doomsday scenario given by forecasters did not have to be as deadly as predicted.

Many in the big business-controlled

media claim that the city of New Orleans was spared by the change of direction of the storm and that things could have been worse. However, had the city taken proper preparations, the loss of life, and the still potential loss of life, would have been averted.

The residents of the hard-hit areas were told to evacuate, but the city was not mobilized to evacuate. What's more, part of the reason for the doomsday scenario is because of the receding coastal marsh and barrier islands. The south of Louisiana loses about 24 miles of coastal marsh a year. The loss of the marsh and barrier islands, which slows down storms, means that every hurricane that hits southern Louisiana could cause massive damage and loss of life.

A coastal restoration project was earmarked at \$14 billion dollars, but the Bush administration put pressure on the state to lower the cost to \$1.2 billion dollars; as of yet, only \$375 million has been allocated.

In addition, the National Guard, which is usually mobilized for natural occurrences, has been depleted and demoralized by the Bush administration's growing imperialist disasters in Iraq and Afghanistan.

One could contrast the preparedness of socialist Cuba with that of the United States. Cuba—a resource poor country—spares nothing when it comes to moving people from the path of tropical storms, hurricanes and other natural occurrences. This year, Cuba was hit by Hurricane Dennis, a category 4 hurricane. Cuba, through mobilizing the Committees for the Defense of the Revolution and the popular army, and by being prepared to meet the needs of the Cuban people, was able to evacuate 1.5 million people.

Hurricane Dennis hit the island, sweeping through Havana, and though 16 peo-

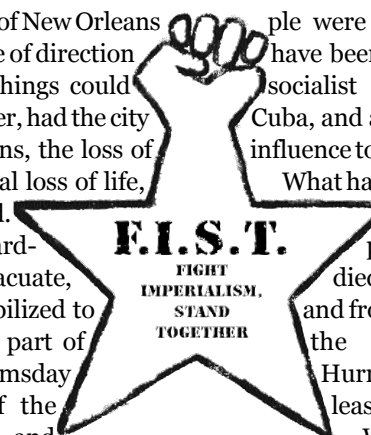
ple were killed, the number would have been higher were it not for the socialist response of revolutionary Cuba, and a head of state who uses his influence to mobilize the Cuban people.

What happened in Cuba is markedly different from what happened in Haiti, where scores died from Hurricane Dennis, and from the United States, where the number of dead from Hurricane Katrina is already at least 100.

While this hurricane ravaged, President Bush was on vacation on his ranch in Crawford, Texas, itself deluged—but by activists galvanized by the courage of Cindy Sheehan, and in opposition to the brutal war in Iraq.

Nature cannot be stopped, but it doesn't have to spell wholesale death. Hundreds of billions of dollars a year are authorized for the Pentagon, and hundreds of billions more have been spent in Iraq and Afghanistan. A fraction of this money could have saved the lives of the people that live on and near the Gulf Coast. In the richest, most technologically advanced country in the world, there is no reason that every person could not have been evacuated and placed in shelters.

That storms do come is no mystery. They come every year around this time. And, it is no mystery what has to be done to spare those in the path of hurricanes. Society has to be organized around the needs of the many, and that will never happen under capitalism, but only by the overthrow of the capitalists and through building socialism. Under socialism the masses can be organized and a socialist state apparatus set up to plan the economy and use valuable resources to provide for countries' needs, and to oversee massive efforts like evacuations. □



Cartas de solidaridad no solucionan nada

Ruptura en la organización laboral favorece los ataques anti-sindicales

Por Milt Neidenberg

Después de la ruptura en la AFL-CIO, el liderazgo de los dos sectores sindicales rivales ha estado trabajando extra para consolidar sus bases. Ambas agrupaciones, la AFL-CIO y la Coalición Cambiar para Ganar (Change to Win Coalition), han estado diciendo a su respectiva membresía que quieren la unidad. Pero están operando de una manera divisiva y hostil, ignorando la necesidad de l@s trabajador@s y las nacionalidades oprimidas de una lucha independiente y de la unidad de clase.

Después de la defeción de la Unión Internacional de Empleados de Servicio (SEIU) y los otros sindicatos, el Concilio Ejecutivo decidió en su convención que los sindicatos desasociados no podían quedarse en los concilios locales laborales ni en las federaciones estatales.

El presidente de la AFL-CIO John Sweeney, dijo que la constitución de la AFL-CIO requería esta decisión. Él les dijo a l@s delegad@s a la convención que los concilios centrales laborales y las federaciones estatales ya no podrían aceptar las cuotas—pagos por miembr@s—de los sindicatos desasociados. Y decidió que los sindicatos desasociados no podrían estar representados por delegad@s u oficiales en las organizaciones locales o estatales.

La burocracia de la AFL-CIO ya se ha retirado de esa posición. Ellos ahora han propuesto “Cartas de Solidaridad” para persuadir a los sindicatos locales de Cambiar para Ganar en los concilios centrales laborales y en las federaciones estatales a que vuelvan a la AFL-CIO.

Después de las defeciones del SEIU y los Tronquistas, los Trabajadores Unidos del Alimento y el Comercio (United Food and Commercial Workers) también se han desasociado de la AFL-CIO. La AFL-CIO calcula que la pérdida de estos tres grandes sindicatos le costará cerca de \$28 millones—de un presupuesto de aproxi-

madamente \$120 millones—y más de 4 millones de sus 13 millones de miembr@s.

El Sindicato de Empleados de la Costura, Industriales y Textiles/ Empleados de Hoteles y Restaurantes—UNITE HERE—y la Internacional de Obreros también boicotearon la convención de la AFL-CIO. Los dos sindicatos amenazaron irse de la AFL-CIO.

El sindicato de Trabajadores Agrícolas Unidos (United Farm Workers) decidió quedarse en la AFL-CIO. El sindicato de Carpinteros no está afiliado a la AFL-CIO.

Sería un desastre a echar a los sindicatos de Cambiar para Ganar fuera de los concilios locales y las federaciones estatales.

Antes de que se terminara la convención de la AFL-CIO, el Consejo Ejecutivo designó a unos cuantos líderes para tratar de mitigar este posible desastre.

Ellos establecieron un comité para revisar la constitución.

Con la aprobación de la junta, Sweeney ahora ha establecido “Cartas de Solidaridad”. Ellas están encargadas de revisar la constitución nacional, permitiendo a los sindicatos locales desasociados a quedarse en los concilios centrales laborales y en las federaciones estatales de la AFL-CIO.

Pero las Cartas de Solidaridad crean una calidad de miembr@s de segunda clase, y están llenas de líos burocráticos.

El primer lío

Según la AFL-CIO: “Si un sindicato local de un sindicato desasociado quiere ser parte de un movimiento local unido en su ciudad y estado, puede solicitar ser parte del concilio central laboral o de la federación estatal.

“El sindicato local pagaría una remuneración de solidaridad del 10 por ciento al concilio laboral o a la federación estatal para ayudar en la compensación del costo de servicios y sistemas de movilización suministrado por la AFL-CIO nacional y apoyado por sus sindicatos afiliados.”

El pago del 10 por ciento sería además de las cuotas que cada miembr@ del sindicato pagó al concilio central laboral y a la federación estatal antes de la ruptura.

El segundo lío

L@s miembr@s que se asocien a las Cartas de Solidaridad tendrán que quedarse en los concilios centrales laborales y en las federaciones estatales hasta el fin del año 2006. Y tendrán que participar plenamente en la política local.

Esto es una referencia obvia a las elecciones congresionales de 2006.

Esta es una maniobra arrogante para conseguir la ayuda de los sindicatos locales de la Coalición Cambiar para Ganar—SEIU, UFCW, los Tronquistas, y los Carpinteros—para financiar a los políticos capitalistas respaldados por la AFL-CIO.

El tercer lío

L@s miembr@s de un sindicato con Carta de Solidaridad no pueden tener puestos en el concilio laboral ni en la federación estatal. L@s individuos que ya estén ocupando puestos solamente podrán terminar sus plazos.

Inmediatamente, Anna Burger, presidenta de la Coalición Cambiar para Ganar, denunció todo el plan para crear Cartas de Solidaridad. Ella las llamó divisivas, diciendo “La AFL-CIO ha tomado una posición que usa retórica de unidad pero está diseñada para proveer divisiones innecesarias.”

Ella acusó a la AFL-CIO de usar un lenguaje que contiene “provisiones de letra diminuta que son píldoras venenosas,” incluyendo “pagos discriminatorios” [y] “una prohibición de participar en el liderazgo local y estatal a los sindicatos desasociados.”

La ruptura estimula el apetito del gobierno

Desgraciadamente, mientras que la retórica fraccional se calienta, los líderes de las juntas locales y estatales se quedan esperando hasta tanto las jerarquías de las dos facciones sindicales planeen su próximo paso.

La Coalición Cambiar para Ganar tendrá su convención de fundación en Cincinnati a fines de septiembre. Al tiempo en que Wall Street, la “América” corporativa y el gobierno están descargando su crisis global y nacional en las espaldas de l@s trabajador@s y oprimid@s, el fraccionalismo promulgado por los líderes de los sindicatos no podría haber surgido en peor tiempo.

La ruptura de la Coalición Cambiar para Ganar con la AFL-CIO y el plan burocrático de Sweeney para formar Cartas de Solidaridad solo va a estimular los apetitos de la clase gobernante y del gobierno.

Como subrayó un titular en el periódico Wall Street Journal del 11 de agosto, justo dos semanas después de la ruptura en la AFL-CIO, tres gobernadores Republicanos— en Missouri, Indiana y Maryland—fomentaron ataques contra los sindicatos del sector público.

El Journal reportó: “El gobernador de Missouri, Matt Blunt, que sirve en esa función por primera vez, rescindió los derechos de negociación colectiva de los trabajadores estatales. ... El gobernador de Indiana, Mitch Daniels, que era director de presupuesto de la Casa Blanca de Bush, derogó una orden ejecutiva que por 15 años dio derechos de negociación colectiva a los trabajadores públicos del estado. Y el gobernador de Maryland, respaldado por la Corte Suprema del estado, suspendió un aumento de salario del 2 por ciento que fue negociado por los sindicatos para los trabajadores estatales con su predecesor.”

El Journal se deleitó en “el resentimiento entre AFSCME y los sindicatos que recientemente se desafilieron de la AFL-CIO—incluyendo la Unión Internacional de Empleados de Servicio (SEIU) que tiene una cantidad significativa de trabajadores públicos.”

La alegría del gobierno puede ser de breve duración. Este portavoz de la clase gobernante no tiene ni idea de lo que están pensando las bases de los sindicatos—aquell@s que trabajan junt@s para proveer los servicios públicos para millones de trabajador@s y pobres y que mantienen la infraestructura que está en estado de deterioro. El trabajo l@ ha unido—afroamericano@s, blanc@s, latin@s, asiático@s

Pero, está dolorosamente claro que mientras la AFL-CIO y la Coalición Cambiar para Ganar peleen, el potencial para la unidad estará sumergido.

Los líderes de las dos facciones están en un curso destructivo y divisivo.

Ellos no muestran una visión en cuanto a lo que se requiere para reavivar el movimiento laboral y fomentar la unidad en los concilios centrales laborales y las federaciones estatales.

El comportamiento burocrático de detenerse en pequeñeces sobre estructura y dinero, que terminó en la ruptura en la AFL-CIO, no sirve para responder a los ataques continuos contra los sindicatos laborales.

Entre la membresía de base plurinacional de las dos facciones hay un residuo de buena voluntad. Ha trabajado junta por décadas en tiempos buenos y malos. Es en los concilios locales y en las federaciones estatales que la mayor parte del apoyo para huelgas y otras formas de lucha se organiza. Estos cuerpos podrían ser la base estructural de una lucha de la membresía multinacional para responder a la ruptura y los ataques anti-sindicales.

L@s trabajador@s públic@s son una fuente de fuerza y recursos para luchar contra el golpe contra sus sindicatos. Aproximadamente un@ de cada tres de l@s 5 millones de trabajador@s del gobierno estatal en este país está representad@ por un sindicato.

AFSCME tiene más miembr@s que cualquier otro sindicato en la AFL-CIO, aún antes de la ruptura. Unido a la fuerza numérica del SEIU que también ha organizado a trabajador@s del sector público, esta fuerza poderosa podría enfrentarse a los ataques contra los trabajadores públicos.

Esta unidad reforzaría al nivel estructural de apoyo establecido en los concilios laborales y en las federaciones estatales. Vendría desde abajo hacia arriba, incluiría a los dos sectores de trabajador@s, el público y el privado, y sería nacional en su visión y enmarcada en la lucha.

Va a requerir reagruparse, un concilio de líderes que vienen de la base, para implementar esta visión de lucha en medio de la guerra de clase.

El sistema capitalista de explotación, opresión nacional, y guerra imperialista estimulará la necesidad de resistir. Emergiendo desde abajo—de la fuerza laboral multinacional, de mujeres y nacionalidades oprimidas y unida al movimiento contra la guerra y otros—ahí está la energía y la voluntad para construir este frente unido. Debe ir adelante. □

