

MUNDO OBRERO

Fatalidad en carcel 12

'Polvo venenoso' 12

Alito EDITORIAL 12



PUERTO RICO

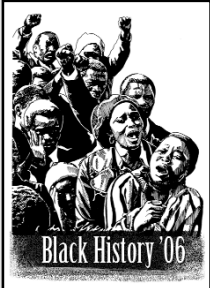
Hit by FBI terror 8

Bankruptcy or pension theft?

4

Racist child abuse in Brockton, Mass.

5



MUMIA ABU-JAMAL

on Paul Washington 3

MALCOLM X

His evolution 3



3

TONY VAN DER MEER

Prospects for liberation 2

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Homeland Security let New Orleans drown Katrina survivors still face hardship

By LeiLani Dowell

While Congressional and Senate investigations expose the bungling of federal and local authorities in the immediate aftermath of Katrina, current-day negligence has led to more despair—and resistance—by Katrina survivors.

The draft of a report by an all-Republican committee on Feb. 12 called the government response to Katrina a “national failure... of initiative.” The draft notes predictions about the storm that went unheeded for up to 24 hours, the lack of preparation to evacuate people from the area, and the dismissal of a report that a major levee had been breached. The draft goes on to say that “At every level—individual, corporate, philanthropic and governmental—we failed to meet the challenge that was Katrina. In this cautionary tale, all the little pigs built houses of straw.”

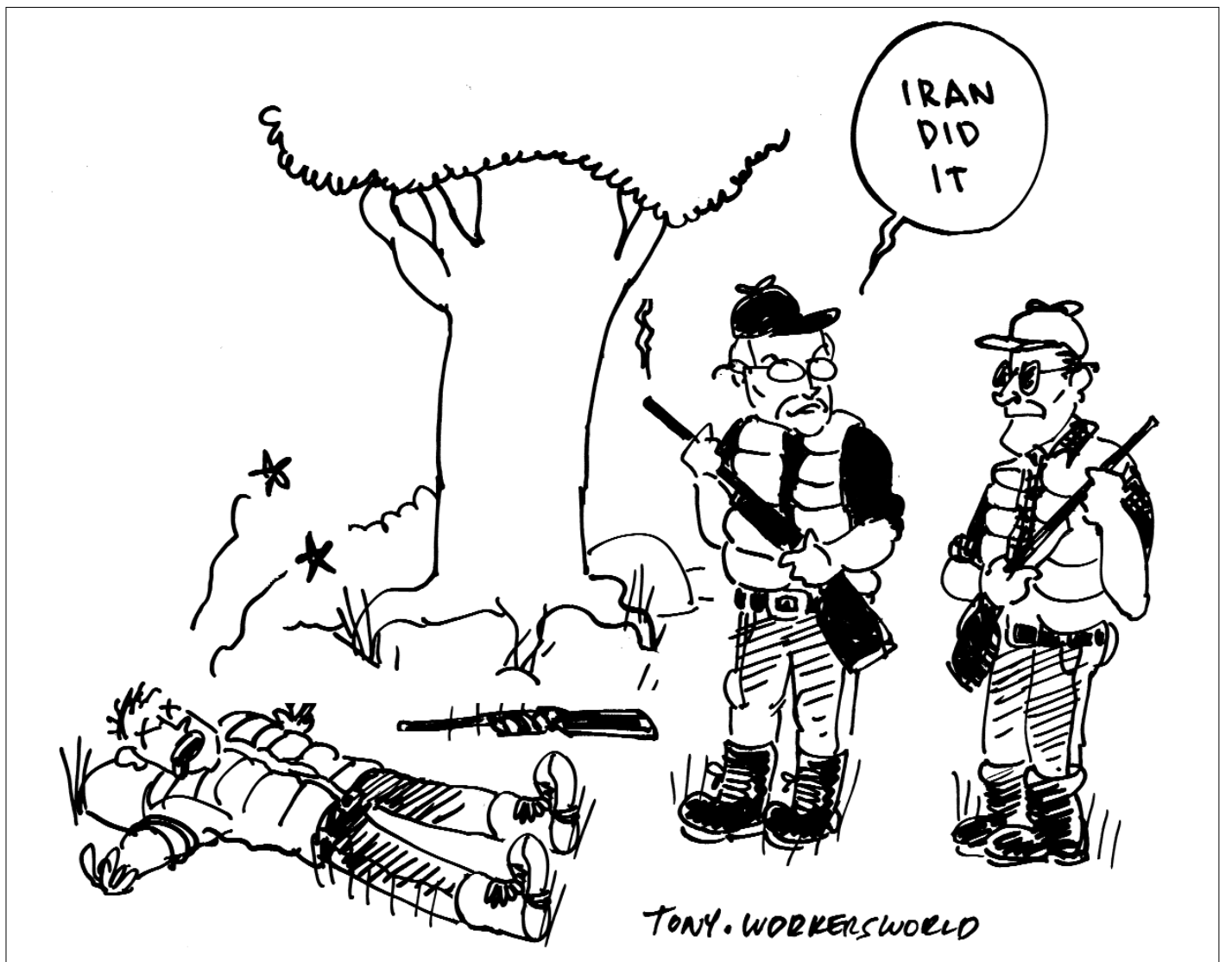
Meanwhile, Senate hearings on the same issue continue. On Feb. 10, fired and disgraced former FEMA head Michael Brown testified. The New York Times reports, “Mr. Brown said that he told a senior White House official early on of the New Orleans flooding, and that the administration was too focused on terrorism to respond properly to natural disasters.” And on Feb. 15, Homeland Security Secretary Michael Chertoff faced the committee. Senators questioned, among other things, why he decided to travel to Atlanta to attend a conference unrelated to Katrina the day after the storm struck.

What is conspicuously absent from media reports about these two investigations is inquiry into current neglect. In response to the draft report, a White House spokesperson told the New York Times that “President Bush was now focused on the future.” However, this does not seem to translate to relief for Katrina survivors. On Feb. 7 about 4,500 survivors across the country were told to evacuate their hotel rooms because the Federal Emergency Management Agency would no longer be paying for their hotel stays. The rest—occupants of at least 20,000 hotel rooms, according to the Associated Press, were given extensions of only one to three weeks. A judge on Feb. 13 upheld FEMA’s decision to drop survivors from the program.

Protests were held across the country to denounce the evictions. In New York survivors, with the support of legal advocates and solidarity activists, have won a reprieve on their eviction from hotels in the city. Using a city law stating that legal evictions must be done through court proceedings and by court order, 17 families at the Radisson won an indefinite stay on their eviction. Armed with that victory, activists on Feb. 13 went to hotels across the city to distribute legal fact sheets to let survivors know their rights, while legal aid lawyers filed the same motion won at the Radisson to extend to all the hotels.

While evictions continue across the country, leaving many with no place to go, FEMA trailers continue to sit unused.

Continued on page 10



Denmark's racist cartoons
EDITORIAL
10

MUNICH-1972
Dreamworks v. reality
11

U.S. militarism threatens:
IRAN 7
LATIN AMERICA 9

Boston professor & activist on Prospects for Black liberation

In April 2003 Tony Van Der Meer, a Black professor of Africana studies at UMass Boston, was assaulted and arrested by campus police after challenging an Army National Guard recruiter who threatened a student distributing leaflets for an anti-war commemoration honoring Dr. Martin Luther King. Van Der Meer objected to the recruiter's cruel remark that the student should be shot like Dr. King.



WW PHOTO: LIZ GREEN

Van Der Meer tried to mediate the tense situation, but five officers physically assaulted him and arrested him for "disorderly conduct" and other trumped-up charges. After an eight-month community support campaign, all charges against Van Der Meer were dropped in December 2003. Presently litigation against the parties guilty of assaulting and violating Van Der Meer's civil and human rights is pending.

Black liberation fighter, Assata Shakur, wrote the introduction to "State of the Race," an anthology on the Afro-Cuba diaspora that Van Der Meer and Jemadari Kamara co-authored. Shakur has been exiled in Cuba for over two decades after being incarcerated in New Jersey as a political prisoner.

Van Der Meer is co-chair of the Rosa Parks Human Rights Day Committee in Boston which sponsored a major anti-war, anti-racist march and rally on Dec. 1 marking the 50th anniversary of Parks' refusal to give up her seat to a white man on a segregated bus in Montgomery, Alabama. Parks' action launched a year-long bus boycott of 40,000 mainly Black people on Dec. 5, 1955 which ended this Jim Crow practice. The RPHRDC is now mobilizing for a "Bring the Troops Home Now! protest in Boston for March 18, the third anniversary of the Iraq war.

Following are excerpts from part three of an interview with Van Der Meer conducted by Bryan Pfeifer of the Boston WW bureau during December 2005. Go to the Black History Month section of workers.org to read parts one and two.

WW: Will the RPHRDC continue after Dec. 1?

Van Der Meer: Yes. We will continue to raise the issues put forth in terms of justice for Katrina survivors, jobs, a living wage and money for healthcare and education, to cut the military budget and bring the troops home. As long as those issues exist the coalition should exist.

Would you comment on the connection in 1955 and that period generally between the African anti-colonial liberation movements and others in Asia, Latin America and elsewhere, but specifically the effect of the African anti-colonial struggles on the civil rights movement and Black liberation movements in the U.S.?

When you look at the struggles here in relationship to anti-colonial struggles in Africa there was a kind of reciprocal relationship. It created a sense of internationalism that has been undermined by others in terms of the Black liberation movement.

The Black liberation movement has been looked upon as being some form of narrow nationalism. More particularly some white left forces haven't seen the broadness in what the Black liberation movement had done in terms of having an internationalist perspective in that regard. When I think of that period I think of people like Robert F. Williams, Malcolm X, organizations like Revolutionary Action Movement and the relations they had with Cuba, Africa and China. Williams was basically an ambassador for us to Cuba. There's a film in which there are pictures of Williams going throughout China, Africa, Cuba and Vietnam. So there was this broad internationalist view of oppression around the globe.

Trying to broaden respect for peoples' right to self-determination within the world and trying to deal with oppression is something that is starting to happen now. The emergence of the realignment of the Black liberation movement is very important and it has the experiences and the lessons that the broader movement can learn from within an internationalist context.

We're in a new period where we have to begin to frame this in a theoretical form but within the context of struggle and practice. This is what's important because the regular people are workers and even those advanced sector of workers can develop theories from their own practice.

We're going to a new phase and if we can excite these young people out here we can engage in a protracted struggle. It's about power and to be able to determine what kind of society that we want and not expect the answer is to get Black people or Cape Verdean people or Haitian people or Spanish-speaking or Afro-Latin@ into positions that white people running society are doing. It's about trying to change the structure of the society. This is what Dr. King said, that there had to be economic and political structural changes in the society. □



Millions More Movement D.C. rally Oct. 15.

WW PHOTO: MONICA MOOREHEAD

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This week ...

★ In the U.S.

- Katrina survivors still face hardships 1
- Prospects for Black liberation 2
- A tribute to Malcolm X 3
- Revolutionary 'music of the spirit' 3
- Mumia on Paul Washington 3
- WCI Steel bankruptcy 4
- Legal, safe abortions already hard to find 4
- Schools guilty of racist child abuse 5
- EPA, Whitman blasted for lies about 9/11 air 5
- Los Angeles Black History Month 5
- Boston prepares for March 18 rally 6
- Immigrant march arrives in Atlanta 9
- Are humans naturally greedy? 10

★ Around the world

- Iraq resistance still growing 6
- U.S. threatens military action against Iran 7
- NYC meeting defends Iran 7
- FBI raids homes of independentistas 8
- Haiti's poor say Aristide ally Préval won 8
- Pentagon quietly builds up Latin American bases 9
- Report from Caracas 9
- Munich 1972: What Spielberg left out 11
- Munich 1972: How WWP responded 11

★ Editorials

- Denmark's racist cartoons 10

★ Noticias En Español

- Fatalidad en cárcel expone condiciones inhumanas 12
- 'Polvo venenoso' ahora en DVD 12
- Aceptando a Alito 12

WW CALENDAR

LOS ANGELES

Sat., Feb. 18
Eyewitness report and video from the World Social Forum held in Caracas, Venezuela by John Parker, West Coast coordinator of International Action Center. 4-6 p.m. At 5274 W. Pico Blvd #203. For info (323) 936-7266.

Thu., Feb. 23
IAC filmshowing: Paul Robeson: Here I Stand. 7 p.m. At 5274 W. Pico Blvd #203. For info (323) 936-7266.

NEW YORK

Fri., Feb. 15
Workers World Party Forum: The State of Black Youth in the United States. Speaker: LeiLani Dowell, FIST/Fight Imperialism, Stand

Together youth group. 7 p.m. (Dinner at 6:30)
At 55 W. 17 St., 5th Fl., Manhattan. For info phone (212) 627-2994.

Thu., Feb. 23
Workers World Party Forum: Katrina: The struggle for justice 5 months later. Also, A tribute to Malcolm X. Speakers: Brenda Stokely, Million Worker March Movement, NY Solidarity Katrina-Rita Coalition; Larry Holmes, WWP, Troops Out Now Coalition; Imani Henry, playwright/performer, WWP; Gloria Verdieu, International Action Center. 6:30 p.m. (Dinner at 6 p.m.)
At 55 W. 17 St., 5th Fl., Manhattan. For info phone (212) 627-2994.

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The evolution of Malcolm X

By Larry Hales

"It is incorrect to classify the revolt of the Negro as simply a racial conflict of Black against White, or as a purely American problem. Rather, we are today seeing a global rebellion of the oppressed against the oppressor, the exploited against the exploiter."

Malcolm X spoke these words on Feb. 18, 1965 at Barnard College in New York, three days before he was assassinated at the Audubon Ballroom in Harlem. He was clearly developing a world view of the struggle compared to when he first gained prominence within the Nation of Islam.

He had always supported the Black liberation struggle which included holding fundraisers during the early days of the civil rights movement for the Monroe NAACP, which came under governmental attack for arming itself against white supremacists and crony racist cops in Monroe, N.C. Robert Williams, a Black revolutionary, was a leader of this NAACP chapter. The documentary "Negroes with Guns" chronicles his pioneer role in advocating armed self-defense for Black people facing racist repression.

The government and big business tried to discredit Malcolm X by portraying him as being violent. However, Malcolm would take every opportunity to expose the brutal and reactionary tendencies of the ruling class, its government and repressive forces—whether legal or illegal.

He once remarked, "...But also I'm a realist. The only people in this country who are asked to be nonviolent are Black people. I've never heard anybody go to the Ku Klux Klan and teach them nonviolence,

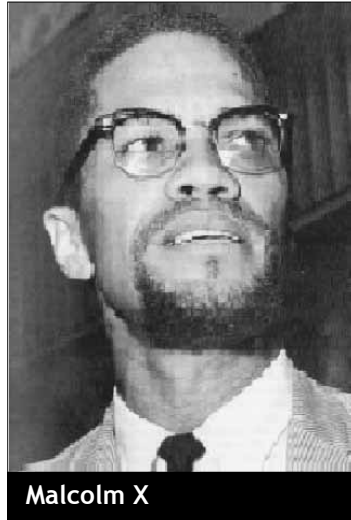
or to the (John) Birch Society and other right-wing elements. Non-violence is only preached to Black Americans, and I don't go along with anyone who wants to teach our people nonviolence until someone at that time is teaching our enemy to be nonviolent."

In his last year of life, Malcolm X traveled extensively, through North and Western Africa, the Middle East, France and England. His travels brought him to the conclusion that the struggle for civil rights should be extended to the struggle for human rights and tied to liberation struggles around the world.

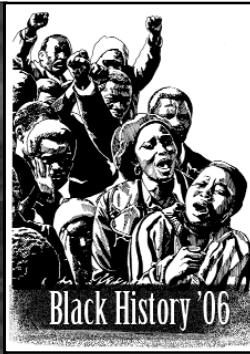
Malcolm was beginning to link racism to capitalism and see that, just as oppressed nationalities determine their struggle against the oppressing class, there was a much larger, multi-national working class struggling against the capitalist rulers.

He was also becoming an internationalist and was seeking to unite the struggle of Blacks in this country to the African liberation struggles, and the struggles of the entire Black diaspora.

Malcolm commented, "I used to define Black nationalism as the idea that the Black man should control his community, and so forth. But when I was in Africa in May, in Ghana, I was speaking with the Algerian ambassador who is extremely militant and is a revolutionary in the true sense of the word and has credentials as such for having carried on a successful



Malcolm X



GRAPHIC: SAHU BARRON

revolution against oppression in his country."

"When I told him that my political, social, and economic philosophy was Black nationalism, he asked me very frankly: Well, where did that leave him? Because he was white. He was an African, but he was Algerian, and to all appearances, he was a white man. And he said if I define my objective as the victory of Black nationalism, where does that leave him? Where does that leave revolutionaries in Morocco, Egypt, Iraq, Mauritania? So he showed me where I was alienating people who were true revolutionaries dedicated to overturning the system of exploitation that exists on this earth by any means necessary.

"I'm against every form of discrimination. I believe in human beings, and that all human beings should be respected as such, regardless of their color....As the nations of the world free themselves, then capitalism has less victims, less to suck, and it becomes weaker. It's only a matter of time in my opinion before it will collapse completely." □

JAZZ

REVOLUTIONARY 'MUSIC OF THE SPIRIT'

By Larry Hales

There was a legend born in the South about meeting the devil at the crossroads. Two well known blues musicians, Tommy Johnson, who wrote "Canned Heat Blues," and the more famous Robert Johnson, summed up the legend this way: a person comes to a fork in the road and in between the two diverging paths is a man that you hand your instrument to, he will then play a few chords, hand the instrument back to you, and then you'll be a master.

The devil is a mythical creation of religion, but in reality there are evils inherent within capitalist society and the ruling class that exploit workers and the poor, pit workers against one another—all for profit—and give only concessions to appease workers and the poor to stave off a revolution.

Culture is a reflection of human movements and along with resisting racism, poverty and degradation, Black people were also able to create music of clarified beauty. Just as capitalism hastens its own demise, culture mirrors the struggles that continue to develop.

Essentially, the history of slavery, oppression and of the African-American struggle led to the beautiful utterances of "Sorrow Songs" and the blues that led to jazz music. Blacks gained access to instruments and were able to take the same passion expressed in field hollers and the vocal blues tradition to another level with jazz.

Classical jazz became popular in the early 1900s especially in New Orleans, home to the incomparable Louis Armstrong. How ironic it is that the cul-



Consuela Lee, left, standing next to collage in her honor at Rosa Parks Museum in Montgomery, Ala., Dec. 5, 2005. John Coltrane, above.

ture of New Orleans, mostly established by the Black inhabitants, is now being exploited by the local ruling elite to rebuild the city after Hurricane Katrina without the people that gave New Orleans a big part of its rich culture.

New Orleans was pegged the "Big Easy" because Black musicians found it relatively easy to find music gigs. Many of these musicians were not formally trained, but were able to hone their talent and make a living through their passion for the music.

"Jazz is a music of the spirit. The man's singing exemplified an undaunted spirit, impeccable intonation and rhythmic perception, as well as improvisational gifts—all essential ingredients for aspiring jazz players to possess," wrote jazz pianist, composer and member of the Alabama Jazz Hall of Fame, Consuela Lee, about a conversation she had with students after playing a song of an elderly Black man singing during a class on jazz she was teaching. (Workers World, Feb. 22, 2001)

There were so many great jazz artists who were influenced by the Black movements of their eras. Perhaps no other musician has become as symbolic of the times in which he lived than the legendary saxophonist John Coltrane.

When asked about the song he composed, "Alabama," and why he named it such, Coltrane responded, "It represents, musically, something that I saw down there translated into music from inside me." Some refer to the song as melancholy, but its crescendo at the end, along with rolling drum beats, reflects how deeply the 1963 Birmingham church bombing that murdered four Black girls impacted Coltrane.

"Trane" could hold a note like no other and stretch it to its sinews, and in this he displayed one of his strengths. His defiance in his creations and interpretations demonstrates the resolve of a people.

Jazz more than anything has come to epitomize the resilience and resistance of Black people. As jazz came into its own with improvisation, smashing forms, and existing in a place where one could be free to interpret at a moment's notice, it was depicting the tenuous nature of living in capitalist North American society of which racism is endemic.

McCoy Tyner, a pianist who played on Coltrane's seminal album, "A Love Supreme," summed up what jazz means to Black culture this way: "They want to play the music; we have to play the music." □

From Mumia Abu-Jamal on death row

Father Paul Washington remembered

Excerpted from a Jan. 26 audio column.

To think of Fr. Paul Washington is, in many ways, to think of the many radical and revolutionary movements that have swept through Black Philadelphia for a half a century. For, no matter the movement, they found a place of refuge behind the brownstone walls of the Church of the Advocate. Fr. Paul Washington opened his arms, his heart, and his church to activists from many movements.

His 1994 autobiography, "Other Sheep I Have," is as such a story of his life and upbringing, as it is a record of struggles, large and small, popular and unpopular, that moved him to play a role.

He tells us of the struggle of the national and local Black Economic Development Conference (BEDC), a group of Black veterans of the Southern freedom movement, who demanded reparations from rich, white church denominations in the North. He met and worked with the late civil rights activist, student activist, mayoral candidate and later law professor, Muhammad Kenyatta, when "Mo" was a 25-year-old Baptist preacher. Fr. Paul would say of him, "He had great charm and gift of persuasion the likes of which I had never experienced before." [p. 33]

Before long, other groups would make their way to him, and like a station on the Underground Railroad, no one would be turned away.

The 1968 Black Power conference would attract young folks from across the country to his church. In 1970, the local and national Black Panther Party would call his church home for several weeks. It would become meeting place, press office, mess hall, sleeping quarters and office.

When Chicago Panther officers Fred Hampton and Mark Clark were murdered by a police/FBI death squad on Dec. 4, 1969 (Fred in his bed!), Fr. Paul would open the church for mourners some ten days later, and 1,000 people would brave the December cold and the state's aura of fear to attend this memorial to the slain Panthers.

Fr. Paul loved his people; not just members of his church; not just folks from Diamond Street; he loved his people; his 'other sheep' like Ramona Africa, the sole adult survivor of the Mother's Day massacre of May 13, 1985 when police bombed the MOVE Home in West Philadelphia, killing 11 men, women and children.

I think this act of state murder reminded him of the assassination of Fred Hampton so many years before. But, in a real sense, this was worse for these were babies!

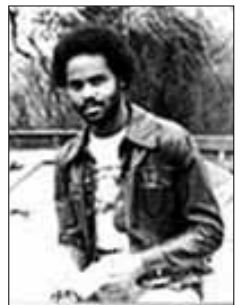
Fr. Paul Washington spoke out eloquently and often, a prophet in life's wilderness. At a time when most wealthy, well-known Black preachers were praying for the mayor, Fr. Paul was on the side of the bombed, not the bombers!

His church became a lighthouse of liberation and marked the ordination of women as priests in the Episcopal church.

For Fr. Paul, it was just another case of 'other sheep'; the poor, the dispossessed, the oppressed, women, gays, the distraught; 'other sheep' who knew he was on their side.

It is many of us who have filled the pews in his memory, just 'other sheep,' like you and me who knew he was with us.

Go to prisonradio.org to hear this audio column in its entirety and other Mumia columns.



Mumia, above, was minister of information for the Black Panther Party at 16, president of the Philadelphia Society of Black Journalists at 25. Today, Mumia is a wrongly convicted political prisoner held for 24 years on Pennsylvania's death row.

WCI Steel bankruptcy robs workers' pensions

By Brenda Ryan

Can you imagine the U.S. government swooping in and confiscating a millionaire's mansion to pay the pensions of retired workers?

Not under capitalism, of course. But a recent New York Times article suggests a government agency may do just that to protect the pension fund of WCI Steel, an Ohio steel maker that's been in Chapter 11 bankruptcy since 2003.

While the Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation (PBGC)—the government agency that insures pension plans—wants a role in deciding WCI's fate, it doesn't have the steelworkers' best interests at heart. It's hard to figure out from media reports how the workers and retirees are faring in the battle to reorganize the company. But it's worth unraveling the tangled tale.

This is an episode in a bigger story about the widespread campaign of corporations like United Air Lines, Delphi Automotive Systems and Bethlehem Steel to use bankruptcy to steal workers' pensions.

Since WCI went bankrupt, two capitalist vultures have been circling around the company, maneuvering to get control of it: WCI's parent company, the Renco Group, and a group of Wall Street bankers.

Ira Rennert, a market speculator who became rich buying up distressed companies, founded the Renco Group. Rennert used WCI as collateral to borrow money from the Wall Street bankers, who became WCI's primary creditors when the company went bankrupt. Rennert and the bankers have put forth competing plans to reorganize WCI, both of which center around the pension fund. After robbing the pension fund, Renco now claims it can cover the fund's shortfall.

PBGC says the pension plan is \$117 million short of what it needs to pay benefits to about 2,000 workers and retirees. While the bankers initially agreed to fund the pension plan they reversed themselves and instead proposed putting the plan into a shell company—which is simply a way to dump the fund. They hope to leave it at the feet of PBGC. As of Feb. 7, the bankruptcy judge had not ruled whether she would accept the bankers' plan.

That's where the PBGC comes in. On Feb. 3, a few days before the bankruptcy judge was to consider the bankers' reorganization plan, PBGC filed suit to block the plan to be able to go after Renco's assets to cover the pension shortfall. The Times reported in a Feb. 3 article that these assets include a 29-bedroom oceanfront estate Rennert owns in the exclusive

Hamptons neighborhood on Long Island, N.Y., valued at \$185 million.

The PBGC is no savior though. Even if it gets equity from Rennert's property the money will go into its coffers rather than to the retirees. PBGC is billions of dollars in debt and will only give retirees a certain percentage of what they are owed. And as more and more companies dump their pensions, PBGC will be saddled with greater liabilities and pay retirees less and less of this percentage.

Disillusioned with Renco, the steelworkers union sided with the Wall Street bankers. That's a risky move. There is no guarantee that the workers will get their pension money back.

Workers need to take control

The maneuverings of the banks, Renco and PBGC show how crucial it is for workers to take control when the company that employs them goes bankrupt. They must demand to be recognized as the primary creditors and appoint a trustee to run the company and protect their equity.

The workers are the true owners of WCI. It is their sweat and decades of toil in heat, smoke and soot that created the company's wealth. It's too late for the workers to file as creditors in WCI's bankruptcy. But they can organize and estab-

lish alliances with the hundreds of thousands of other workers who are fighting to keep their wages, health benefits and pensions.

While corporations like United Airlines, Delta Air Lines and Delphi use the bankruptcy courts to get out of paying their pension obligations, other companies have started doing so directly, without declaring bankruptcy. IBM Corp. announced last month that it plans to freeze its pension fund for its 125,000 workers in 2008 and push them into 401k plans. And Alcoa Inc., the world's largest aluminum company, said its new salaried employees would not receive traditional pensions.

Corporations originally set up pensions as a way to reduce workers' paychecks. Pensions are deferred wages. Workers were willing to make the sacrifice and delay getting this pay in order to obtain some security in their older years. Now the brutal hand of capitalism wants to snatch away this hard-earned pay.

Workers everywhere cannot rely on one wing of the capitalist class to soften the blow. Nor, given the Democratic Party's do-nothing record on this issue, can they rely on the Democrats. The workers must join together and fight to take back what belongs to them. □

Supreme Court test due

Legal, safe abortions already hard to find

By Sue Davis

The Supreme Court is due to hear arguments on Feb. 17 about the legality of the ban on the intact dilation and extraction abortion procedure (misnamed "partial-birth abortion") that President Bush signed in 2003. This will be the first abortion case before the court since right-winger Samuel Alito joined it. The court will issue its ruling in the spring.

The 9th Circuit Court of Appeals in San Francisco ruled the ban illegal on Jan. 31 because it failed to include an adequate exemption to protect pregnant women's health. Courts in the 2nd circuit in New York and the 8th circuit in St. Louis had previously issued similar rulings, which the U.S. attorney general has appealed.

Amid much speculation about how the court will rule with two new rightist justices—John Roberts and Alito—it's important to note that in 2000 the court voted 5 to 4 that the ban was illegal precisely because it failed to provide protection for women's health. By signing the 2003 bill without the needed protection, Bush thumbed his nose at the 2000 ruling.

He smugly assumed that by the time the identically worded ban came before the court, he would have appointed anti-abortion justices.

This case is a litmus test for Bush, the Republican Party and all their misogynous, reactionary, holier-than-thou followers who seek to overturn the Roe v. Wade decision legalizing abortion in 1973. Already legislatures in five states—Kansas, South Dakota, Georgia, Ohio and Tennessee—are considering laws outlawing abortion.

'Bad old days' are back

Dire predictions in the corporate press that overturning Roe v. Wade will send women back to the "bad old days of back-alley abortions" don't take into account that the bad old days are already here for millions of women.

Legal abortion doesn't really exist for many poor, young, rural women, who are disproportionately African American and Latina. Laws in 32 states requiring parental consent restrict these women's rights. Often the only education they receive in school about sex is abstinence-only misinformation. And they're vulnerable to the growing social pressure stigmatizing women who seek abortions.

Young women also lack access to affordable, needed health care and birth control.

The cost of an abortion—around \$380 for the past 20 years—is out of reach for most teens or a single mother working for the \$5.15 minimum wage. The need for many abortions could be averted if women could buy emergency contraception over the counter. This alternative is now available only with a doctor's prescription.

The Alan Guttmacher Institute reports that only 13 percent of U.S. counties have abortion providers. Three states—North and South Dakota and Mississippi—have only one. The African-American administrator at the Mississippi clinic said in a 2005 PBS special that for young Black women in Mississippi, "it's as though Roe never happened."

Some hospitals report that they are seeing 12 to 20 women a year who have tried to induce abortions by taking quinine pills with castor oil or douching with caustic products like bleach. "They are underage or poor women mostly, and a few daughters of pro-life families," reported mediagirl.org. (Feb. 3)

Deva Skydancer was recently convicted in Greenfield, Mass., of performing an illegal abortion. (masslive.com, Feb. 2) She was charged with practicing medicine without a license when the young woman on whom she performed a menstrual extraction developed an infection requiring hospitalization. The sentence of two months' probation and a \$500 fine could have been much harsher, but the judge acknowledged that the young woman agreed to the procedure and Skydancer had no previous record.

Last summer Geraldo Flores was sentenced to life in prison for so-called "fetal homicide." (Texas is the only state with such a law.) Flores' teenage girlfriend tried to self-abort after receiving misinformation about obtaining a legal abortion from a right-wing "crisis pregnancy center." She then asked Flores to

kick her belly, leading to stillborn twins.

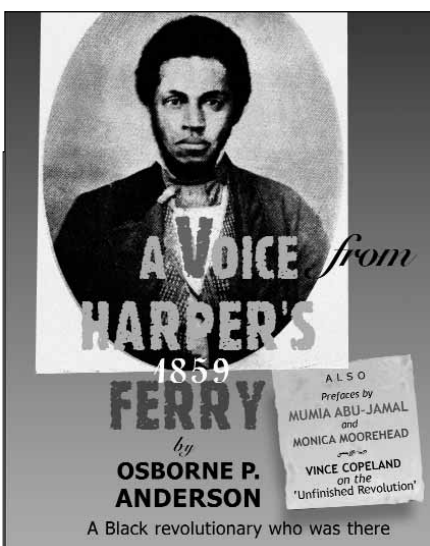
Michigan is prosecuting another young man after his girlfriend, who also received misinformation about a legal abortion from a private physician, asked him to hit her with a baseball bat, leading to a miscarriage. Michigan and Texas have strict parental-consent provisions.

Reports indicate more high school students are hiding pregnancies from their friends and family and then abandoning the newborns. Despite a 2001 New Jersey "safe haven" law, about 20 babies have been illegally abandoned. "The anti-abortion movement in this nation has largely succeeded in making birth control and abortion for young women taboo topics," reported NorthJersey.com. (Jan. 19)

Even worse, it criminalizes the young women. On Feb. 9, Zehra Catalbas, a senior in Mount Sinai High School on Long Island, was charged with second-degree manslaughter after she gave birth, the baby died, and she sought medical care at a hospital. When Suffolk County police told her parents, her father had a heart attack. The young woman and her family are in dire need of health care counseling and community support, not indictments.

The real crime in these cases is state intervention. Young, vulnerable, distraught, misinformed, unemployed or poor young women and men lack the social, economic or cultural support to make informed decisions. They should not be imprisoned because this capitalist, patriarchal, unjust social and economic system failed them. The lack of reproductive rights for all women only exposes the class, racist, anti-gay divisions in this society.

A strong, mass, united movement with women of color, youth and lesbians in leadership is needed to fight for full reproductive freedom for all women. That must be an integral part of the struggle for socialism in this country. □



By Osborne P. Anderson, a Black revolutionary who was there. With an essay on 'The Unfinished Revolution' by Vince Copeland and prefaces by Mumia Abu-Jamal and Monica Moorehead.

128 pp, photographs. World View Forum, \$18 online at www.leftbooks.com

BROCKTON, MASS.

Schools guilty of racist child abuse

By Steve Kirschbaum
Boston

Brockton, Mass., a working-class suburb south of Boston, was the scene this February of a most vile case of racist child abuse and anti-immigrant harassment. On Jan. 30, Brockton Public Schools officials suspended a Haitian first grader from Joseph H. Downey Elementary School for the outrageous charge of "sexual harassment."

According to Berthena Dorinvil, mother of the 6-year-old boy, the school officials' conduct in this case, from the white teacher who initiated the complaint to the principal all the way to the superintendent of schools, has caused untold pain and suffering to her son and her family.

The Dorinvil child was playing with his classmates when a white female child touched him. He responded by touching the back of her shirt. When the girl complained to the teacher, the teacher accused the Dorinvil child of "sexual harassment" and proceeded to "punish" him. He was isolated in a corner and told him he must look down and not make eye contact with the other students.

The teacher refused to allow the child to eat lunch with the other children and made him put his head down on his desk in the classroom while the other children were at lunch. With a number of teachers present, the little girl's mother was allowed to yell at the boy and threaten him until he was in tears. Unlike the Dorinvils, the girl's

mother had been called immediately,

At this point white adult administrators subjected the boy to repeated "questioning," which included scolding and other frightening and abusive behavior. He was coerced into signing a statement without his parents present, or any advocate or lawyer. At the close of this racist frame-up "internal investigation," the Brockton School District gave the child a three-day suspension and immediately called the Plymouth District Attorney and School Police.

Up until this point BPS failed to contact the Dorinvil family. When Berthena Dorinvil arrived, she found her son totally traumatized and sobbing uncontrollably.

Berthena and her husband Phillip Dorinvil, a Boston School Bus Driver USWA 8751 union member, immediately launched a campaign to defend their son and fight this cruel injustice. The Dorinvils had the support of USWA 8751 and leaders of the Boston Rosa Parks Human Rights Day Committee, including Boston City Councilor Chuck Turner, the Womens Fightback Network, and Bishop Filipe C. Teixeira, OFSJC, Diocese of St. Francis of Assisi, Catholic Church of the Americas and an anti-racist organizer from Brockton. Together these forces have established a Committee for Justice for the Dorinvil Family. People's lawyer John Pavlos represents the family legally.

The family demanded that their son be transferred to another elementary school, away from the racist Downey School

Administration. At first the BPS administration refused and issued statements attempting to justify its officials' outrageous actions against the Dorinvil child. Cynthia E. McNally, the District spokeswoman stated, "This was done by the book. This was thoroughly investigated."

The local and national media has engaged in sensationalist frenzy. The Boston Herald's front-page coverage showed photos of the family with the headline "Boy, 6, hit with sex harass rap." Reporters continue to virtually stalk the family.

On Feb. 9, as a result of an avalanche of national and local protest against this racist child abuse, BPS School Superintendent Buzz Nembirkow released a statement in which he said that the system made a private apology to the boy and his family. He granted the transfer request and promised to change the BPS sexual harassment policy.

Tip of racist iceberg

"This is an example of widespread racism in the Brockton Public Schools. It reveals one of many stories that minority communities in Brockton are telling us. No matter how much Brockton tries to deny it, this type of behavior exists in all its institutions," said Bishop Teixeira.

According to Rachel Nasca of the Women's Fightback Network and the Rosa Parks Committee, "This case is only the most recent in a long and ugly history of the state's racist use of sex charges. It brings to

mind the notorious North Carolina 'kissing case' of 1958, where two African-American children, aged 7 and 9, spent time in prison for allegedly kissing a white girl they were playing with. It took a long struggle led by Black liberation fighter Robert F. Williams to win the boys' freedom."

There is a deep history of racism in Brockton schools—on a broad range of issues including desegregation, curriculum, disparate treatment in discipline, achievement gap, access to resources, etc. Berthena Dorinvil has stated that other families who have suffered from racism in BPS have contacted her.

The Dorinvil Family and their supporters have stated that they will continue the fight for justice in this case. They are demanding:

1. A full, fair and independent investigation led by the family, the African-American, Haitian, Cape Verdean, and Latin@ Communities of Brockton, including educational, child-advocate, legal and school policy experts.

2. Concrete and serious action to be taken against all those responsible, at every level for the racist child abuse.

3. Full and fair restitution and compensation to the Dorinvil family for extreme hardships suffered, including possible treatment for their traumatized son.

At the planning meeting, Berthena Dorinvil said, "I am fighting not only for my son but to assure that no other mother will have to suffer what I have suffered." □

EPA, Whitman blasted for lies about post 9/11 air quality

By Mary Owen
New York

A federal judge blasted the Environmental Protection Agency and its former head Christie Whitman on Feb. 4 for issuing public and repeated statements that Lower Manhattan air was safe to breathe in the days right after 9/11.

Safety and health activists have long contended that post-9/11 health and environmental risks were not fully reported. Falling and burning buildings released 2,000 tons of asbestos, lead from 50,000 computers, 424,000 tons of concrete pulverized into dust, cancer-causing PCBs and other toxins.

U.S. District Judge Deborah A. Batts ruled the EPA and Whitman were not protected from a class-action lawsuit filed by workers, residents and students in Lower Manhattan who returned to contaminated workplaces, homes and schools after the EPA's false assurances. The areas affected also included Chinatown, the Lower East Side and Brooklyn.

"No reasonable person would have thought that telling thousands of people that it was safe to return to lower Manhattan, while knowing that such return could pose long-term health risks and other dire consequences, was conduct sanctioned by our laws," Judge Batts said. She found Whitman's actions "conscience-shocking" because the EPA chief knew the twin towers' collapse had generated tons of airborne toxic materials.

The ruling greenlights a lawsuit that seeks a special fund for medical monitoring and treatment of long-term health effects in non-emergency workers, residents and students who were exposed to the toxic air and toxin-laden debris that

blanketed the area after 9/11; damages for exposure to hazardous materials from the World Trade Center collapse; and reimbursement for cleanup costs.

Currently only 9/11 rescue and recovery workers are eligible for medical monitoring and treatment, with 15,000 actually being monitored.

But even this group, praised by local and national authorities, had to fight hard in 2005 to keep the Bush administration from cutting their program by \$125 million—just as some were starting to die from 9/11-related illnesses.

White House, Wall St. also to blame

Some air is bound to be cleared as the lawsuit against EPA goes forward. But the Bush administration and its capitalist backers on Wall Street should not be let off the hook.

The White House manipulated EPA statements and news releases on air quality in the days after Sept. 11, according to an August 2003 EPA Inspector General report. The Bush spin doctors deleted cautionary information and added reassurances that the EPA did not have the data to support.

EPA Administrator Marianne Horinko admitted that the Bush administration used the National Security Council, not environmental or public health experts, to filter data about Ground Zero air and water quality because "the thinking was, these were the experts on weapons of mass destruction." The White House then coordinated the public release of information from the NSC and other federal agencies. (Newsday, Aug. 23, 2003)

"The agencies have made it a priority to get the lower Manhattan financial and stock markets up and running at any cost.

In so doing, they have allowed thousands of people to be exposed to substances that haven't even all been identified, let alone quantified," said Joel Shufro, Executive Director of the New York Committee for Occupational Safety and Health, which represents more than 250 unions. (St. Louis Post Dispatch, Jan. 12, 2002)

The cooked-up disinformation led people to return to contaminated areas too soon and at risk to their health. Down on Wall Street, the financial heart of U. S. capitalism, the Stock Exchange and big corporations promised workers free lunch and donuts—while toxic fires were still burning at the site of the Twin Towers. □

Los Angeles Black History Month



By John Parker

Larry Holmes of the Katrina Solidarity Network, Troops Out Now Coalition and Workers World Party spoke on Feb. 11 at an International Action Center Black History Month Forum on "Katrina: The Struggle for Justice Five Months Later." Holmes made a clear connection between U.S. criminal neglect regarding the Katrina victims and the attack against all workers in the U.S. and abroad. He showed why the civil rights struggles like those sparked by people like Rosa Parks were so successful in winning economic justice and helping to end the war in Vietnam. Holmes responded to many questions. When asked about the role of racism, he gave a comprehensive yet very understandable explanation of racism's central role, not only in the Katrina disaster, but through its use as U.S. imperialism's weapon against all

working and poor people.

Some of the attendees of the event included members of SEIU's Local 660 African American Committee, Minjok-Tongshin, a progressive Korean media resource, and Channel 11 (Fox) News. □

VERDIEU
Black History Month discussion, from left, John Parker, Lawrence Reyes, Larry Holmes, above.

WW PHOTOS: GLORIA

In the spirit of Rosa Parks

Boston prepares for March 18 rally

By Peter Cook
Boston

Following the historic Dec. 1 Rosa Parks Human Rights Day march of nearly 2,000 people through Roxbury and downtown Boston, the Boston Rosa Parks Committee is providing the leadership and focus for organizing Boston's participation in the global days of action on the 3rd anniversary of the criminal U.S. invasion and occupation of Iraq.

The rally/march will begin at 11 a.m. on Saturday, March 18 at the Dudley Common, Blue Hill Avenue & Dudley Street, in Roxbury and move through the Downtown Crossing shopping district of Boston to the Statehouse.

Following the call for global actions on March 18-19, the Boston Rosa Parks Committee issued the following call for an action in Boston:

"It is not enough to just focus on the war in Iraq, we must address the root causes of violence in our communities and point the finger at the real perpetrators of this violence—state, local and federal government and their policies of racism and lethal hostility towards poor and working people.

"Unemployment, the use of racial profiling and police brutality against the youth in the communities of color has become an epidemic... The \$500 billion Pentagon budget and the \$200 billion spent on the war is money that

has been stolen from our communities. This money is needed for union jobs, housing, youth centers & programs, education, daycare centers, AIDS and healthcare. This money is needed to rebuild the Gulf Coast and compensate the survivors of Katrina for the criminal and racist neglect of the government.

"There is an epidemic of violence against women and increasingly abortion rights are under attack. Let's be clear, we are fighting to stop two wars—the war abroad and the war at home against racism and poverty."

Dec. 1 launched new anti-war movement

The Dec. 1 Rosa Parks Day march represented the birth of a new anti-war movement in Boston, based in the oppressed communities and organically linked to the struggle against racism and poverty. The movement's leadership represents the broadest level of involvement from communities throughout Boston. It includes City Councilor Chuck Turner; Prof. Tony Van Der Meer; Askia Toure; Puerto Rican activist Dorotea Manuela; Clemencia Lee of the Cultural Cafe; Bishop Felipe Tiexera; USW L. 8751 Boston School Bus Drivers; Women's Fightback Network and the Boston Troops Out Now Coalition (TONC).

At the first organizing meeting for March 18 Tony Van Der Meer put it in perspective when he said, "It is significant

that the Boston Rosa Parks Human Rights Day Committee is organizing for March 18 because it is making the connection between the struggle against national oppression and the struggle against imperialist war."

Organizations and individuals that have endorsed and are actively organizing include: Committee to Defend the Somerville 5; Young Cape Verdean Club, Inc.; New England Human Rights Organization for Haiti; MLK Jr. Bolivarian Circle; International Action Center; Angolan Association of Mass., Inc.; Immigration Pastoral Center, Inc; Franciscan Order of Saint Joseph Cupertino; Saint Martin De Porres Catholic Church of the Americas; Disabled Peoples Liberation Front; Stonewall Warriors; United American Indians of New England; Northeastern Diocese of Saint Francis of Assisi, Catholic Church of the Americas; Greater Boston Stop the Wars Coalition; Rule 19; QueerToday.com; Boston Mobilization; United for Justice with Peace; Lucy Parsons Center; Dorchester People for Peace; Brookline Peaceworks; Women's International League for Peace & Freedom.

In the spirit of International Women's Day

Under the banner of "Stop Poverty, Racism, Sexism & War!" The Women's Fightback Network and the Cambridge Women's Center have announced plans for a Women and Girls Contingent to take part in the March 18 protest. This

announcement has generated a lot of enthusiasm, especially in light of the recent confirmation of the right-wing Samuel Alito to the Supreme Court and the new round of budget cuts that will have a dramatically negative impact on women, children and the poor.

According to Rachel Nasca of the Women's Fightback Network, "This year for International Women's Day it was decided that, given the current political climate of war and budget cuts, it would be important for women and girls to take to the streets of Boston on March 18 to stand in solidarity with our sisters around the world and begin the process of organizing a militant mass movement to defend our rights."

For more information or to get involved, contact either the Women's Fightback Network at 617-522-6626; wfn@iacboston.org or the Cambridge Women's Center at 617-354-6394.

In addition to the Women and Girls contingent www.QueerToday.com has announced plans for an LGBTQ contingent and USW L. 8751, Boston School Bus Drivers is organizing a labor contingent.

Boston organizers invite readers who want to get involved to join planning meetings for the March 18 action, taking place every Wednesday at 6 p.m. at the Cultural Cafe, 76 Atherton St., Jamaica Plain. The Boston Rosa Parks Committee can be reached at 617-524-3507, rosaparksday@brphrd.com or via the web at www.brphrd.com. □

Iraq resistance still growing

By David Hoskins

Recent events illustrate just how much the U.S. and British governments were caught unprepared for the developing Iraqi struggle. The occupying governments were not ready for the level of

resistance to their presence. Attempts at militarily defeating the resistance have failed, despite the diversion of 22 percent of the so-called reconstruction budget toward military contractors and away from the water and sewage projects the fund was allegedly created for.

Resistance forces have gained skill and experience in the three years following the U.S.-led invasion of their homeland. A wave of armed action has swept the country after the puppet Iraqi elections, the resumption of President Saddam Hussein's trial and the upcom-

ing third anniversary of the invasion. On Feb. 13, nine police officers and the head of an Islamic party collaborating with the U.S. occupation were killed as guerrilla forces targeted police and government officials.

Just three days earlier, two U.S. marines were killed when their vehicle detonated a roadside bomb. The death toll for British soldiers in Iraq eclipsed 100 dead at the beginning of February. Meanwhile, Iraq's leading Sunni political alliance has threatened a campaign of strikes and civil disobedience. The alliance is demanding that the Interior Minister and aides resign, that Interior Ministry security units stop operating, along with the release of all prisoners held at Iraqi administered camps. The alliance claims that the current Iraqi government is targeting civilians in the name of defeating "terrorists."

Occupation forces are struggling in the face of a growing armed guerrilla movement and the threat of a civil disobedience campaign against the puppet government. A recent report by the U.S. General Accounting Office says that the number of attacks in December 2004 were 250 percent higher than in March of the same year. Insurgent forces engaged in almost 3,000 armed actions in October alone. Most attacks targeted the occupying coalition forces. There has been an increase in the number of actions taken against Iraqi security forces now that they have become operational.

The GAO report cited a senior military officer who admitted that the insurgents were able to rearm and attack repeatedly because "the insurgent groups...are an intrinsic part of Iraq's population." This gives the lie to earlier notions that resistance forces were somehow outside the mainstream of the Iraqi population. □

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U.S. threatens military action against Iran

By Sara Flounders

The Pentagon is actively preparing devastating bombing raids against Iran, backed by submarine-launched ballistic missile attacks. The U.S. military's plans were described in the London Sunday Telegraph of Feb. 12 and then covered in other media around the world. The story is based on leaks, which are often part of the psychological warfare tactics of the Pentagon.

The newspaper wrote that "Central Command and Strategic Command planners are identifying targets, assessing weapon-loads and working on logistics for an operation." These commands report directly to U.S. Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld.

The next day the Guardian, another British newspaper, in a story headlined "Thousands would die in U.S. strikes on Iran, says study," summarized a report by the Oxford Research Group, a think tank that specializes in arms control and non-proliferation issues. It says civilian casualties would be greater in Iran than they were in the early days of the Iraq war if the U.S. or Israel launch surprise attacks on any of the more than 20 Iranian nuclear energy facilities located in densely populated areas.

In a similar story the same day, the Associated Press included maps and detailed target lists.

Daily stories in the U.S. media and major publications around the world citing an Iranian nuclear threat are part of a war climate being ratcheted up.

The Bush administration's plans to attack Iran—which have been openly discussed since 2002—are now dangerously escalating on the military, diplomatic, political and media fronts.

On the political front, top-ranking members of Congress, both Republicans and Democrats from Sen. John McCain to Sen. Hillary Clinton, are discussing the alleged Iranian nuclear threat and using "the military option."

On the diplomatic front, the U.S. has succeeded in pressuring the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) to report Iran to the UN Security Council. This represents the most dangerous step. Washington is laying the ground for taking unilateral military action if the Security Council vote doesn't go its way.

The script of the Iranian nuclear threat is a rehash of the lead-up to the 2003 criminal invasion of Iraq. At that time every arm of the U.S. and British media gave extensive, daily coverage to charges that Iraq had dangerous weapons of mass destruction—biological, chemical and nuclear. It was all a fraud. The major corporate media went along and endlessly hyped every fabrication, as did the leaders of both political parties. They never admitted what was so obvious after 12 years of relentless war, sanctions and inspections: Iraq had no WMDs.

No basis in fact

The charges that Iran today presents a nuclear threat have no basis in fact. It is pure war propaganda to justify a possible attack on a country of 70 million people that is the world's fourth-largest oil exporter. Every U.S. intelligence agency agrees on this issue. On Aug. 2, 2005, the Washington Post reported that, according to the National Intelligence Estimate (NIE), which represents a consensus among U.S. intelligence agencies, Iran was a decade away from being able to manufacture the



WW PHOTOS: ARTURO J. PÉREZ SAAD

The American-Iranian Friendship Committee and the International Action Center hosted a forum in New York on Feb. 14 that raised the question, Is Iran the threat or is the U.S. threatening Iran? As the Bush administration and the Pentagon intensify their military provocations, the forum explored the real reasons why U.S. imperialism is targeting this oil-rich country and showed that Iran's right to develop nuclear technology and energy is not a real threat.

Speakers included Sara Flounders, Ardeshir Ommani, Ellie Ommani and Daniel Strum (shown here left to right). Iranian activist Ardeshir Ommani gave the main presentation. Ommani, a co-founder of the AIFC, gave a moving account of Iran's eco-

key ingredient for a nuclear weapon.

Yet the charges continue and are being whipped up to cloud even the most well-known facts. U.S. Director of National Intelligence John Negroponte, a key figure in the Iran-Contra scandal during the Reagan administration, told the Senate Intelligence Committee on Feb. 2 that "Iran conducted a clandestine uranium enrichment program for nearly two decades in violation of its IAEA safeguards."

In fact, Iran has yet to begin operations of its planned "uranium enrichment program." It has only conducted research into how to make low-enriched uranium as a nuclear fuel, research that it was not required to report to the IAEA under its safeguards agreement. (Green Left Weekly, Feb. 15)

It is also important to know that Iran is in full compliance with the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). It has submitted to even the most intrusive and humiliating inspections, far beyond what is required by the treaty and far beyond what any other nation has agreed to. After three years of searches and 1,400 inspection hours, the head of the IAEA, Mohammed El Baradei, has reported there is no proof of any weapons programs in Iran.

Right to develop

It is also essential to remember that Iran has a right, under international law and as a sovereign country, to develop nuclear energy.

Article IV of the NPT explicitly states: "Nothing in this Treaty shall be interpreted as affecting the inalienable right of all parties to the Treaty to develop research, production and use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes...."

It is the U.S. government that is in major breach of the non-proliferation treaty. It has violated every commitment to disarm its stockpile of more than 10,000 nuclear warheads—the largest stockpile of weapons of mass destruction on the planet.

Far more ominous than its refusal to disarm existing weapons, the Pentagon has for years engaged in intense efforts of research and development, in violation of the treaty, to develop a whole new generation of battlefield or tactical nuclear weapons. These are for use in conventional warfare against a non-nuclear opponent. There is a great deal of specu-

lation that the Pentagon might actually use these new tactical nuclear weapons in an attack on Iran.

The U.S., let us never forget, is the only country that has ever used nuclear weapons against a civilian population.

Iran oil market in euros

Iran does have plans for something that U.S. finance capital considers far more threatening than beginning the first stages of uranium enrichment.

Iran plans to open an Iranian Oil Bourse in March. This Oil Bourse will be in direct competition with the New York Mercantile Exchange (NYMEX) and London's International Petroleum Exchange (IPE). Unlike them, it will do business not in U.S. dollars but in euros.

In Iran, there is mass popular determination to use its resources to develop the country industrially, technically and financially. The Iranians are determined that their country be more than just a source of raw materials.

For decades the U.S. dollar has dominated the world system of marketing oil and natural gas. The requirement that these products be bought and sold in dollars is of great benefit to U.S. corporations. To purchase oil and natural gas on the world market, every country must hold large dollar reserves. This gives Wall Street dominance in all world trade agreements.

The urgency behind the U.S. invasion of Iraq was that country's decision to start accepting only euros for its oil. One of the first steps of the occupation authorities after the U.S. invasion of Iraq was to reverse this policy and again sell Iraq's oil in dollars.

Mass resistance to threats

Today in Iran there is an overwhelming determination to stand up to the ominous U.S. threats. Past U.S. interventions are well understood.

The 1953 CIA-orchestrated overthrow of the democratically elected government of Dr. Mohammed Mossadegh, who had moved to nationalize Iran's oil, and the return of the hated Shah to the "peacock throne" was followed by 25 years of brutal dictatorship. Every Iranian school child today knows about the hated Shah and his U.S. and British backers. For all his U.S.-supplied weapons and U.S.-trained SAVAK secret police, millions rose up against his

economic transition from an oppressed colony terribly exploited by British Petroleum to a developing, independent country attempting to defend its sovereignty.

Ellie Ommani of the WESPAC Foundation and AIFC spoke on the gains made by Iranian women since the 1979 revolution. Strum, from the Fellowship of Reconciliation, provided some stunning video footage of a recent trip a U.S. delegation made to Iran.

IAC co-director Flounders, who chaired the forum, announced an important campaign called "International Campaign to STOP the War on Iran before it starts." Go to StopWarOnIran.org for more information.

—Monica Moorehead

regime in 1979 in a revolution that broke the U.S. hold. For the past 27 years, however, U.S. sanctions have impeded Iran's right to development at every turn.

In the face of the Pentagon's growing threats and war plans, international opposition could become an explosive force. Recent demonstrations of outrage against the racism of the Western imperialists show the mass mood throughout the entire region. While the Bush administration controls weapons of enormous destructive capacity, its arrogant conduct in Iraq and elsewhere has underestimated the people's consciousness and ability to resist. The current threats against Iran will also prove to be a howling blunder. □

MUNICH 1972

What Spielberg left out

Continued from page 11

by then UN Ambassador George Bush senior. From 1972-1990, 32 U.S. vetoes protected Israel from condemnation.

That was, and is the real relationship of forces, then and now. There is no equal sign between the actions of the Israeli state and the actions of the Palestinian resistance. Israel is the oppressor, armed and protected by Washington. The Palestinians are the oppressed and fight for their legitimate national rights under the most difficult of circumstances.

Through sheer determination and self-sacrifice, the Palestinian people have reclaimed their identity, they have shown the world who they are, and that they have rights, are entitled to self-determination, their own state, and to return to their lands. And even more they have showed their determination to continue the struggle to regain these rights no matter what forces are arrayed against them.

The message of the film "Munich" is "Let's just all stop the violence and have peace." In fact, Spielberg calls the film his "prayer for peace." The film is very powerful, and many who see it leave the theater thinking "peace." But it is a false peace. There will be no peace until the legitimate grievances of the Palestinians are addressed. True peace can only be achieved through justice. □

IN PUERTO RICO

FBI raids homes of independentistas

By Tom Soto
San Juan, Puerto Rico

Hundreds of FBI agents armed with automatic weapons and Homeland Security helicopters and military vehicles on Feb. 10 raided the homes of "independentistas"—supporters of Puerto Rican independence. Five homes and one workplace were raided.

The island nation of Puerto Rico has been a colony of the U.S. since 1898, when it was seized by the U.S. as a territory during the Spanish-American War.

In San Juan, the FBI forcibly entered the apartment of Liliana Laboy. Boxes and suitcases of her personal property were seen being taken from the apartment complex where she lives, including her computer and written materials. Although Laboy was not arrested, during the three-hour invasion she was handcuffed and held incommunicado by the FBI. Her attorney Roxana Badillo, who was at the apartment complex, was not permitted to enter.

As news of the FBI intrusions spread, residents, family members, students and pro-independence activists began to gather outside the Condominio de Diego #444. The crowd protested the presence of the FBI, while a growing number of press began reporting the event in live broadcasts.

FBI attacks

That same evening all the television channels, and the next day all the newspapers, showed videos and pictures of FBI agents attacking residents and students, and even assaulting members of the press at the Condominio de Diego. Some press members were clubbed and others were thrown to the ground. FBI agents were shown using pepper gas, while other agents drew their weapons as if to fire on the crowd. A dozen reporters were injured, and some had to be hospitalized.

As FBI cars and vans left the scene at the Condominio de Diego, they were challenged by a militant crowd, who pounded

FBI vehicles with rocks and bottles while chanting "AA-SE-SI-NOS." The chant, meaning "assassins," referred to the political assassination carried out by the FBI on Sept. 23 of Filiberto Ojeda Ríos, a renowned leader of the independence movement, who headed the Ejército Popular Boricua—Macheteros (Popular Puerto Rican Army—The Canecutters).

Simultaneous raids were also carried out at the homes of other independentistas in the northwest cities of Trujillo Alto, Isabela and Aguadilla, and in Mayaguez and San German in the west and southwest.

In Aguadilla the home of schoolteacher Vilma Vélez was occupied. Upon returning home from work, she discovered that her sons, ages 28 and 24, had been roughed up, questioned and detained by the FBI. Many of her personal belongings, including her computer and documents, were also taken.

FBI seizes lists

Velma Vélez is a delegate of the Hostos National Independence Movement (MINH) in Aguadilla. She has been a pro-independence activist for 15 years. One of the documents that was seized was the mailing list of the MINH members and supporters.

Another raid was carried out in Trujillo Alto at the home of Norberto Cintrón, a lifelong trade union organizer and former president of the Puerto Rican Workers Union (GPT). Norberto is a member of the Caribbean and Latin-American Fraternity (CCL). He was not home at the time of the raid.

Norberto comes from a pro-independence family. His father was a member of the Nationalist Party of Puerto Rico (PNP) when it was headed by the legendary Don Pedro Albizu Campos. In the 1980s Norberto refused to recognize the authority of a federal grand jury investigating Los Macheteros, and spent 11 months in a New York City jail for refusing to testify.

Community organizations targeted

In yet another intrusion, the home and



PHOTO: ROBERTO J. MERCADO

New York protester carries portrait of assassinated Puerto Rican leader Filiberto Ojeda Ríos.

the office of Rev. José Morales (in Aguadilla and San German), president of the Ecumenical Committee for Community Economic Development (CEDECO), and the home of William Mohler in Mayaguez, who coordinates housing development programs for CEDECO, were also raided and ransacked.

CEDECO is a non-profit organization which for ten years has been working with community groups to develop housing projects which, upon completion, are turned over to low-income families. The seizure of CEDECO's computers, documents, financial and other records puts the program at risk of being terminated, and makes it virtually impossible for the organization to finish processing the deeds and handing over of more than 100 new homes to low-income families that was scheduled to take place in the coming months.

In response to the raids, on Friday evening an emergency demonstration of 500 people was held at the Federal Building in San Juan. The protest was initiated by the Socialist Workers Movement (MST), the Hostos National Independence Movement (MINH) and the Socialist Front/FS. The demonstration had broad participation, including the Puerto Rican Independence Party (PIP).

At a press conference held on Saturday, Blanca Vélez of the San Juan Housing Services and the Network of Supporters of Community Groups in Socioeconomic

Development (RAGCDS) characterized the FBI raid as "an attempt to criminalize the work of community organizations. ... It is repugnant that the ideological affiliation of individuals working with members and leaders of community organizations should serve as a pretext to disparage the work that is realized with the poor communities throughout the country."

Particularly critical of the FBI was the Association of Journalists of Puerto Rico, which characterized the FBI agents as "anti-democratic and revengeful." Nelson del Castillo of the Federation of Latin American Journalists (FLAP) said that "U.S. federal agents were seeking to intimidate journalists at a moment when they are unleashing persecution against ... sovereignty, after 107 years of colonial domination by the United States."

While the attacks against the independence movement and the press have been widely condemned in the media, and amongst the population in general, the two bourgeois parties that administer the colonial government—the pro-statehood New Progressive Party and the Popular Democratic Party—have remained virtually silent.

Asked about the FBI actions, Governor Acevedo Vilá said, "On Friday morning the FBI called to inform me that they would be carrying out searches of homes in regards to their ongoing investigation of the Macheteros, but later in the evening they changed their story and told the press they were intervening to prevent a terrorist attack against private businesses in Puerto Rico."

Hector Pesquera, leader of the MINH, characterized the FBI: "They are the criminals, the troops who invade our nation, assassinate our patriots and conspire against the most fundamental rights of our people."

Rafael Bernabe of the Socialist Front called on the workers and people of Puerto Rico to remain vigilant and combative in light of the new attacks by the FBI. "Last year the FBI intervened in one of the most important unions of the country, after that they assassinated Filiberto Ojeda ... and now they carry out searches and seizures so as to later frame-up pro-independence groups and leaders." □



The home of Norberto Cintrón was among those raided

Haiti's poor say Aristide ally Préval won

By G. Dunkel

As of Feb. 13 poor people in neighborhoods in an around Port-au-Prince were burning tires and setting up barricades to protest what they saw as manipulation of the vote count in the presidential election. Witnesses said the occupation MINUSTAH forces killed one protester in the Tabarre neighborhood.

The poor and working people had their candidate for the Feb. 7 presidential election—René Préval—and they were not going to let a foreign military occupation, threats to drown the election in blood—something that has happened more than once in Haiti—and the skulduggeries of a brutal government imposed on them by the forces of the United States, France and Canada, keep them from voting.

Reports as of Feb. 10 from Haiti had Préval leading by well over 50 percent in a field of 32 candidates. He appeared likely to win without a run-off, but by the evening of Feb. 11 the electoral commission announced that Préval's total had fallen below 49 percent. Few believed the report,

especially as a graph to illustrate the totals showed Préval with 52 percent. No other candidate had more than 12 percent.

Préval himself said from Port-au-Prince news conference on Feb. 14, "We have the conviction that massive frauds tarnish the election process."

Préval won 90 percent of the vote in Cité Soleil, one of the poorest communities in Haiti, and 70 percent of the vote in Petionville, a neighborhood where many wealthy, well-off Haitians live along with the workers who serve them.

Well before 6 a.m., the time the polls opened, tens of thousands of people poured through the gates in the walls around Cité Soleil, heading for their polling places. The illegal government currently in power and the UN forces occupying Haiti had decided it was too dangerous to establish polling places in Cité Soleil. If the local polling places were closed, the people opened them. Where the polling places were already open, the people waited in huge lines for their turn.

Where the population was prevented from voting, they demonstrated, pro-

tested, and put intense pressure on the election officials to find some way of opening up the polls. As one poor Haitian told Reuters, "I'm 46 years old and never had a job. But I should be able to vote!"

The intense mass pressure on election officials forced them to keep the polls open four hours beyond their scheduled closing time and to adopt the rule that no polling place would close while anybody was waiting on line. Well over 50 percent of Haitians voted.

In Gros Morne, a small, very poor town in northwest Haiti, a police officer shot and killed someone waiting to vote. Bystanders pulled out their machetes—a common tool for farm workers in Haiti—and killed the cop. Voting continued.

Préval said in his election platform that he will allow President Jean-Bertrand Aristide to return. He also promises to institute a program of people's literacy and take immediate steps to improve Haiti's agriculture, where two-thirds of Haitians make their living. Literacy is a big issue, since well over half of all adult Haitians can neither read or write.

Préval's Lespwa party is highly unlikely to win a majority in parliament, which places him even more on the defensive with respect to his political opponents, who are mainly wealthy bourgeois supporters of the coups against Aristide.

Préval, a businessperson who used to run a bakery in Port-au-Prince, was trained as an agronomist in Belgium and worked on Wall Street in New York—as a messenger and porter—before returning to Haiti. He was Aristide's prime minister in his first government, followed him into exile and then was president between Aristide's first and second term. Some elements of Aristide's Lavalas Party have backed Préval. Fr. Gérard Jean-Juste, for example, recently endorsed Préval.

Should Préval be elected in the first round, this is not expected to bring substantial changes to daily life in Haiti. But it is obvious that neither the U.S. nor the right-wing forces in Haiti that overturned Aristide's government want him in office. It is already apparent that the mass of the poor population are ready to struggle for Préval's right to take office. □

Pentagon quietly builds up Latin American bases

By Teresa Gutierrez

At the very same time that the working class and progressive movement in Latin America is rapidly shifting to the left, invigorating anti-imperialist sentiment around the world, Washington is quietly and ominously militarizing the Americas.

From the U.S./Mexican border to many parts farther south, U.S. imperialism is setting up more and more military bases throughout the region and stealthily sending ever more U.S. troops and mercenaries to Latin America.

Under the guise of fighting the so-called drug war or seeking "Al Qaeda terrorist cells," Washington's real intention is to prepare to overcome the rising movements against U.S. imperialism that are sweeping the region.

Washington's intense escalation of military force is extremely dangerous for the oppressed people of the Americas and should be energetically fought by the anti-war movement in the United States.

As Conn Hallinan wrote last November in *Foreign Policy in Focus*, "Indeed, it is feeling a little like the run-up to the sixties and seventies, when Washington-sponsored military dictatorships dominated most of the continent, and (secret) armies ruled the night."

The growing U.S. military threat

Although it only recently came to light, last year the Bush administration sent 400-500 U.S. troops to Paraguay, alarm-

ing many Latin Americans.

This action takes place within the context of a growing number of U.S. military bases built in the region in the last several years, and within the context of Plan Colombia, a \$3-billion-plus military initiative for Colombia, was passed under the Clinton Administration. Plan Colombia is the military wing of the stalled Free Trade Agreement of the Americas (FTAA).

What cannot be wrested from the people of Latin America by its operators in three-piece suits, Washington clearly aims to steal through its agents in military fatigues.

There are approximately 25 known U.S. military bases or land-based radar stations in Latin America and the Caribbean. These include military bases in Guantanamo, Cuba; Comalapa, El Salvador; Reina Beatriz, Aruba; Fort Buchanan and Roosevelt Roads, Puerto Rico; Hato Rey, Curacao; Manta, Ecuador and Soto Cano, Honduras.

In January 2006, Cuban Radio Havana revealed that Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld had authorized the expansion of U.S. military bases in the summer of 2005. These expanded military bases were called CSL's—Cooperative Security Locations—and set up at the Mariscal Estigarribia airbase in Paraguay and elsewhere.

According to Radio Havana, these bases, while staffed by a relatively small number of troops, "have the capability to ramp up military operations at short notice."

Developments in Paraguay are alarm-

ing progressives across that country's borders in Brazil, Argentina and Bolivia, where Indigenous peasant leader Evo Morales recently took office as president.

According to an article in the *January Political Affairs*, the Bush administration in December 2004 canceled \$330 million in aid to several South American countries because they had refused to grant U.S. soldiers immunity from prosecution for crimes committed in those countries.

Paraguay did sign the immunity agreement in a secret session of its congress on May 26, 2005, authorizing an 18-month stay for U.S. soldiers, which can be extended repeatedly.

The U.S. troops that arrived in Paraguay last July 1 are only 120 miles from Bolivia at a base near Mariscal Estigarribia, Paraguay.

The base has a runway long enough to accommodate large military transport planes such as B-52 bombers and Galaxy C-5 cargo planes. It also has barracks space for 16,000 troops, a huge radar system and vast hangers.

Prominent Paraguayan journalist and human rights activist Alfredo Boccia Paz stated recently that "immunity from prosecution for U.S. soldiers, extension of their stay, and joint military exercises all provide the groundwork for the eventual installation of a U.S. base in Paraguay."

Furthermore, last July a high-powered meeting of Bush administration officials met with Paraguay's vice president.

Dick Cheney, Donald Rumsfeld and Robert Noriega met with Paraguay Vice President Luis Castiglioni and concluded that "experts would soon be going to Paraguay to develop a planning seminar on systems for national security."

The FBI also announced that in 2006 it would open an office in Paraguay.

The U.S. troops stationed in Paraguay are already up to no good. The Southern Command, according to several sources including Radio Havana, announced an upcoming "saber rattling" military exercise to take place in Paraguay called "Fuerzas Comando 06 (Operation Commando Force 06)."

Stan Goff, a former sergeant in the U.S. Special Forces, often points out in his denunciations of U.S. intervention that it can be misleading to judge the impact of a U.S. intervention only by the number of U.S. troops involved. If these troops are Special Forces, for example, they can train local mercenaries or pave the way for

thousands of ground troops.

Bush administration officials deny that Mariscal Estigarribia will become or is a U.S. military base.

Manta, Ecuador

In 2001, the Pentagon came under criticism for opening a military base in Manta, Ecuador. The base is located 20 minutes from war-torn Colombia's borders. Those in Colombia who resist neocolonial domination there consider the base opening an act of war. Many U.S. Congress members also opposed Manta and tried to block the Manta project.

The first thing the base in Manta housed was E-3 AWACS surveillance planes. According to the *Washington Post* (Jan. 25, 2001), with the troops and the planes, "Manta will become the main hub for U.S. surveillance flights over the vast cocaine-producing areas of Latin America."

The U.S. pays no rent at Manta. It signed the deal with a former Ecuadorian president, Jamil Mahuad, who fled to exile in the U.S. and was under indictment for abuse of power.

One year before Ecuador opened the Manta base it adopted the U.S. dollar as the national currency.

A rose is a rose

In the usual Pentagon and Washington double talk, government officials have taken to doctoring up the language of the militarization of Latin America to make it palatable for the U.S. public.

In the case of both Manta, Ecuador, in 2001 and Mariscal Estigarribia, Paraguay now, government officials called the bases "Forward Operating Locations" or "Cooperative Security Locations" to avoid calling them bases.

Washington has mislabeled the militarization of Latin America as part of the fight against drugs, just as some of the media have mislabeled the Minutemen militarizing the U.S.-Mexican border as freedom fighters.

In reality, the strengthening of military bases and the sending of U.S. troops is aimed to subvert the rising revolutionary movements in Latin America. It is aimed against Presidents Hugo Chávez in Venezuela and Evo Morales in Bolivia and at Fidel Castro in Cuba.

But the tide for an end to colonial and imperialist domination has turned in favor of the oppressed and no military base can turn it back. □

Immigrant march arrives in Atlanta

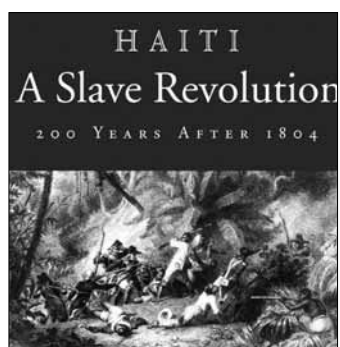
The historic march for migrants arrived in Atlanta Feb. 14 on the way from San Diego to Washington, D.C., demanding dignity and respect for immigrants.

During their stop in Atlanta the caravan participants picketed CNN headquarters, called on CNN to cancel the talk show of anti-immigrant cheerleader Lou Dobbs, and met with community leaders in a local church.

The caravan will encourage communities across the U.S. to denounce: (1) the assassination of Guillermo Martinez Rodriguez by the San Diego border patrol in December and (2) HR 4437, a bill that seeks to increase the already deadly militarization of the border and attempts to continue the criminalization of migrants, their employers and supporters.

The caravan will also pay homage to the 4,000 migrants who have died since the inception of the racist, INS-sponsored "Operation Gatekeeper" in 1994.

—Photo and story by Cheryl LaBash



HAITI A SLAVE REVOLUTION

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Report from Caracas

Dominican community activist Vannia Lara and housing-rights, anti-war leader Nellie Bailey reported on their recent trips in solidarity with Venezuela's Bolivarian revolution at a New York meeting of Workers World Party Feb. 10. Lara told of her participation in the first U.S./Venezuela exchange gathering on Jan. 13-22. Bailey spoke on the Jan. 24-30 Caracas session of the 2006 World Social Forum. Both shared their favorable impressions of the Bolivarian popular organizations and President Hugo Chávez.

—Story and photos by Monica Moorehead



Denmark's racist cartoons

Outrage continues throughout the world in response to the offensive, hate-mongering caricatures of the Muslim prophet Mohammad that were published first in the Danish publication *Jyllands-Posten* and later in newspapers around the world. Just between Feb. 9 and Feb. 14, protests were reported in Bangladesh, Canada, Kenya, Malaysia, Pakistan and Russia. A demonstration is scheduled for New York City on Feb. 17.

Throughout history, cartoons and illustrations have been used to demonize oppressed groups of people, from Jews in Nazi Germany to people of color—Native, Black, Latin@ and Asian—in the United States. Such depictions have simultaneously been a reflection of, and an attempt to justify, governmental policies of discrimination, exploitation and repression toward those people. And often the capitalist media joyfully assists.

In true form, reactionary government officials in imperialist countries have responded to the outcry surrounding the recent caricatures by whipping up even more animosity and hatred. Italy's Reform Minister Roberto Calderoli has produced t-shirts of the drawings; Reuters reports that leaders of his organization, the anti-immigrant Northern League party, "say the cartoon violence shows the danger of allowing Muslim immigrants to settle in Italy." In another article, Reuters paraphrased U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for Europe Dan Fried, who said in Brussels on Feb. 14 "that the United States and Europe should respond to the row ... by intensi-

fying efforts to nurture Middle East reform"—a euphemism for regime change.

Fried also told the press: "Governments don't tell or shouldn't tell newspapers what to publish. In free societies newspapers work this out for themselves." He seems to have so quickly forgotten the case of former New York Times reporter Judith Miller, who was spoon-fed fabrications to justify the war in Iraq by none other than Karl Rove, President Bush's chief political strategist.

Hand-in-hand with their governments, media outlets such as the *Western Standard* in Canada's conservative Alberta province, where Big Oil rules, continue to unapologetically publish these images under the banner of "free speech"—that is, freedom for the wealthy who control the capitalist media to put out whatever biased, racist, pro-imperialist propaganda suits their agenda. An example of this can be shown in a "correction" printed in the Feb. 10 *New York Times*: "A Critic's Notebook article ... referred incorrectly to the reaction in Auckland, New Zealand. While there were protests after the cartoons were published, imams there have not demanded executions or amputations for the cartoonists and their publishers."

The continuing protest over this injustice by Muslim followers and anti-racists is not just a response to the current images—it's a response to the collusion of imperialist governments with the media, time and time again, in seeking to legitimize oppression over resistance. What's clear is that more and more of the world isn't buying it. □

Are humans naturally greedy?

By Hillel Cohen

Are human beings "naturally" greedy? Is greed so much a part of human biology that it will always shape human social life?

This age-old question came up once again in an article circulated by Bloomberg News, the big business news service. (bloomberg.com)

The article highlights the work of Stanford University psychology professor Brian Knutson who has used modern brain-imaging technology to try to associate regions of the brain with specific behaviors. In experiments by Knutson and colleagues, volunteers pretend to buy and sell stocks while the imaging machine called a functional MRI (fMRI) records the brain areas activated.

The findings suggest a connection between activity in "pleasure center" areas of the brain and the action of making a profitable stock sale and even risk-taking behavior in anticipation or hope of gain, such as gambling. (Brain areas considered pleasure centers have been linked to activities such as sexual orgasm and cocaine use.)

In the experiments, losses and fear of loss activated a different area of the brain—one that has been associated with painful experiences.

The researchers believe their findings may help explain why investors, like gamblers, often take irrational risks in the same way that people will often carry out what they know is risky and even dangerous behavior for a pleasurable high from sex or drugs.

The Bloomberg business editor commented: "At a neurological level, our species' desire for money may resemble our desire for sex..." and "our brains lust after money, just like they crave sex."

In this interpretation, capitalist greed is biological—"hard-wired" by our brains neural circuits. But this view is just a high-tech version of the very old, and mistaken, notion that greed is part of "human nature."

A scientific basis for solidarity

Human beings are able to experience pleasure and pain, and for the most part, we pursue activities that give pleasure or lead us to anticipate pleasure, and we avoid activities that give pain or fear of pain.

But we must separate the question of how we feel pleasure and pain (the biology of the brain) from the question of what stimulates those feelings.

issued calls against the election and threatened to hold demonstrations and take further legal action.

Meanwhile, those stuck in the prison-industrial complex in New Orleans will be incarcerated for even longer without a trial. A district judge suspended all the cases in his section on Feb. 10, citing a lack of public defenders, on which 80 percent of all criminal defendants in the city rely. The *Times-Picayune* says that other judges are expected to take similar action, and therefore "More than 3,500 pre-Katrina defendants and about 1,000 defendants arrested since the storm could be thrown in limbo."

Lorraine Ervin, a returning New Orleans resident, summed up the sentiment and resolve of many Katrina survivors in the press release from PHRF: "We are refugees in our own country. Where are our tax dollars that we've paid all of our lives? Why can \$60 billion dollars go toward war in Iraq? There is no way we should be here [in the U.S.] begging... I will fight for my rights." □

Burn your finger with a match and you'll feel pain. Pleasure can come from a drink when you're thirsty or food when you're hungry.

But under capitalism people learn that money can buy almost anything. Making money can become associated with pleasure just as surely as a bell can make a dog salivate, once the dog has learned that the bell means dinner.

For the big capitalists, greed—the desire for more and more wealth beyond the necessities of life—is what made them capitalists in the first place. If that did not drive them, then they would not have succeeded as capitalists, or they might pursue some more useful occupation.

Under a different social system that valued equality rather than inequality, getting satisfaction from accumulating more wealth than one person could ever use would be considered a sickness—something like kleptomania.

The scientific finding that greed (under current social conditions) can stimulate feelings of pleasure similar to sex or drugs does help explain why capitalists seem to actually lust after profit and power, and why this lust will lead them to seek short-term gratification even if the long-term results of their action may be disastrous. The experiments by Knutson offer one explanation for corporate opposition to environmental controls, as the tycoons of oil industry and other capitalists risk global warming and the long-term destruction of human life on earth rather than give up even a portion of their current profits.

Seeking pleasure and avoiding pain is a biological part of human nature. Greed is not. But seeking pleasure and avoiding pain are not uniquely human. This behavior is shared by all living things that can experience the sensations of pain and pleasure.

Are there, then, any characteristics of human biology that let us behave in a way that is substantially different from other animals? That perhaps give us hope for human solidarity?

About 10 years ago, neuroscientists discovered a type of neuron (nerve cell) in the brains of monkeys that the scientists labeled "mirror neurons." These specialized neurons activated the very same way whether a monkey did something itself or simply saw another monkey do it.

In other words, these specialized nerve cells allowed monkeys to imitate others and even to share the experiences of others. With further study, scientists found that humans have even more highly developed mirror neurons than monkeys.

These cells help humans learn by watching others—an enormously useful ability that enables human social interaction. Even more importantly, these cells may be the biological basis of human empathy, of the ability to experience someone else's emotions, including pain or pleasure, as if the emotions were one's own. Human language and other social and cultural tools appear to depend on these neurons.

It may turn out that the number and sophistication of human mirror neurons are an evolutionary development—along with an opposable thumb—that has enabled humans to develop a social and cultural life far beyond our closest animal relatives.

If so, then the truly essential biological part of human nature is the capacity to experience the feelings of others as much as our own feelings. Rather than greed, this capacity for solidarity may be what makes us distinctly human. □

Katrina survivors still face hardship

Continued from page 1

Activists with the People's Hurricane Relief Fund (PHRF) rallied on Feb. 12 at a FEMA trailer site on a lot in the New Orleans' Eighth Ward, where approximately 100 such uninhabited trailers reside. The rally was to demand that the trailers be made immediately available to all those facing eviction. According to the group's press release, "The trailers are apparently hooked up to power and have plumbing, but are not being used to provide much-needed shelter for the 10,000-plus New Orleans residents that have come back to rebuild their homes and their lives."

In Hope, Ark., FEMA placed 10,770 of its brand-new, completely furnished trailers at an airport that was once a military base. The trailers remain empty. FEMA not only intends to keep these trailers there, but is planning to lay down a 290-acre gravel bed beneath them, at a cost of \$6 million, according to the Feb. 10 *Los Angeles Times*.

Under the Stafford Act, FEMA is required to provide local transitional housing and rental assistance to the survivor's workplace for eighteen months after a disaster. The *Times* article quotes FEMA spokesperson Nicol Andrews, who says that part of the blame for the distant location of the trailers lies with the fact that "only eight of Louisiana's 64 parishes have welcomed them."

The will of local officials to carry forward with the gentrification of the region—denying the poorest, mostly Black survivors the resources and support to return—is also reflected in the upcoming elections in New Orleans, now scheduled for April 22 although many residents have not yet been able to return. The Washington D.C.-based Advancement Project filed a lawsuit that says the election plan, which plans to use some form of absentee voting to reach evacuees, will in effect freeze many Black voters out of the process.

The Associated Press notes that, "The most striking aspect of the race is the number of prominent white business leaders and politicians who have jumped into the fray. Incumbent Mayor Ray Nagin remains the only Black candidate among more than half a dozen hopefuls." The last white mayor in the city completed his term in 1978.

The AP article quotes New Orleans political analyst Silas Lee, who says, "Everything reflects the effects of Hurricane Katrina on the demographics of the city.... [T]hat impacted how many white candidates perceive their political fortunes."

Groups like the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People and the National Policy Alliance, which is comprised of leaders from a number of national Black organizations, have also

MUNICH 1972:

What Spielberg left out

By Joyce Chediak

Do you think that John Wayne fought at the Alamo, or that Brad Pitt and Orlando Bloom took up arms at Troy?

Of course not. But many people think the John Wayne character in "The Alamo," the Texas Ranger, was the true hero in that battle, or that, as in the film "Troy," the Greeks waged a 10-year war over a love affair. In the current culture, films "inspired by real events" and TV docu-dramas carry the weight of history. So it is valid to examine these films from a class point of view, and to ask whose story do they tell, and whose do they leave out?

Steven Spielberg, for example, is a skilled director whose films wow the audience and elicit strong emotions. Spielberg commands vast resources, and his films are widely distributed. What artistic choices has he made with his historical films?

His 1997 movie "Amistad" told of a bold uprising aboard a slave ship of that name in 1839. Many wanted to know who were these captured Africans? How did this heroic and courageous uprising succeed? The actual slave rebellion, however, was over in a few minutes. The rest of the film deals with the attempts of two Connecticut lawyers to declare the slaves "wrongfully stolen property" in order to return them to Africa.

"Schindler's List," made in 1993, concerns the Nazi Holocaust. But Spielberg did not choose to depict the heroic Warsaw Ghetto uprising, or the courageous rebellion at the Sobibor death camp in Poland. Spielberg's subject of choice is a Nazi, Oskar Schindler, who made his fortune super-exploiting cheap Jewish labor in Poland. When it was clear that the Nazis were losing World War II, Schindler had an 11th-hour conversion and saved 1,100 of his Jewish workers from the death camps, trying to save himself as well. The movie ends endorsing the creation of Israel.

And then there's "Munich."

These films examine critical times in history, but the voices of oppressed people—the Africans and Jews—who played key roles in the events are muffled or left confused. The same can be said of Spielberg's latest endeavor, the \$68 million "Munich," based upon events at the 1972 Munich Olympics. Spielberg claims this film is not historical, rather it is "inspired by real events." Most of his audience, however, knows little about the real history.

What are the events that "inspired" the film? Palestinians took hostage the Israeli Olympic team at the 1972 Munich Olympics. All the Israeli hostages were killed (who killed them is dealt with below). A Mossad (Israeli secret police) hit squad then killed Palestinians in Europe in retaliation for the deaths of the athletes. Spielberg's cited source is the book "Vengeance: The True Story of an Israeli Counter-Terrorist Team," by George Jonas.

Spielberg interprets these events, then draws his own conclusions. The director builds a construct: What could be more heinous than the killing of innocent athletes? What could be more appropriate than seeking revenge for this awful act? In the film, the actor playing Israeli Prime Minister Golda Meir reacts with revulsion to the violence at Munich. "We are a civilized people," she says, "We don't act that way." She then authorizes a hit team to kill the Palestinian planners of the Munich action. The Israeli assassins begin to kill, convinced that they fight for a just cause.

Then Spielberg knocks his construct down. As the killing continues, the hit men begin to have second thoughts. They become demoralized, and argue among themselves. "How can we call ourselves Jews and do this?" "I don't like this any more than

you do." "What we did to create Israel wasn't very pretty, but we had to do it." Yet another assassin admits he complains all the time, but always gets the job done. Another says he does not care about those they kill, "I only care about Jewish blood."

As anguished and divided as the assassins seem to become, not one resigns. They continue to kill, even though they suspect the Palestinian intellectuals and diplomats on their hit list had no connection to Munich. Though filled with angst, the assassins even decide upon some new targets to kill who clearly had no Munich link.

There are Palestinian characters in the film, played by Arab actors. But none is developed. Most of the Arabic spoken in the film is not translated.

The film focuses on the emotional disintegration of Avner, the head assassin. At the end of the film, he dreams about the Palestinians taking the Israeli athletes hostage at Munich, but he sees himself as one of the hostage takers. Spielberg's message is that violence itself is so corrupting that the Israeli assassins become like the Palestinians. It's all the same. Violence begets violence, and this endless cycle of violence must stop. There must be peace. That's the message of the movie, and it's very well done. But it's a false message.

What's false in "Munich"?

In "Munich," Spielberg says the actions of the oppressed and the oppressor are the same. And that's why the movie is false. In today's class-divided society there can be no equal sign between the defensive violence of the oppressed and the aggressive violence of the oppressor.

What really happened in 1972?

A brief look at history shows the difference. In 1948, through mass killings and terror, Zionist forces armed by the Pentagon forced 750,000 Palestinians from their villages and cities. The country of Palestine was erased from the map, and Israel took its place.

Palestinian refugee tent camps spread throughout the Arab world. There was no sanitation, no protection from the environment, no medical care, no schools.

In 1967 Israel again struck out, seized more Arab land, and forced 400,000 more Palestinians out of their homes.

MUNICH 1972:

How WWP responded

By Joyce Chediak
New York

In September 1972, most people in the U.S. mistakenly saw Israel as an underdog, as the brave little David defending itself against the giant Goliath—the Arab countries. In 1972, the racist vilification of Arab people by the press went unquestioned. On top of this, after the Munich Olympics, the media unleashed a wave of hysteria of fever pitch against Palestinians and all Arabs.

In this difficult climate, Workers World Party (WWP) distributed across the country a leaflet entitled "What every worker should know about the violence at the Olympics." This flyer told what really happened at Munich, described the Palestinian struggle, and explained why workers in the U.S. had an interest in supporting that struggle.

Distributing this leaflet was hard. In cities like New York, more WWP members and friends were needed for security—

In 1972, the Israeli Prime Minister was Golda Meir, an American school teacher from Milwaukee. She emigrated to Israel under the "Right of Return," which states that any Jewish person can automatically become a citizen of Israel. But the Palestinians who lived there for centuries cannot return. Golda Meir's most telling statement was, "There is no such thing as the Palestinian people."

By 1972, the situation of the Palestinians was desperate. Everything had been taken from them, even their identity. They were known as the "unfortunate refugees," "the poor Arabs in the camps."

The Israeli line was, "They're Arabs, let the Arabs take them in." Their plight was not told in the press.

The world had forgotten them. In marked contrast, in the West, and especially in the U.S., Israel, the oppressor in the Middle East, was portrayed as the brave little David with the slingshot fighting the giant Goliath, the Arab countries.

What really happened at the Munich Olympics?

In the name of two mostly Christian Palestinian villages in northern Israel whose population was kicked out in 1948 by Israeli occupation forces, Palestinians mounted a bold and courageous action. They seized the Israeli Olympic athletes.

The Palestinians did not conceive of the action as a suicide mission. The goal was not to kill the Israeli athletes. They wanted to call attention to the suffering of the Palestinian people and to exchange the Israeli athletes for 200 Palestinian and Lebanese prisoners held in Israeli jails. The Israeli government, however, refused to negotiate.

Who killed whom? Mohammed Dawud, who organized the Palestinian commando action at Munich and escaped assassination, blames the West German police and the Israelis for the deaths of the athletes and the two Palestinians who were killed with them (Reuters, Sept 9, 2005)

"West German police opened fire, according to eyewitnesses," stated BBC in September 1972.

Workers World Party widely distributed a leaflet in the U.S. soon after the Munich incident entitled "What every worker should know about the violence at the

Olympics" (see article this issue). The leaflet explained, "The Israeli government has always stated categorically that it will not negotiate with Palestinians. This time the West German government got its orders from the Israelis, specifically from Moshe Dayan [the general in charge of the 1967 war-JC], who had flown to Munich, and Israeli representatives at the scene of the bloodshed.

"Accordingly, the West Germans flew the Palestinians and their Israeli hostages to an airport on a NATO base, as sure

a deathtrap for both the Jewish athletes and the Arabs as a bed of quicksand. West German police and military forces had surrounded the area before the helicopters carrying the Palestinians and Israelis even landed. Almost immediately the police fired directly into the vehicles containing both Arabs and Jews, and in the end 15 persons had been killed."

It is ironic that the Israeli government worked so closely with the West German government, whose apparatus was never fully purged of Nazis, and whose police force might not have been so concerned about saving the Israeli athletes. But the Israeli government did not criticize West German police for possibly shooting too quickly.

Instead, all the blame for the death of the athletes was heaped on the Palestinians, and to this day it is repeated that the Palestinians killed the athletes. Members of the Israeli press were to point out in the 1990s that the West German police never did autopsies on the athletes to see whose bullets killed them.

Arab civilians killed in Israeli bombing

The day after Munich, the Israelis bombed villages and refugee camps in Lebanon and Syria, killing between 200 and 500 people. And they kept on bombing. UN officials report that between 1968-1974 Israeli air attacks killed 3,500 people in Lebanon, Syria and Jordan.

After Munich, Washington developed a new policy of using its veto power in the UN to protect Israel from international censure for its constant attacks on neighboring Arab countries. The first such veto was cast

Continued on page 7



defending the leafleters

—than there were leafleters, as a small but determined group of Zionists tried grabbing the leaflets or tearing them up. The Party's comrades of Jewish background played the main role in this defense.

Whenever Israeli Prime Golda Meir or other officials came to the U.S., WWP, or the Committee in Support of Middle East Liberation, which WWP helped initiate, called a protest. Banners at these protests read, "Arab land, Arab oil, for the Arab people," and "Israel—tool of U.S. rule."

In 1972, there was a large movement in the U.S. against the war in Vietnam. WWP alone in this movement also opposed Israel's war on the Palestinians. The organizers of the two coalitions opposing the Vietnam War were not only highly critical of the Palestinian struggle but also opposed bringing up other issues at Vietnam War protests. In marked contrast, WWP said that all U.S. imperialist wars must be stopped.

Workers World Party, noting the strate-

gic importance of the Middle East to U.S. imperialism, and the huge profits made by U.S. oil companies through theft of Arab oil, felt this included Washington's proxy war on the Palestinians via Israel. While opposing the Vietnam War, WWP and its allies also carried banners in these demonstrations saying, "No Vietnam War against the Arab people."

For example, the WWP leaflet following the Munich events ends with: "Should Israel ever appear to be unable to conquer the Arabs, the poor and working people of America, and especially the Black, Puerto Rican, Chicano and Native Americans, would be forced to fight and die in another unjust war." Some 32 years later, with U.S. troops deployed in Iraq, this seems especially prophetic. AP's latest report on Feb. 13 is that 2,269 U.S. soldiers have died in Iraq. □

EDITORIAL

Fatalidad en cárcel expone condiciones inhumanas

Por John Parker
Los Ángeles

Un preso negro de 45 años de edad murió y más de 100 quedaron heridos durante una pelea el 4 de febrero en la cárcel North County Correctional Facility que involucró a 2.000 presos, según el departamento del alguacil. El departamento dijo que este último incidente puede haber sido en represalia por el apuñalamiento de un preso latino por parte de un preso negro la semana anterior en la cárcel Men's Central Jail, una prisión grande en la parte céntrica de Los Ángeles.

La violencia en la prisión North County es común. Más de 150 peleas "por motivos raciales" han ocurrido desde 1990, según la policía. En el 2000, ochenta y un presos fueron heridos en la prisión. El alguacil Lee Baca mandó el cierre de todas las celdas afectando más de 20.000 prisioneros en el Condado de Los Ángeles.

Ninguno de los oficiales policíacos ha citado como factores contribuyentes a los acontecimientos violentos el hecho bien conocido de que las cárceles están sobrepobladas y faltan facilidades educativas y de recreo.

Sin embargo, se sabe que California, el estado con el sistema penal más grande de los Estados Unidos está plagada por problemas que incluyen sobrepoblación y falta general de atención a la salud básica y seguridad de los presos.

Según la organización Reforma Penal Internacional, que proporciona materi-

ales para el entrenamiento de administradores de cárceles: "La sobrepoblación de presos en pequeños espacios construidos para una población mucho menor es inhumana, viola normas internacionales, y contribuye a una amplia variedad de males sociales que afligen a comunidades enteras".

En un artículo del periódico Los Ángeles Times del 13 de Marzo de 2005, oficiales de las cárceles de Sacramento dijeron que no podían encontrar ninguna correlación estadística entre la sobrepoblación y la violencia. Sin embargo a la misma vez, el mismo artículo señala que, "En febrero, la oficina estatal no partidaria de análisis legislativo reportó que el nivel de "incidentes" penitenciarios incluyendo asaltos, había incrementado en un 18 por ciento desde 1997 hasta 2003 —un período de aumento significativo en la población".

El estrés se eleva aún más cuando el recreo, que podría aliviarlo, se elimina. En muchas cárceles de California, las facilidades para el recreo han sido convertidas en más celdas para bregar con el aumento de la población. El artículo en el Times describió una de esas prisiones: "En un gimnasio, ahora conocido como "Dormitorio G" las canastas de baloncesto se han replegado para crear espacio para filas tras filas de camas literas de triple altura. La bulla de televisores, radios, gritos y risas, es constante, y el olor es lo que se esperaría de 225 hombres viviendo en un espacio muy reducido donde tienen que usar inodoros excesivamente usados y esperar en filas para

poder utilizar las pocas duchas existentes".

Con la creencia de que "el conflicto de razas" es la causa determinante de la violencia, el Alguacil Baca mandó a que los presos negros y latinos fueran segregados. Sin embargo, la Corte Suprema de Justicia había decidido en febrero de 2005 que el departamento penal de California tenía que poner un alto a la separación de presos por raza a menos que fuera la única manera para mantener la seguridad, puesto que esto sería una violación de la prohibición de la Constitución nacional contra la segregación racial por parte del gobierno.

Baca, como si estuviera hablando de ratones de laboratorio, dijo que la violencia racial en las prisiones es "imposible de prevenir". "Se separarán según sus razas", dijo. "Hay un código de raza. [Uno] tiene que defender su raza".

La unidad entre los presos es sin duda una amenaza más peligrosa para los oficiales. Muchos presos han hablado de los oficiales que provocan violencia y división entre los presos de distintos grupos étnicos. Algunas cárceles de California han sido sorprendidas promoviendo peleas de "gladiadores" entre prisioneros negros y latinos.

El incidente del 4 de febrero hace un señalamiento a las condiciones horribles que deben conducir a una mayor participación de la comunidad en combatir el complejo carcelero-industrial y ayudar a terminar con el aislamiento y la represión que confrontan los prisioneros, tanto masculinos como femeninos. □

Aceptando a Alito

Cualquier persona al menos un poco liberal estará de acuerdo en que el nuevo juez de la Corte Suprema, Samuel Alito, es totalmente reaccionario en casi todo los asuntos, acción afirmativa, derechos de la mujer, derechos de los obreros y libertades civiles. Si el Partido Demócrata desea mantener su imagen de tener una agenda diferente a la de los Republicanos, tendría que distanciarse de Alito.

Pero el apelar a los sentimientos progresistas de las masas para obtener la elección y luchar en contra de la ultra derecha son dos cosas muy diferentes. Todos los grupos en pro del Partido Demócrata que representan movimientos masivos—el movimiento sindical, el movimiento de la mujer, el movimiento de derechos civiles y otros—querían que el partido tratara de obstruir la nominación de Alito por Bush. Los Demócratas no tenían la mayoría para hacer esto en la votación para la confirmación. Pero hay un mecanismo por el cual un partido minoritario en el Senado puede parar a la mayoría: es el "filibuster", maniobra obstruccionista por medio de la prolongación de un discurso para aplazar una ley.

Toma 60 votos en el Senado para dar fin a un debate sobre cualquier tema, llamado "cierre del voto". A menos que miembr@s del partido minoritario, en este caso Demócratas, crucen y voten con la mayoría, el debate puede continuar indefinidamente. Esta táctica fue usada por los Republicanos en 1968 cuando ellos estaban en la minoría. Su táctica de usar este método de prolongación forzó al entonces Presidente Lyndon Johnson a retirar su nominación para Abe Fortas a la Corte Suprema.

El 30 de enero, la administración de Bush recibió la seguridad de la nominación de Alito cuando el Senado pasó una resolución de cierre de debate aceptada con 72 votos a favor y 25 en contra. Solo 24 de los 44 miembros demócratas en el Senado votaron en contra, junto con un independiente. Si todos los 44 demócratas, o aún solo 40, hubieran votado en contra, el debate hubiese continuado y la nominación hubiera sido prolongada.

Un día después se dio el voto sobre la confirmación de Alito. Esta vez, 40 demócratas votaron en contra. Pero solo fue un gesto. Todos sabían que su nominación ya estaba asegurada.

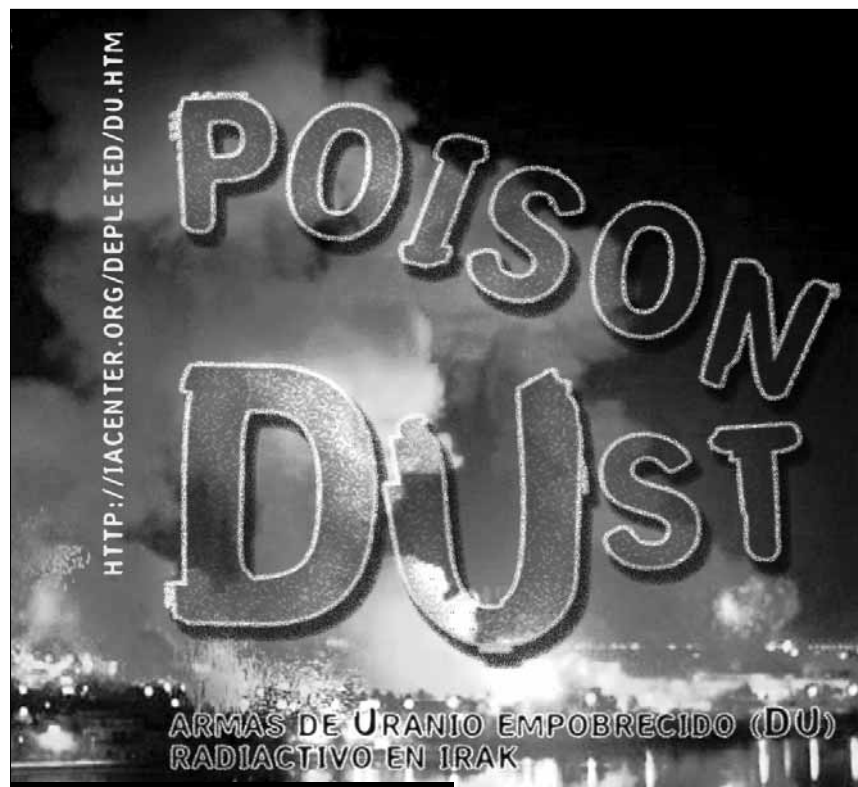
Los demócratas que habían votado por el cierre del voto anteriormente, podrían ir ahora a sus constituyentes y decir: "Tratamos de ayudarles. Yo voté en contra de Alito." Pero ellos y los dirigentes ricos de este país quienes dan dinero a ambos partidos saben que el partido cedió a la presión de la derecha cuando realmente se necesitaba. □

'Polvo venenoso' ahora en DVD

Un video documental que abrió los ojos de muchas personas sobre el uso criminal por el Pentágono de uranio reducido (DU) en armas modernas acaba de ser reemitido en formato DVD. El film "Polvo venenoso" ha sido convertido en un DVD de 84 minutos por el Lightyear Entertainment. También incluye información sobre el uso de DU en Vieques, Puerto Rico, y un artículo escrito por Sara Flounders, co-directora del Centro de Acción Internacional. Está ahora disponible en las tiendas y a través de leftbooks.com.

La cineasta Sue Harris entrevistó a soldados estadounidenses llegados de Irak, donde habían sido expuestos al polvo radioactivo creado cuando casquillos cubiertos con DU son estallados. Hay muchos soldados que sufren de enfermedades misteriosas y tienen hijos nacidos con defectos congénitos. El Pentágono usa DU para recubrir proyectiles y vehículos porque es extremadamente duro — además de barato, siendo producto de deshecho resultante de programas de energía nuclear y armas.

El documental señala que un tercio de los soldados estadounidenses que participaron en la Tempestad del Desierto, la primera guerra contra Irak, ahora tienen incapacidades. El pueblo iraquí tiene aún más para preocuparse. Los iraquíes viven en un medio ambiente que estará envenenado por DU por cientos de miles de años.



Música por Movement in Motion, Catherine Moon, the Fourth Wall Players, Pam Parker & Jobari Namdar-Parker.

El film incluye entrevistas con el ex Procurador General estadounidense Ramsey Clark, el periodista Juan González del New York Daily News, el eminente físico Dr. Michio Kaku, y muchas otras personas. □

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