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From Iraq to Afghanistan Pentagon attacks, people fight back

By Greg Butterfield

June 20—"Resistance is futile," the catchphrase of Star Trek villains The Borg, might well be the slogan of both the Republican and Democratic parties in this midterm election year.

Yet, like the stalwart crew of the Starship Enterprise, millions of people from Iraq to Afghanistan, and even here in the belly of the beast, know that resistance is not only necessary, it is inevitable—and indeed, sometimes the only hope for survival.

Washington fears resistance. Its occupation forces are in crisis. The proof is in the twin assaults now under way in the Iraqi city of Ramadi, population 400,000, and in villages throughout the southern Afghan mountains, aimed especially at punishing the wide civilian support for resistance fighters.

World condemnation has exposed the torture of 460 imprisoned "terrorist suspects" at the U.S. Naval base at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, and the network of U.S.-run torture camps around the globe. In four-and-a-half years, only 10 individuals held at Guantanamo have actually been charged with crimes. On June 12, three prisoners committed suicide—a desperate act horrifically labeled "terrorism" by the Pentagon.

Here at home, 1st Lt. Ehren Watada, hailing from Hawai'i and currently stationed at Fort Lewis in Washington state, electrified anti-war activists and fellow soldiers June 7 with his refusal to deploy to Iraq. He won't go, he said, because it would make him "a party to war crimes" and the "wholesale slaughter and mistreatment of the Iraqi people."

Watada told the June 14 Army Times, "There are a lot of people in the military supporting me." He cited handshakes from noncommissioned officers and emails from NCOs and field

grade officers thanking him for speaking up.

More than 130,000 U.S. troops are stationed in Iraq, and over 20,000 in Afghanistan. Some 2,500 have been killed in Iraq since the occupation began in March 2003.

"Put yourself in my shoes," Watada said. "Go in front of the country and do what I did and have to face the consequences of those actions. If they call me a coward, I want to see them do that."

Watada's refusal to fight what he calls an illegal war inspired the First United Methodist Church of nearby Tacoma, Wash., to declare itself a sanctuary open to service members who don't want to go to Iraq.

Through the looking-glass

While resistance shakes the empire, the whole U.S. population is subject to a full-court press by the Republican administration of President George W. Bush and the party's congressional majority. Their aim: to re-sell the "War on Terror," with special emphasis on bolstering the Iraq occupation.

Driving this renewed propaganda push is fear of a Republican rout at the polls in November, as the working class and other sectors grow increasingly disgusted with the human and financial costs of the war in Iraq—including a price tag now topping \$318 billion. (Telegraph, June 16)

The most conservative estimates of Iraqi casualties begin in the tens of thousands. Many believe the true figure is over 100,000 civilians killed. Iraqi casualties are grossly under-reported by the U.S. corporate media, when they're mentioned at all.

Even so, the growth of the resistance has led to more informa-

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James Connolly & the Irish struggle



James Connolly



Bryan G. Pfeifer

PHOTO: LAL ROOHK

The following is adapted from a speech by Bryan G. Pfeifer, a contributing editor of Workers World, delivered at the May 13-14 Workers World Party conference titled, "Preparing for the Rebirth of the Global Struggle for Socialism" in New York City. The Boston branch of WWP is hosting a forum on "The 1916 Irish Rebellion, James Connolly, and the 1981 Hunger Strikers," June 24, 1 to 4 p.m., at 284 Amory Street, Jamaica Plain, Mass.

This year, the vibrant and unconquerable spirits of the leaders and participants of 1916 and 1981 are being commemorated internationally for their selfless sacrifices to free Ireland from colonialism, capitalism and other forms of imperialist oppression. The Irish masses have been imbued with this spirit for over 800 years.

Both the 1916 and 1981 actions of the Irish revolutionaries inspired the masses, thus widening the political and social space for propelling the social revolution for a free Ireland. These steadfast actions also revealed to the world the nakedly barbaric nature of British (and U.S.) colonialism in Ireland.

The 1916 Rising pushed the international socialist and communist movements forward by attempting to create the second socialist revolution after the Paris Commune. Its earth-shaking impact helped create and build the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution and many socialist revolutions in the 20th century.

The Rising, both its mistakes and advances, is studied closely by revolutionaries. It inspires socialist and anti-colonial people's struggles, such as those of the Puerto Ricans and Palestinians, today.

James Connolly, a socialist labor organizer, Republican, and principal leader of the Rising, ranks as one of the most unique and important figures in Irish and all revolutionary history.

Bobby Sands in his prison writings hailed Connolly, a hunger striker at one time himself, as his most revered fighter for Irish freedom. May 5 was the 25th anniversary of the death of the gallant Sands after a 66-day hunger strike for political status. On March 1, 1981, nine of Sands' comrades also died on the strike. The hunger strikers and many other republican prisoners carefully studied Connolly's teachings.

The Rising—and Connolly's contributions—were an inspiration and guide for Elizabeth Gurley Flynn, Lenin, Ho Chi Minh, Che Guevara, Don Pedro Albizu Campos, Mairead Farrell and many other working-class and oppressed revolutionary leaders internationally.

The road to 'The Rising'

Ninety years ago, after the 1916 Rising begun April 24, Connolly was critically wounded on May 12, strapped to a chair in Kilmainham prison in Dublin, and barbarically assassinated by the British. Fourteen other leaders of the Rising were also murdered by the British in prison after surrendering. Over 1,300 were wounded or killed in battle and many more imprisoned.

Connolly had become politically conscious as a teenager in Edinburgh, Scotland, where he was born to Irish immigrant parents. He later moved to Dublin and formed the Irish Socialist Republican Party.

As a socialist, Connolly advocated unity with nationalists, but maintained that workers needed an independent program and organization to achieve socialism.

"If you remove the English army tomorrow and hoist

the green flag over Dublin Castle," Connolly wrote in the pamphlet "Socialism and Nationalism," "unless you set about the organization of the Socialist Republic, your efforts would be in vain. England will still rule you, through her capitalists, through her landlords, through her financiers, through the whole array of commercial and individualist institutions she has planted in this country and watered with the tears of our mothers, and the blood of our martyrs."

Added Connolly, "Nationalism without socialism—without a reorganization of society on the basis of a broader and more developed form of that common property which underlay the social structure of Ancient Erin [Ireland]—is only national recreancy."

Connolly traveled to the United States in late 1902 for a Socialist Labor Party speaking tour, and stayed until 1910 when he returned to his homeland. As a member and founder of the Industrial Workers of the World and as a member of the Socialist Party and SLP, he supported national-liberation struggles, self-determination for oppressed nationalities and socialism the world over.

Connolly—fluent in German, Gaelic, Italian and English—was an expert on united front strategy. He was a brilliant trade union tactician and strategist. He traveled throughout the United States during these years fighting for industrial unionism. He was involved in many working-class and theoretical battles, most notably with the SLP's Daniel DeLeon, and worked to win all workers but particularly the Irish to socialism.

Connolly's parting shot in the United States was against the U.S. Steel Trust in 1910, when he took over, temporarily before he left for Ireland, as managing editor of The Free Press. This Socialist Party newspaper in McKees Rock, Pa., published extensive coverage of the mine and tin and other workers' strikes as well as other pitched battles against the robber barons. When the editorial staff was charged with violating the Alien and Sedition Act and imprisoned for supporting the strikers, Connolly ably guided the paper for a few issues, often giving lessons on various strike strategies.

In his first issue as Free Press editor, Connolly challenged a racist article in the previous issue and published an anti-racist British Socialist labor leader's letter supporting the Black workers in the Rand Gold Mines in Johannesburg, South Africa.

Connolly the theorist

"Labor in Irish History," Connolly's major Marxist theoretical contribution, was first published in 1910 after his return to Ireland. It is a profound historical materialist analysis of Ireland's development, specifically as Britain's first colony. Connolly analyzed communalism in Ireland and traced the country's stunted progress after its colonization by England in the latter half of the 12th century. He concluded with developments at the beginning of the 20th century.

Like Marx, Engels and Lenin, Connolly showed how Britain developed as a capitalist state and the world's first imperialist power by forcefully under-developing Ireland's economy and using this colonized country as an

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BOSTON

Sat., June 24
Workers World Forum. "The 1916 Irish Rebellion, James Connolly and the 1981 Hunger Strikers." In honor of the 90th anniversary of the Irish Rebellion/Easter Rising led by James Connolly and the 25th anniversary of the 1981 Hunger Strike, this forum will address the Irish and other national liberation movements in the last century of world struggles for socialism. 1-4 p.m. Free and open to the public. At 284 Amory St. (The Brewery), Jamaica Plain, MA (Stonybrook, Orange line T stop).

LOS ANGELES

Fri., June 23
The U.S. Role in Darfur, Sudan. Featuring: Isma'il Kamal, co-founder Sudanese-American Society and Larry Holmes, secretariat member, Workers World Party. 7:30 p.m. At 5274 W Pico Blvd #203 (between Fairfax & LaBrea). For info phone 323-936-7266.

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Two of Somerville 5 receive verdicts

By Phebe Eckfeldt
Boston

On June 17, after six days of trial, the jury in the case of two of the Somerville 5 returned its verdict. Part of the verdict acknowledged that Calvin Belfon Jr. and Isiah Anderson had the right to defend themselves and others against a brutal racist police attack.

Belfon and Anderson, along with Earl Guerra, Marquis Anderson and Cassius Belfon—all Black teenagers ranging in age from 15 to 18—were beaten, clubbed and maced on April 20, 2005, by white police officers in Medford, Mass. The youths, who came to be known as the Somerville 5, were student-athletes at Somerville High School at the time.

The five were at a carnival when a Medford cop approached Calvin Belfon, made a remark, punched him twice in the face and kned him in the groin. He defended himself by punching the officer back.

Several cops then jumped on Calvin Belfon and began clubbing and beating him. When Isiah Anderson tried to intervene to help his friend, the cops attacked and beat him along with the other youth. Anderson defended himself and also came to the defense of the others.

All five were arrested. Calvin Belfon was charged with seven counts, including charges of assault and battery on a police officer and on a public employee (the police) and with a dangerous weapon, along with resisting arrest and disorderly conduct. Anderson was charged with 11 counts of similar charges.

The jurors were in their early 20s and all white except for one Black woman. They found Calvin Belfon not guilty of five of the assault and battery charges. But the jury found him guilty of one count of disorderly conduct and one count of resisting arrest.

The jury found Anderson not guilty of seven of the 11 charges, including assault and battery on a police officer and with a deadly weapon. But they found him guilty of two counts of assault and battery on a public employee—which is a lesser

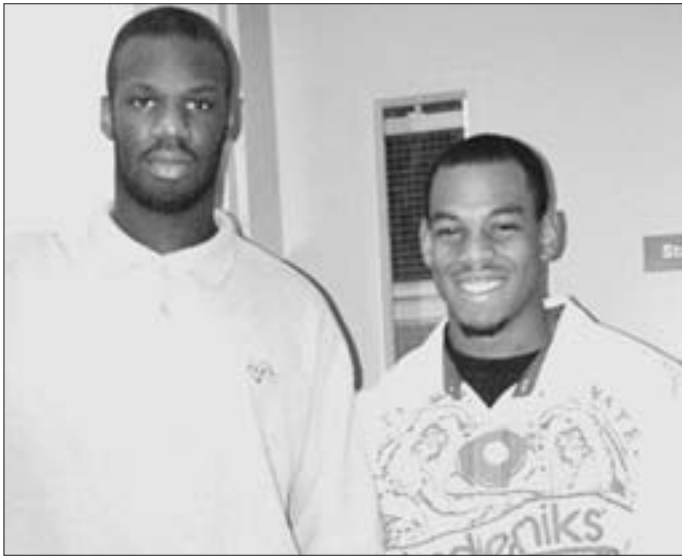
misdemeanor than assault on a police officer—and on one count each of disorderly conduct and resisting arrest. All the guilty charges are misdemeanors.

The defendants' lawyers based their case on a Massachusetts law that states in part: "Where [a police] officer uses excessive or unnecessary force to subdue the arrestee, regardless of whether the arrest is lawful or unlawful, the arrestee may defend himself by employing such force as reasonably appears to be necessary." *Commonwealth v. Moreira*, 388 Mass. 596, 601 (1983).

Calvin Belfon Sr. said: "The fact that the jury found them not guilty on most charges shows that Calvin and Isiah spoke the truth and were heard and understood by the jury. I want to thank the community for their support, for coming every day to the trial. It made a big difference. The trial showed that the youth are not what the cops made them out to be. These young men have a future and goals and a direction. But it is not over yet, we must still keep on fighting."

Elizabeth Belfon, Calvin's mother, told *Workers World*: "The jury ruling proves that Calvin and Isiah were innocent all along. I think that all the charges should have been thrown out. Why is Isiah being charged with anything? Isiah is a hero. He came to the defense of the other youth who were being beaten. He helped save my son. He did what not a lot of adults would even do."

She continued: "It sends a message to other youth that they need to stand up for their rights. They need to know that they can go to an organization like the Committee to Defend the Somerville 5 and the Women's Fightback Network and not have to give themselves over to the prosecutor. Young people need to know that they can defend themselves if they are being racially profiled or brutalized by the police."



WW PHOTO: LIZ GREEN

Isiah Anderson and Calvin Belfon at a benefit concert for their case March 25.

Tony Van Der Meer, co-chair of the Boston Rosa Parks Human Rights Day Committee, told *WW*: "Justice is not what someone gives us, it is something that we must demand and take. The case of the Somerville 5 speaks to the need for having a real 'jury by your peers' trial. Eleven whites and one Black female is clearly not a jury of one's peers, especially when the case is about racial profiling and police brutality in the city of Medford where the police have a reported reputation for lawlessness.

"The truth of the matter is that the

defendants are heroes for defending their First Amendment rights and their right to self-defense in the wake of excessive force by racist cops. The defendants are young men who are studious and active. They had no guns, knives, drugs, etc. Yet they stood up for their rights and were convicted. They at least know that if the police who are supposed to 'serve and protect' fail, as usual, in doing so, but instead become the victimizer, then we all have no other choice but to protect and defend ourselves—like the survivors in New Orleans where the government left the people there to die," Van Der Meer concluded.

Bob Traynham of the Committee said: "There were supporters, Black and white, in the courtroom every day. On the final day we had more than 40 people in the courtroom from many organizations. We feel that the community support was decisive in the outcome of this case."

Supporters are being asked to pack the court again on June 29 for the sentencing hearing. Supporters are also urged to write letters of support for Calvin Belfon and Isiah Anderson and send them to: Judge Janet L. Sanders, Cambridge District Court, 40 Thorndike St, Cambridge, MA 02141.

The trial for the remaining three youths is scheduled to begin in September. □

Survivor of racist lynch mob dies

By Larry Hales

Dr. James Cameron, founder of the Black Holocaust Museum in Milwaukee, Wis., died June 11. His funeral will be held on June 19—Juneteenth. It is a fitting tribute to both Cameron and the holiday. He was a staunch fighter for Black liberation, and Juneteenth is the holiday that celebrates Black people's freedom from chattel slavery. Juneteenth actually commemorates the day of June 19, 1865, when slaves in Texas and other areas were finally freed, but it has come to symbolize freedom for Black people.

Dr. Cameron was 92 when he died. He had lived through every ill of racism in this country, even a lynching. At 16, Cameron and two friends were kidnapped by a racist mob from a local jail, for supposedly having killed a white man during a robbery and raping his companion. The companion would later say that no rape took place.

The mob severely beat the young men and hanged the other two. They were about to hang Cameron when someone shouted out to let him go.

In 1988, Dr. Cameron would found the Black Holocaust Museum, displaying the hundreds of years of chattel slavery, rape and murder of Black people.

Rarely does history speak of the thousands who were lynched by the Klan or other racist groups, or of how big the Klan was. But when Dr. Cameron watched as his friends were murdered, there were nearly 10,000 people cheering rabidly for the young men's death.



PHOTO: A JOB IS A RIGHT CAMPAIGN

James Cameron, Jeff Rivera of Zapatista Movement and *WW*'s Monica Moorehead at Black Holocaust Museum in 2000.

Dr. Cameron would remember: "I can never forget the mobsters breaking into the jail. They surged forward in one great lunge, knocking and trampling the Black prisoners around me. Some of the mob got their hands on me right away, three on each side, and then the merciless beating began."

He dedicated his life to the fight against racism. He helped organize numerous protests against the Klan in Milwaukee and in Marion, a town in a state that was a base for the Klan. At one point in Indiana in the 1930s there were 20,000 registered Klan members.

He also was a proponent of armed self-determination for Black people, feeling that Black communities had a right to defend themselves from racist violence. At a rally against the Klan in 1998 he said, "The only way we're going to get rid of the Klan is if the people do it themselves.... rip their robes off and kick their asses out of town." □

WW interviews Puerto Rican muralist

The Puerto Rican Cultural Center in Chicago and its allies in the Local Initiatives Support Corp. and the Division Street Business Development Association are planning a whole week of activities around the theme "From Memories of Resistance To Communities of Hope: Commemoration of the 1966 Division Street Riots."

These activities include everything from the 29th annual Puerto Rican People's Parade to poetry readings and a new theater production. An important event in this series took place on June 14: "Reclaiming Space-Affirming Our Culture: Paseo Boricua Celebrates A New Mural."

Community-based artist Martin Soto is in the process of creating a beautiful new mural at the corner of Division and Washtenaw depicting the 1966 uprising. Workers World writer Eric Struch spoke with Soto about the new mural's political significance.

WW: What are the main issues facing the Puerto Rican community in Humboldt Park today and how does the mural address these issues?

MS: Gentrification is a pressing issue in this community, and having art in a permanent mural stands as a testament to the resolve of Puerto Rican people not to be pushed out of yet another community. These physical affirmations of our identity are put up on walls and built into the wall, so they're in—not necessarily in a desperate sense—but when there's no other recourse, we are attaching our hopes onto this wall and holding on to dear life, like in a hurricane maybe. I think this mural, at least, I wanted to be an anchor, to be a physical anchor to all my people. There's a reason why they asked me to do it. And I know because I have such a love for my people, man. You know what I'm saying? And I'm putting it into this wall because if it wasn't that, I'd put all my money into every single possible property in this whole neighborhood. If I was a multi-billionaire, I would literally just buy it and give it to Puerto Rican people.

Right on.

Next: Chicago uprising 40 years ago

Draw the line at Delphi

Auto workers face historic challenges

By Jerry Goldberg

Since October 2005, when Delphi Automotive went into bankruptcy after its unions rejected management's outrageous demands for a 65-percent wage cut along with Draconian benefit cuts and mass layoffs, the fight there has been closely watched by all who are actively engaged in the class struggle. Would the unions draw the line at Delphi against the massive cutbacks being imposed on workers in every major industry, and especially against the use of the bankruptcy courts as the new ruling-class weapon to accomplish this?

The objective conditions for a working-class victory seemed to exist. Unlike most bankruptcy situations where the workers are fighting an isolated and failing company, a strike at Delphi would immediately shut down General Motors operations at the precise moment when GM is introducing a new product line to regain its diminished market share.

Significantly, from the first bankruptcy announcement, the rank and file began mobilizing for the battle. They formed the organization Soldiers of Solidarity. They had meetings and demonstrations all over the country to galvanize the workers. They developed websites to keep the workers informed. And they staged slowdowns called "work to rule" at Delphi plants nationwide.

A recent UAW strike authorization vote passed overwhelmingly, as did a previous vote by Delphi members in the International Union of Electrical Workers/Communication Workers of America.

However, the prospects for a successful battle at Delphi were dealt a severe blow on the eve of the June 12-15 UAW convention. The UAW negotiated a "buyout" package at Delphi funded by General Motors.

This package is an attempt to remove the higher-wage workers at Delphi, and

open the door for their replacement by new hires and temporary workers—who already come in at a wage scale more than \$12 an hour below the current work force under the two-tiered wage scale previously negotiated.

In essence, this "buyout" package was a capitulation by the UAW leadership to the demand by Delphi management and GM to fundamentally restructure Delphi wages and benefits and eliminate three-quarters of the work force.

Is restructuring a "farsighted solution"? In his speech to the convention delegates, UAW President Ron Gettelfinger said, "They [GM, Delphi, Ford] demand new and farsighted solutions and we must be an integral part of developing those solutions."

General Motors and Ford, egged on by Wall Street, are attempting to use this temporary shift in the U.S. market, and the losses they have suffered as a result, to fundamentally restructure the auto industry. They want to lower the wages and benefits of auto workers and eliminate tens of thousands of jobs.

Delphi, which was part of GM until it was spun off in 1999, is the first step in this process.

In his report to the UAW convention, Gettelfinger correctly pointed out that the current crisis facing GM and Ford and their parts suppliers is not a product of a downturn in U.S. auto sales, which continue at relatively high levels. GM and Ford have lost market share simply because they continued to produce gas-guzzling trucks and SUVs, where the rate of profit is highest, when the market for these vehicles started dwindling, especially with the rise in gas prices. As a result, they lost sales to their competitors like Toyota, Honda and Nissan.

Still, GM made profits of \$2.8 billion in 2004, \$3.8 billion in 2003 and \$1.7 billion in 2002. Even from a bourgeois point of view, the idea that these corporations can-

not operate profitably with a decently paid work force is a lie.

Buyouts—a bad choice

It appears that many Delphi workers are taking buyouts. They feel they have no choice when their union leadership is encouraging them to do so rather than offering a perspective on how to fight back against the corporate vultures.

Unfortunately, they may be in for a rude shock in the future. Many workers taking early retirement believe they will be getting a GM pension. But as Greg Shotwell, an organizer for Soldiers of Solidarity, wrote in his "Live Bait and Ammos" numbers 76 and 77, these workers will be getting a Delphi pension.

In other words, their future pensions will be dependent on a shrunken corporation that won't hesitate to use bankruptcy to escape its benefit obligations. In fact, even in the best-case scenario, Delphi will have a \$3.1 billion pension shortfall even if it gets the cuts the bosses want. Moreover, under the UAW-GM-Delphi Special Attrition Program, GM is obligated to cover health benefits for Delphi retirees only through October 2007.

In a June 18 report headlined "UAW Dissenters Speak Out," the Detroit Free Press wrote: "Greg Shotwell is currently the most recognizable dissenter. Shotwell approached the center aisle microphone Monday with confrontation on his mind. 'What happens if Delphi stops paying on the pension fund after the GM benefit guarantee expires?' UAW Vice-President Richard Shoemaker shot back: [He] told Shotwell he was out of order but said he would answer the question privately."

A dissenter from the group Members for Change said: "Power at the bargaining table comes from an involved, informed, empowered and mobilized membership and community support. We believe it's time for a change."

The corporations want to take advantage of the crisis to raise their rate of profit. Unfortunately, rather than fighting back, the Gettelfinger leadership seems to have accepted the need for what he termed in his convention report "structural challenges" in the automotive industry. Earlier this year, he negotiated unprecedented mid-contract cuts in health benefits at Ford and GM. Now the UAW leadership seems prepared to cave in to Delphi's demands for a fundamental lowering of wages and massive job eliminations.

But the UAW workers' struggle to maintain a living wage and decent benefits for themselves and to show the way for the entire working class is hardly over. For one thing, there is still no contract in place at Delphi. And next year, all the UAW-GM, Ford and Daimler-Chrysler—contracts are up. You can believe the battle lines will be drawn.

An interesting offshoot of the buyouts being offered by GM and Delphi is that many UAW local union leaders with loyalty to the Gettelfinger leadership are high-seniority workers who are taking advantage of these buyouts. Hence, a whole new leadership is about to emerge across the UAW. This is an opening for activists like those in Soldiers of Solidarity to rebuild a fighting leadership in the union.

At the convention they were successful in eliciting 35 delegates to sign onto a statement entitled, "Draw the line at Delphi." This was a statement with a militant perspective against concessions and lay-offs. It advocated solidarity with the immigrant workers' movement as well.

The upcoming battles in the UAW will have consequences for the entire union movement. The working class will find its way to reverse the tide of corporate take-backs and instead go on the offensive to win living wages and benefits for all workers in this, the richest country on earth. □

In LA and NYC

Activists plan immigrant rights campaign

By Heather Cottin

Activists on both coasts met on June 17 to launch a summer of struggle for immigrant rights and worker unity. The March 25th Coalition in Los Angeles and the May 1 Coalition in New York convened planning conferences to address Washington's reactionary policies, which are geared to incite racism and worker disunity in the U.S.

The two coalitions have been working in tandem since early spring to build a national movement. They helped organize millions to march on May Day for immigrant rights.

They are putting forward a slate of demands: full legalization of all undocumented persons; no border walls; no detention and deportation of immigrants; protection of civil rights for all; no "guest worker" slave labor program; opposition to the "criminalization" of immigrants; full worker rights for all; reunification measures for immigrant families; repeal of sanctions on employers of undocumented workers; and no to both the Sensenbrenner bill (HR-4437) and the Hagel-Martinez bill (S-2611).

The New York conference met at a school in Jackson Heights, Queens, a community

of diverse nationalities from Asia, the Caribbean, Africa and Latin America. It broke down into committees that addressed legal, economic and social issues.

One group discussed opposition to so-called free trade agreements, specifically the North American Free Trade Agreement and the Central American Free Trade Agreement. Together with the World Trade Organization and "structural adjustment" programs imposed by the International Monetary Fund, these mechanisms have increased poverty and unemployment all over the world and have forced millions of people to migrate from their homelands to more developed countries while enriching the transnational corporations.

This committee also went on record opposing the 1947 Taft-Hartley Bill, which the CIO has dubbed a "slave labor act."

Legalized slave labor is an intrinsic part of the immigration bills presently before Congress. It is the reason Washington wants a so-called "guest worker" program. Congressional collaborators with capital are looking to bring back the Bracero Program under which millions of Mexican farm workers provided low-wage labor in U.S. fields for more than two decades after World War II. This push to resurrect a sys-

tem of legalized slavery is designed to provide cheap labor for everything from megastores to meat-packing, from farm labor to food preparation, from construction to landscaping.

"The immigrant rights issue is a workers' issue," said Brenda Stokely, a leader of the Million Worker March Movement who headed the New York workshop on building alliances with labor unions. Vicente "Panama" Alba of Local 108, Laborers' International Union of North America, spoke of strengthening unity with anti-war, environmental and other progressive groups. Many have been slow to take up the cause of immigrant rights.

The May 1 Coalition intends to produce literature exposing the reactionary and racist campaign against immigrants and showing how the Hagel-Martinez bill would declare war on the undocumented. The bill could lead to imprisonment and deportation for millions of workers and their families. It is engineered to divide the immigrants, deporting millions while promising legal residency to others who have lived here for over five years. But anyone who ever used false identification could be punished by deportation. As Beatriz, a Colombian from the Legali-



Los Angeles May 1.

WW PHOTO: JULIA LA RIVA

zation Workshop, said, "Just about everyone who came here without documents obtained fake papers to get a job."

The conference ended with a plan to endorse national demonstrations for immigrant rights on July 15 and to support the National Grassroots Immigrant Strategy Conference, July 28-30, at American University in Washington, D.C.

The March 25th Coalition in Los Angeles devoted its planning conference to organizing a summer of protest. A teach-in on immigration will be held on July 15, followed by a rally in late July in support of day laborers. The coalition is also planning a rally in solidarity with the Black community at UCLA. The state has cut back affirmative action programs so drastically that Black enrollment at the university is at record lows.

The March 25th Coalition will join unions and unorganized workers in the Labor Day march in Los Angeles in what they hope will be part of a national day of protest and support for immigrant and worker unity. □

Oaxaca, Mexico: Mass march protests police violence

By Ruth Vela

Oaxaca, Mexico, state police—armed with tear gas, firearms and covered by helicopters—moved in hours before dawn the morning of June 14 and forcibly removed thousands of schoolteachers from the plantón, the location of a protest encampment that had been set up two weeks earlier in the central plaza of Oaxaca City.

Some 40,000 teachers have been on strike since May for higher wages. They are now demanding that the governor of Oaxaca State be impeached.

Witnesses said police fired into the crowd, and local media reports claim two dead. Police fired large amounts of tear gas indiscriminately into the crowd, including from police helicopters.

Reports are that 92 people were injured by the police assault. A pregnant woman suffered a miscarriage as a result of the police violence.

Although the local citizens have re-occupied the city's central square, there have been reports of people being killed by the police, with many others injured, arrested or "disappeared." According to state officials, two police officers were also being held hostage by teachers. If true, this is an indication that the teachers are not taking the police attack lightly.

Mexico City leaders of the National Coordinating Body of Educational Workers (CNTE) also said that two teachers had been killed in the attack, and six "disappeared." (El Universal, June 15) Meanwhile Oaxaca Gov. Ulises Ruiz Ortiz had the audacity to deny in an official TV and radio address that any teachers had been killed.

Mexican President Vicente Fox refused to condemn the police action. Presidential spokesperson Ruben Aguilar Valenzuela said the federal government "respects the sovereignty" of the states, adding, "Never again will we have the presidential authoritarianism, never again the centralism; we have embraced democracy and we now have real federalism."

That same day five airplanes with 700 elite Federal Preventative Police landed in Oaxaca.

Since the attack, the third teachers' mega-march in Oaxaca took place on June 16. It brought out all sectors of civil society in a vast repudiation of the governor's repressive policies.

The march, hundreds of thousands strong, was the direct response to the bru-

tal June 14 police attack on the strikers' encampment—an attack that is being called "the straw that broke the camel's back."

Yet for many, the Oaxaca attack is just typical violence, similar to what has been seen in years past in Mexico and also sadly in the very recent past as well. In May, police suppressed a rebellion in San Salvador de Atenco, a town near Mexico City. Demonstrators opposed the government's efforts to evict flower vendors who were selling without official permits. Two protesters died in the crackdown. Also, in April two steel workers were killed in battles with police sent in to break a strike, part of a long and bitter nationwide work stoppage by miners and metal workers.

Presidential spokesperson Aguilar said the upheaval in Oaxaca, like the previous incident in San Salvador de Atenco, was not a sign of instability around the upcoming presidential election. For their part, the 40,000 teachers vowed to continue the strike, and have threatened to disrupt the presidential election voting in Oaxaca. □



400,000 march on June 16 in Oaxaca to support teachers.

Support for Mexican teachers' union

By G. Dunkel

Mexican police unleashed violent repression against the striking teachers of Oaxaca Local 22 of the Mexican National Education Workers Union (SNTE) on June 14. Using tear gas and weapons, the police raided the union hall and arrested union leaders.

SNTE—along with a number of progressive unions in the United States, Canada, the Caribbean and Latin American countries such as Ecuador and Argentina—is an active member of the Initiative for Democratic Education in

the Americas.

Hundreds and hundreds of union resolutions expressing solidarity have poured into SNTE headquarters. Here is a selection from a resolution passed unanimously at the June 15 delegate assembly of one member of IDEA, the Professional Staff Congress of the City University of New York, AFT Local 2334:

"Resolved, that PSC-CUNY join in the growing international condemnation of this state violence to break the Oaxaca teachers' union; condemns the state police attack on our striking brother and sister teachers in Oaxaca; fully supports

the demand of Local 22 of the SNTE for wages, adequate school funding, school buildings and supplies, and student stipends for the poor; and expresses admiration for their courage and organization in winning such wide public support of their struggle and defending their encampment; and be it further

"Resolved, that PSC-CUNY calls on the Oaxaca governor and the Mexican president to end all police attacks on the teachers immediately, to return to negotiations, and to meet the teachers' just demands." □

Reproductive rights forces mobilize

By Kris Hamel
Detroit

The struggle for reproductive rights, particularly women's right to choose abortion, is heating up.

In South Dakota On June 19, the Campaign for Healthy Families won a temporary victory when Secretary of State Chris Nelson certified pro-choice petitions to place HB1215 on the Nov. 7 ballot. That recently passed law criminalized almost all abortions in the state, with no exceptions for rape, incest or chance of harm to the woman from the pregnancy. Campaign activists filed over 38,000 signatures to repeal the law.

As a result of the petition campaign the law, which was to have gone into effect in July, will now be suspended pending the November election results. Voters will be asked to vote "No" on Referred Law 6 in order to overturn what the CHF calls the "extreme ban" on the right to abortion.

In Louisiana on June 18 Democratic Gov. Kathleen Blanco signed a strict anti-choice law, which will take effect if the U.S. Supreme Court overturns its 1973 Roe v. Wade decision that expanded abortion rights. Like the South Dakota measure, the

Louisiana law has no exceptions for pregnancies resulting from rape or incest. It includes stiff criminal penalties—10 years in prison and fines of \$100,000—for physicians who perform abortions unless to save a woman's life.

Seven other states already have such "trigger laws" on the books to outlaw abortion if Roe is reversed. Bills banning abortion are pending in Ohio and Tennessee.

Meanwhile, on June 19, the U.S. Supreme Court announced that it will review a California court ruling against the federal "Partial-Birth" Abortion Ban Act of 2003. The biased language of that law refers to certain third-trimester procedures used to terminate pregnancies.

In February the high court agreed to rule on a U.S. Court of Appeals decision in Nebraska that struck down the federal law as unconstitutional and imposing an undue burden on women's right to privacy. Now the Supreme Court will review both cases when its fall term begins in October. Anti-choice groups hope recent conservative additions to the court, Justice Samuel Alito and Chief Justice John Roberts, will result in Roe v. Wade being overturned.

In Michigan, activists are stepping up

efforts to defend and expand women's right to reproductive choices. On June 30, the Detroit Action Network for Reproductive Rights will hold a pro-choice rally and news conference in downtown Detroit—timed for the day before the South Dakota law was to go into effect.

Shalece Daniels, administrator of the Women's Advisory Center & Sharpe Clinics and DANFORR activist, told Workers World: "South Dakota was like a slap in the face, the first domino in taking away our rights. Right-wing forces have a petition drive to change the [Michigan] state constitution to say that life begins at conception and therefore make abortion illegal. We will be demonstrating on June 30 to show our resolve that a law like the one in South Dakota will never be allowed in Michigan.

"We also want to show our solidarity with the women of South Dakota in their struggle for choice. July 1 will mark a temporary pro-choice victory in South Dakota, but it will also be a solemn reminder to women everywhere that, without a struggle, choice can be taken away."

For more information, contact DANFORR at (313) 378-2369 or at danforr@sbcglobal.net. □

Connolly

Continued from page 2

agricultural outpost, a source for cheap raw materials and labor as well as military recruits. That is, Ireland, the colony, was a key material resource for Britain's ability to eventually colonize three-fifths of the globe by the most horrific means such as slavery.

Annihilating these vestiges of colonialism, capitalism and imperialism—whether of the British form or any other in his homeland—and ushering in an Irish Workers' Republic was Connolly's principal life's work. For this he gave everything, including his life.

Ed Childs and Jan Cannavan contributed to this report.

Next: Connolly in Ireland (1910-1916), The Rising, and Ireland today.

LGBT liberation: An essential working-class struggle

The following talk was given by WW Managing Editor Leslie Feinberg at the May 13-14 "Preparing for the Rebirth of the Global Struggle for Socialism" conference in New York.

Same-sex love, sex-change and gender variations are found in the ruling class and middle class, as well as the working class. So how is lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans (LGBT) oppression a working-class question?

It's true that wealthy white lesbians or gay men face bigotry—and rich women face sexism—although certainly not to the same degree as a homeless trans youth of color, or a single white woman trying to feed kids on a low-paying job.

But the difference between these two major economic classes in society is that the ruling class can't profoundly transform capitalism to create economic and social justice. Historically, their class unconsciously came into being to develop the tools of production on a mighty scale, which in turn created the modern working class.

Today the working class is the only economic force in society that has the power to revolutionize society. That's because workers and oppressed peoples do the work of the world everyday on a huge, collective scale, setting in motion the vast productive apparatus built by our class.

So it is in the class interests of working and oppressed peoples to take over collective ownership of the productive apparatus and plan production to meet the needs of all.

But divide-and-conquer ideology diverts the working class from realizing that the historic moment has ripened to unite to take power. Understanding that solidarity is in the class interests of all who are exploited and oppressed is the key to revolutionary struggle.

That's why we as communists see the struggle against lesbian, gay, bi and trans oppression as an essential component of the working-class struggle.

Fighting all forms of oppression defends lives. And it also helps build unity in the struggle by revealing to the entire working class the social and economic

inequalities that are built into the capitalist system.

Fighting LGBT oppression is an ideological, social and economic battle.

When LGBT workers are denied same-sex benefits for their partners, they are being paid less than their co-workers, which drives down wages and benefits for all workers. The LGBT-led struggle for domestic partner benefits has helped win gains for unmarried heterosexual workers, as well.

LGBT workers have to cobble together an economic support system without the benefits bestowed on heterosexual families. That's why we support the right to same-sex marriage. We are not advocates for or against marriage—we say the state does not have the right to discriminate.

We also maintain that people shouldn't have to couple and marry in order to have health care or other benefits. And we press demands faced by the most oppressed of the LGBT movement—against national oppression, police and prison brutality, gay-bashing, denial to health care access.

We fight the Pentagon brass when they wage war around the world and we fight them when they wage war on their own troops—whether that's brutality towards LGBT soldiers or sexual violence against women GIs. But we wage this struggle to reveal the character of the military in order to counter-recruit!

Ironically, the pretexts for the widening imperialist war drive have shifted towards "humanitarian interventions"—including sending the Pentagon to "save" women and gays, from Afghanistan to Iran. Articles about the plight of gay Afghans and Iraqis began appearing in the U.S. shortly before both imperialist invasions.

We don't know the whole story.

However, without any idealizing, the Taliban campaign in Afghanistan may have begun as a struggle against a form of forced sex by feudal militia commanders.

In Iraq, the death penalty may have been extended to include homosexuality and rape in an effort to close ranks with Islamic forces as imperialist invasion grew



Leslie Feinberg

imminent. But today, under imperialist occupation, U.S. media are silent about Iraqis who are perceived to be homosexual currently being targeted in a terror campaign of assassinations.

For the last year, reports that the Iranian government is carrying out state executions against "gays" have traveled the Internet.

The first and most widely touted report, that two gay youth were hanged by the government for consensual sex, turned out to be a mistranslation of the charge of same-sex rape. A widely circulated article alleging police abuse of a female-to-male transsexual in Iran never mentioned that the government there extends more rights to transsexuals than any other on the planet.

It's also not thoughtful, sensitive or precise to automatically assume or impose a universal identity of "gay" on people in oppressed countries.

Even in the U.S., there are widespread expressions of same-sex affection, love and sexuality outside of the distinct self-identifications of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and transsexual.

And self-identities and concepts in Greenwich Village or Castro St. may be very different in a Black community in Newark or a Gujarat community in Jersey City or among homeless Mexican youth living in parks in San Diego.

That's true internationally, as well. Many indigenous forms of sexuality, gender and organization of the sexes in cultures millennia-old still survive—while not untouched by thousands of years of patriarchal class societies and hundreds of years of colonial and imperialist eco-

Lavender & Red focuses on the relationship over more than a century between the liberation of oppressed sexualities, genders and sexes, and the communist movement. You can read the entire, ongoing Workers World newspaper series by Leslie Feinberg online at www.workers.org. Stop and get a subscription while you're there!

conomic, cultural and military domination. This understanding deepens realization of the complexities of human social and self-expression.

Sensitivity is critical to building true internationalist solidarity and anti-imperialist consciousness.

We are not apologists for oppression anywhere. But we will not join the chorus of imperialist demonization of countries fighting for sovereignty and self-determination. U.S. finance capital seeks to conquer, not to liberate.

Historically, British, Spanish and Portuguese and U.S. colonialism brought "anti-sodomy" laws to Asia, Africa and the Americas.

And today, in their drive for re-colonization, the CIA and Pentagon have incorporated sadistic anti-gay and anti-trans humiliation, rape and other forms of violence into their science of torture.

The propaganda by the spin doctors of finance capital that military invasion and occupation are for "liberation" of gays and women demonstrates the need to develop more LGBT and women's leadership and participation, particularly by the most oppressed, in the anti-war movement.

Our Party has made important contributions to the historical and theoretical understanding of the roots of lesbian, gay, bi and trans oppression in class society—and has been in the streets in the struggle.

As historical materialists, we have seen the evidence that human beings are not hardwired to be bigoted. Ancient pre-class societies on every continent respected greater spectra of sexuality, gender and sexes.

It was the rise of class divisions that led to laws and enforcement to regulate sexuality, degrade the social status of women, violently punish transsexuality and intersexuality, and brutally enforce norms for female and male dress and behavior. Why? To try to break up communal kinship networks, overall social organization and belief systems.

That was in the class interests of the new ruling elite. The development of the patriarchal, heterosexual family was in their class interests too.

But though it was designed to pass on wealth through male heirs, today the male-dominated heterosexual family is an oppressive institution foisted on the entire working class, as well as an economic unit for survival under capitalism.

In the last century, the left-wing of the revolutionary movement—those most successful in breaking with the oppressive ideology of millennia of class rule—has fought against state repression of homosexuality and the oppression of women.

The early revolutions that struggled to build socialism under terrible economic isolation and military pressure were not able to eradicate the social damage of centuries of class rule overnight. A revolution is a process, not a single act.

Replacing the male-dominated family as an economic unit required lifting the financial burden of survival from families, allowing individuals to live and love with-

There's no anti-gay pogrom in Iran

By Leslie Feinberg

Google the word "Iran" with the keywords "gay" or "transsexual" and thousands of English-language articles and blog entries pop up, the vast majority generated after two young men were executed in Mashad, Iran, on July 19, 2005.

Within hours, gay neo-conservative journalist Andrew Sullivan, former editor of the New Republic magazine, wrote a blog account entitled "Islamists Versus Gays."

The London-based gay rights group Outrage! posted a media release stating, "Two gay teenagers were publicly executed in Iran on 19 July 2005 for the 'crime' of homosexuality."

Gay political pundit Doug Ireland, a longtime journalist for the Nation magazine, also declared in his blog headline: "Iran Executes 2 Gay Teenagers."

In cyberspace, this interpretation raced at the speed of light down the Internet information highway.

While Outrage! claimed that the Iranian Students News Agency had published an item on the morning of July 19, 2005, say-

ing that the two young men were executed for consensual gay sex, even Human Rights Watch says the headline and the first sentence of the article make it clear they were hanged for rape, or "sodomy by coercion"—"lavat beh onf."

And some anti-Iranian imperialist media monopolies—including the New York Times, Associated Press, Fox News Channel and Times of London—also mentioned that the two were executed for taking part with at least three others in abducting and gang-raping a 13-year-old boy at knife point.

Radio Free Europe—also no friend to Tehran—ran a lengthy report on Sept. 1, 2005, entitled "Iran: Is There an Anti-Homosexual Campaign?" The article concluded, "It is clear that officially and in practice, there is discrimination against homosexuals in Iran. However, systematic repression of homosexuals does not seem to be an issue."

Project GayRussia.Ru published an online interview, dated Aug. 25, 2005, with the publishers of MAHA—an Iranian gay Farsi-language e-magazine. The

MAHA representative explained, "The LGBT situation in Iran has changed over the past 26 years. The regime does not systematically persecute gays anymore, there are still some gay websites, there are some parks and cinemas where everyone knows that these places are meeting places for gays; furthermore it is legal in Iran that a transsexual applies for sex change and it is fully accepted by the government. There are some medias which sometimes (not often) write about such issues. Having said that, the Islamic law, according to which gays' punishment is death, is still in force but it is thought not much followed by the regime nowadays." (www.gayrussia.ru)

This more nuanced view of the situation facing the LGBT community in Iran doesn't fit in with U.S. finance capital's propaganda war, which is demanding "regime change" in order to re-conquer the oil wealth, land and labor of 70 million Iranian people. In such a bellicose climate, progressives must be vigilant against any reports—real, manufactured or exaggerated—that seem to support the imperialist re-enslavement of Iran. □

Continued on the next page

March organizers to city, cops:

'June 23 Trans Day of Action will happen!'

By LeiLani Dowell
New York

Trans and gender non-conforming (TGNC) people of color and their allies held a news conference on the steps of New York City Hall June 20 to announce plans for the Trans Day of Action for Social and Economic Justice on June 23—as well as to protest the decision by the New York Police Department and Mayor Michael Bloomberg to deny organizers a permit to march down Eighth Avenue.

The news conference was organized by TransJustice, a TGNC people of color organizing group of the Audre Lorde Project, which is also organizing the march.

Gael Guevara, a TransJustice working group member, opened the news conference, describing the Trans Day of Action as a “day where trans and gender non-conforming people will come out to the streets. We will be speaking out against police bru-

tality, the lack of economic opportunities for our community, our lack of sensitive and accessible health care, and more.”

Guevara noted the significance of the march route denied by the city: “Eighth Avenue houses a lot of our social service agencies. It is an important place in the city for us and we have to be a part of it.”

Organizers also plan to take the march to the Human Resources Administration office on 34th Street to protest repeated discrimination against the community in provision of public assistance. Guevara said, “We will demand that the HRA respect our community.”

Last, organizers plan to march across 42nd Street to honor the life of Amanda Milan, a 25-year-old African-American transgender woman who was brutally murdered in an intersection near Port Authority Bus Terminal.

The march comes at a time when hate crimes against lesbian, gay, bi and trans

people have increased in the city.

Lourdes Hunter described the hardships she faces due to gender oppression and her determination to resist: “Since my tumultuous journey to New York City four years ago, I have faced everything from sexual harassment to the denial of social services. Now TGNC people are being ostracized again by the Bloomberg administration. But as long as I have breath, I will march and rally, whenever and wherever my community decides to. TransJustice will continue to fight whenever and wherever injustice occurs.”

Rickke Mananzala of FIERCE—Fabulous Independent Educated Radicals for Community Empowerment—applauded TransJustice for following the legacy of the Stonewall uprising: “What happened on June 28, 1969, did not happen in a vacuum. It happened in a moment of struggle against all injustice.”

Imani Henry of TransJustice closed the rally by first thanking the many allied organizations that had come to support the news conference, saying, “This is a moment of solidarity.” He also raised the Trans march set to occur concurrently in San Francisco, which will honor the 40th anniversary of the rebellion at the

Compton Cafeteria, an uprising of LGBT people against police brutality and public discrimination that predated Stonewall.

He ended by saying: “For the NYPD to deny permits for this march is an outrage. We have to hold them accountable—they set the tone and give the green light to the bashings that occur around the city by their actions. To deny TransJustice the right to march is furthermore an attack on all progressive movements, and all social activists in this city. We say to the city: The Trans Day of Action will happen, this year, next year and every year!”

Organizations participating in the news conference included Critical Resistance, Gay Men’s Health Crisis, International Action Center, Jews for Racial and Economic Justice, Queers for Economic Justice, Q-Wave, Sylvia Rivera Law Project, Uhuru-Wazobia and the Urban Justice Center—Peter Cicchino Youth Project.

For more information and to get involved in the march, please contact info4tdoa@alp.org or 718-596-0343, ext 18.

Dowell spoke on behalf of the International Action Center at the news conference.

Email: ldowell@workers.org

Gender oppression & class society

From a talk given by Yolanda Carrington of Raleigh, N.C. FIST—Fight Imperialism, Stand Together—at the May 13-14 conference on “Preparing for the Rebirth of the Global Struggle for Socialism” in New York City.

I’m an African-American queer woman, born and raised in the South. I’m poor and I identify with the class struggle. I understand that I’m part of a larger global struggle of oppressed people rising up against imperialism, and I’m proud to be part of that struggle. It’s 10 percent of the people that own the means of production, that control the labor of all human beings, and I’m proud to be part of the 90 percent struggling against that. I’m committed to building the movement and a party that struggles for socialism and for the people to own the means of produc-



WW PHOTO: LAL ROOHK
Yolanda Carrington

tion, to own their labor.

The Research Triangle Park region is the richest, wealthiest, most highly educated region in North Carolina. We suck the wealth from the rest of the state. People migrate to the Triangle in search of work and most of the work they get is in the service industry—hotels, restaurants, bars. Or they end up homeless.

There needs to be a revolutionary party committed to socialism in the Triangle. I want a movement that’s out in the streets, that talks to the homeless people [and] single mothers struggling on the job, and goes into the welfare office. We need a movement that places the oppressed at the head of society.

The progressive movement [also] needs to put the struggle against gender oppression at the head of our movement, because gender oppression reinforces class society. People cannot get their basic needs because of who they love, how their gender expression is. Sometimes you can’t even get a job. That needs to change. The struggle against gender oppression needs to be central to our movement.

The Duke University case that we’re struggling against right now has really shown me the way. It blew open the contradictions for me in a huge way between class, race, gender, power—entrenched power and an institution that really leeches off the working class.

Duke University’s not just a school. It’s the hospital system. It’s one of the big charitable foundations in North Carolina. Duke is our empire in North Carolina. So it’s something that we struggle against, that entrenched power. □

'Uniting Our Struggles' – WWP Boston Pride

Heightened solidarity and unity were on display at the Boston Workers World Party Pride event on June 17. This year’s forum featured LeiLani Dowell, a managing editor of Workers World newspaper; Erica Lopez of



WW PHOTO: LIZ GREEN

Somos Latin@s LGBT Coalition; and Brian Rainey of Queertoday.com. The speakers told of compelling struggles linking the lesbian, gay, bi and trans communities: recent gay bashings, the Bush administration’s anti-immigrant policies and the increasing corporatization of Pride celebrations in the United States.

—Story by Gerry Scoppettuolo



PHOTO: DIAN KILLIAN

Cleveland Pride

Antiwar and LGBT activists joined together in a militant contingent in Cleveland’s Pride parade. Organized by the Troops Out Now Coalition, the marchers drew cheers as they chanted “We’re here, we’re queer, we want the troops home” and “Stay out of Iran, get out of Iraq, born-again bigots get off our back!” —Martha Grevatt

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out economic dependence.

But technological underdevelopment, imperialist embargo and hostile military encirclement made it hard for early revolutions, struggling to build a socialist economy in isolation, to achieve that goal. However, from the early Soviet Union to East Germany to Cuba, important gains have been made.

Ultimately, as socialist revolutions develop, particularly within the imperialist countries with more technological resources, world cooperation can harness the vast worldwide apparatus of production to meet the needs and wants of all working people.

Socialism creates the material impetus for cooperation. And socialism can utilize the massive tools of mass education to raise consciousness to eradicate racism, sexism and other vestiges of bigotry and reaction.

That is what it will take to set love free from repression and fear, guilt and shame.

But today, we have got to fight against all forms of oppression in order to defend lives and to cement the kind of unity necessary to wage the class struggle, and win it.

So if you’re looking for a revolutionary party that takes the struggle against sex and gender oppression seriously, you’ve found it! □

The bitter fruit of Zionist policy

By Michael Kramer

As the 35th World Zionist Congress prepares to convene in Jerusalem on June 19, the Palestinian people are continuing their determined and heroic struggle against the colonial enterprise that has been set up throughout their most beautiful land.

The Zionist colony in Palestine calls

Protest against Israeli attacks

On June 16 Al-Awda New York, the Palestine Right to Return Coalition, held a demonstration in Union Square to protest the recent increase in attacks on Palestinian civilians by the Israeli military.

A horrifying escalation by Israeli occupation forces has included missile attacks and artillery bombardments of densely populated areas. On June 9 the Israeli Navy bombarded a Gaza beach, killing seven members of a family gathered there for a picnic.

—Story by Dustin Langley

itself the State of Israel. It rules over millions of Palestinians through brute force and an apartheid-like legal system. Millions more Palestinians have been forced into exile and/or live in refugee camps. Thousands of others at any one time are locked up in Israeli jails. High rates of unemployment are official government policy.

The Zionists call their colony a Jewish "homeland" and encourage Jewish immigration with generous financial grants and subsidized housing. In 1967 the colony expanded into Syria, where it established illegal settlements in the Golan Heights region.

Today most settlers are either religious fundamentalists or come from countries with high degrees of economic and/or social instability such as Russia, Uzbekistan and Ethiopia. Each year thousands of settlers—especially youth in their twenties—emigrate to leave behind a life of endless war, military call-ups and racism.

The colony relies on the economic, military and political support of the U.S. government for its survival. It is widely

acknowledged to possess the latest in high-tech strategic and tactical weapons systems, including nuclear weapons of mass destruction. Successive U.S. administrations repeatedly use their veto power in the United Nations Security Council to quash any anti-Israeli motions. Billions of dollars a year flow into the colony via congressional appropriations and Pentagon grants, artificially propping up the standard of living of most settlers. This prevents a mass reverse-migration that would result in the collapse of the whole colonial enterprise.

The Palestinians fight with what they have: AK-47 assault rifles and rocket-propelled grenades. This self-defense of the oppressed must never be confused with the violence of the oppressor.

In desperation some turn themselves into human bombs. Others construct ground-to-ground rockets with simple guidance systems in secret machine shops. Hundreds of these rockets have been successfully launched against settler towns and farms east of Gaza. While they have not caused great physical damage,

their effect on the morale and psyche of the settler population should not be underestimated.

The Zionists have never hesitated to utilize terrorism against the civilian Palestinian population. Targeted killings of Palestinian political leaders and militants are an everyday occurrence. Arabic-speaking Israeli death squads in civilian clothing roam the West Bank. U.S. supplied air-to-ground missiles are regularly fired into the middle of densely populated urban neighborhoods.

A large extended family picnicking on a beach in Gaza was recently targeted by artillery fire, resulting in horrendous casualties.

The four-day World Zionist Congress will have over 2,000 participants, but it is really only a "feel-good" event and photo-op for Zionist activists.

The real deliberations over Zionist policy take place behind closed doors in Washington, D.C.—in the White House, Pentagon and State Department.

Michael Kramer served in the Israeli Defense Forces during the 1973 Arab-Israeli War.

WW
FEATURE

Activists demand end to Philippines death squads

On June 14, Bagong Alyansang Makabayan (BAYAN) staged a protest in front of the Philippine Consulate in Manhattan denouncing the rise in death squads targeting activists and critics of the Arroyo regime.

The most recent killings include Manny De Los Santos, a BAYAN peasant leader from Nueva Ecija, on June 11 by two unidentified armed assailants riding a motorcycle. BAYAN MUNA representatives Noli Capulong and Sotero Llamas were also assassinated in June. A new report by BAYAN tallies over 70 killings in 2006 alone.

During the protest, four members of the Troops Out Now Coalition (TONC), of which BAYAN is a member organization, entered the consulate to confront Consul General Cecilia Rebon and Permanent Philippine Representative to the United Nations Laurel Baja over the significant escalation of political killings in the Philippines.

The encounter stretched to an anxiety-filled three hour meeting with Rebon and Consul Ed Badajos as the four protesters also put forth demands such as the withdrawal of U.S. troops from the Philippines, withdrawal of the multi-million-dollar U.S. military aid package funding the Arroyo regime, and the release of Philippine Congressperson Crispin Beltran of Anakpawis, an outspoken Arroyo critic, from illegal detention.

During the protest and meeting, pictures of slain BAYAN leaders and a miniature black coffin blocked the consulate's window display.

—Story by Dustin Langley



WW PHOTO: DAVE SCHECTER

From Iraq to Afghanistan people fight back

Continued from page 1

tion filtering out to the population here: U.S. missile attacks on residential targets, random shootings of civilians, people—including children—imprisoned and tortured without charges, all in the name of "democracy."

Topping that list is the widely reported massacre of 24 civilians, including disabled seniors and infants, by rampaging U.S. Marines in Haditha last November. (See *Workers World*, June 7, "Bush & Blair's hollow words")

How fare the Democrats? Their leaders support the "War on Terror." They backed the 2003 invasion of Iraq while the world scoffed at Bush's bogus charges about weapons of mass destruction.

Only in the last year have some Democratic politicians opportunistically jumped on the anti-war bandwagon. Yet now, even as public support for the occupation reaches new lows and calls for the troops to be brought home grow, the Democrats are running scared.

House Republicans jumped on the June 7 U.S. assassination of Musab al Zarqawi—whom the White House called the "leader of al-Qaeda in Iraq"—and President Bush's subsequent surprise visit to Baghdad to "recast an unpopular conflict as part of a broader war on terror and

totalitarianism," the *Washington Post* commented on June 17.

Never mind the fact that, as the *Post* itself had reported April 10: "The U.S. military is conducting a propaganda campaign to magnify the role of [Zarqawi] in Iraq, according to internal military documents and officers familiar with the program. The effort has raised his profile in a way that some military intelligence officials believe may have overstated his importance and helped the Bush administration tie the war to the ... Sept. 11, 2001, attacks."

Forty-two Democrats voted with Republicans June 16 for a resolution supporting the occupation. It passed 256-153. Echoing reports throughout the establishment media, the *Washington Post* wrote that the "divided" House Democrats emerged "bruised" and "on the defensive."

The Senate is expected to pass a similar resolution.

On June 16, just six Senators voted in favor of a resolution to withdraw the troops by the end of this year. And only three opposed a bill granting the Pentagon \$66 billion in "emergency funding" to continue the occupations of Iraq and Afghanistan.

As a result of this "bruising" experience, the Democratic leadership has reportedly decided to drop Iraq as a major campaign issue, focusing instead on a small increase

in the minimum wage.

Ironically, those same cynical Democratic leaders are counting on Republican belligerence to deliver the support of moderate anti-war forces in the midterm elections—even as the Democratic Party betrays its erstwhile allies once again.

Mission accomplished?

For public consumption in the United States, the death of Zarqawi and Bush's blessing on the puppet regime of Iraqi Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki are supposed to signal that the Iraqi resistance is all but crushed. Surely bright days lie ahead for the occupation troops—though of course, no one can say exactly when they might come home.

These claims have no more substance than Bush's infamous "Mission Accomplished" boast.

No one can say exactly what impact Zarqawi's death will have on the resistance. But his was only one group of many—and far from the biggest. There are believed to be at least 12 bigger resistance organizations.

U.S. military estimates of the Iraqi resistance range between 20,000 and 40,000 fighters, mostly Iraqis, according to former Bush advisor Richard Clarke, while Zarqawi's Tawhid wal Jihad group has just

"several hundred insurgents, almost all foreigners." Saudi Arabian intelligence agents, meanwhile, estimate the active resistance at 77,000 members. (*New York Daily News*, June 8, and *New York Times*, June 12, quoted in *Green Left Weekly*)

Even these estimates are probably understated, and take no account of the vast numbers of sympathizers and supporters among the general population.

Iraqi resistance fighters continue to carry out daily attacks on occupation forces and the U.S.-dominated Iraqi army and police throughout the country. Actions are common even within the "green zone" in Baghdad.

U.S. troops can't venture onto the streets without knowing that they are hated and feared by the masses, and that they are targets for military actions by the resistance. Two U.S. troops were captured and one was killed at a checkpoint 30 miles south of Baghdad on June 16.

In Afghanistan, occupation forces have long concentrated on controlling the capital, Kabul. But a recent rebellion in Kabul against the abuses and brutality of the occupation troops, coupled with a surge of armed resistance in the countryside, has shattered the illusion of relative stability.

Now comes the 11,000-troop-strong,

Continued on page 9

Who's really isolated?

U.S. policies provoke new Korea crisis

By Deirdre Griswold

June 21—The arrogant and aggressive policies of U.S. imperialism have led to another prospect of military confrontation, this time on the Korean peninsula.

The media focus is all on whether or not the Democratic People's Republic of Korea—the northern half of the divided peninsula—is about to test-launch a missile. Called the Taepodong 2, it is reported to have a range of 3,700 miles. This is presented as a major threat to the United States. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice has said a missile launch would be a “provocative act.”

In South Korea, however, the authorities are skeptical of U.S. claims. A South Korean official said “his government is not particularly alarmed by the situation and ‘doesn't understand why there is such fuss in other countries on this.’ He also said it is too early to tell if the North Koreans are trying to launch a satellite or test a missile.” (Washington Post, June 21)

The U.S. still has over 30,000 troops stationed in South Korea despite widespread, militant opposition to them. Its claims that the troops are there to protect the south from the north are rejected by the majority of southerners.

However, Washington is leaning heavily on the political establishment in the south. A planned visit by former South Korean President Kim Dae-jung to Pyongyang to meet with DPRK leader Kim Jong Il as part of ongoing discussions on north-south cooperation was postponed after Kim Dae-jung had a meeting with the U.S. ambassador to South Korea, Alexander Vershbow. (Shanghai Daily, June 21)

Ignored in the avalanche of news accounts about a possible missile launch is the fact that the DPRK is ringed by hostile U.S. forces and has been for over half a century. It has tried many times to get Washington to negotiate a peace treaty that would formally end the 1950-53 war, when Washington sent nearly 2 million troops to the other side of the globe in an effort to destroy the socialist revolution there.

Since George W. Bush included the DPRK in his invented “axis of evil,” the cloud of another possible U.S. assault has hung over any negotiations. That cloud contains more than bellicose words.

U.S. ships, planes menace region

At this moment, three U.S. Navy carrier battle groups—including three aircraft carriers, 22,000 troops, dozens of fighter planes and several heavy bombers—are assembled in the western Pacific off Guam

for the first time since the Vietnam War. They are supposedly engaged in long-planned exercises with ships of other nations, but their presence can only be seen as a threat to Asian countries.

Right off the coast of North Korea are the USS Curtis Wilbur and the USS Fitzgerald, both guided-missile destroyers. They are supposedly there to detect and track the flight of any missile, but as their designation of “destroyer” says, they also have fearsome offensive capability.

On June 16, the DPRK accused the U.S. of conducting spy flights over its coastal area for the third time that week and said there had been more than 170 such flights in the month of May.

Ever since Ronald Reagan proposed a “missile defense” system that became known as Star Wars, the U.S. has been spending billions of dollars—the total has now reached \$97 billion, according to stratfor.com—on a system that supposedly will be able to detect and intercept incoming missiles. The two ships now positioned off Korea are part of that system. Many military experts think the whole thing is an extremely expensive and possibly embarrassing boondoggle that might not work—it hasn't been tested— but whose purpose is intimidation.

Even if it doesn't shoot down anything, however, the military-industrial complex will still be laughing all the way to the bank with the billions in tax money stolen from social programs and this country's crumbling infrastructure.

The DPRK is not intimidated. It has a

very long history of political stability and unity behind leaders who have not buckled, even under the nuclear threat that hangs over their country every day. When the current tensions flared up in mid-May, the DPRK was celebrating the 40th anniversary of the day its current leader, Kim Jong Il, first began his work with the Central Committee of the Workers Party of Korea in 1966. This continuity of leadership has made it impossible for U.S. strategists to play off one group against another, as they do in so many other countries they want to oppress.

Strains in Washington, not Pyongyang

Some strains over its Korea policy are beginning to show up in the Bush administration, however, which is beset with crises of its own making all over the world.

David Straub, who retired in 2004 as head of the State Department's office of Korean affairs, has gone public with criticisms of Bush and Condoleezza Rice in what was described as “a rare public attack on the administration by a foreign service officer.” (Reuters, June 21) Even rarer is disagreement over U.S. policy toward Korea, especially from within a very right-wing administration.

“One fundamental failure of Bush's approach was the tendency to raise tensions and make South Korea nervous by stating that ‘all options’ were on the table, a phrase underscoring U.S. intentions to use force against North Korea if necessary, he said.” Straub was speaking to a meet-

ing in Washington of the Korea Club, a grouping of former officials, scholars and journalists.

It was these kinds of threats, plus the imposition of new economic sanctions by the U.S., that led the DPRK to walk out of six-party talks last November that were supposed to facilitate a resolution of the tensions. Since then, it has been calling for direct negotiations with the U.S., something Washington has refused so far.

The line from Washington, repeated in the media, is that the DPRK is isolated.

However, as U.S. military threats were reaching a crescendo, the People's Daily on June 21 announced, without comment, that Liang Guanglie, chief of the general staff of the People's Liberation Army and member of China's Central Military Commission, had met with a delegation from the DPRK's People's Army, and that cooperation between the two armed forces and nations would be expanded. The Korean delegation made the visit at the invitation of the Chinese National Defense Ministry, which has the responsibility of defending the 1.3 billion Chinese people.

Liang said, according to the article, that “China and the DPRK have enjoyed a long tradition of profound friendship” and that “close, friendly and long-term cooperation between the two armed forces has made great contribution to the revolution and construction of the two countries.”

Meanwhile, Bush was being booed by the people of Vienna, where he was meeting the Austrian president. Who's really isolated? □

Class struggle in Nepal enters new phase

By David Hoskins

After massive demonstrations that forced the retreat of Nepal's reactionary monarchy, communist revolutionaries and Nepal's interim government have reached an historic agreement dissolving the current parliament and overturning the 1990 constitution.

Negotiators from both the Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist) and the current coalition government, which contains parties of both the left and center, have reached an eight-point agreement that will pave the way for establishing an interim constitution and a new interim government that will include the revolutionaries. The agreement also calls for elections to a constituent assembly to rewrite the constitution within a year.

Leaders of the CPN(M), whose people's war has liberated most of the countryside from landlord-capitalist rule, have embarked on a nationwide campaign to train their party's cadre in preparation for elections to the constituent assembly. The party is organizing for the elections under a banner that calls for the elimination of even a ceremonial monarchy, the establishment of a democratic republic, and revolutionary land reform that addresses the deep inequalities stemming from Nepal's 237-year rule of feudal forces in collaboration with foreign capital.

Class struggle continues, under new conditions

Some elements of the Nepali ruling class have resisted these moves to establish a republican form of government inclusive of the revolutionaries.

The Nepali Congress Party's central committee has expressed its dissatisfaction

with the eight-point agreement, citing the fact that it does not require the revolutionaries to disarm as a prerequisite for joining the new interim government. The Maoists say they won't disarm as long as the current state is armed to repress the people.

The Congress Party's leader, Girija Prasad Koirala, who is also the new prime minister, has stated his party's support for a ceremonial monarchy.

A day after his remarks, protests called by the Free Students' Union erupted on campuses across the capital, Kathmandu. The students burned effigies of Koirala, called for his resignation and disrupted traffic in opposition to the continuation of any form of monarchy.

Earlier in the month the CPN(M) had organized a rally of hundreds of thousands in the heart of Kathmandu. Deputy commander of the People's Liberation Army, Comrade Prabhaker, sought to clarify his party's stance in light of recent developments. According to Prabhaker, the PLA and CPN(M) “are not tired and don't want to give up war to share power. We want to attain our goal, through as little bloodshed as possible.”

The CPN(M) organized hundreds of buses and minivans to transport supporters from neighboring districts. Hundreds of revolutionary activists distributed revolutionary literature and pamphlets calling for an end to the monarchy.

Historical precedent

No observer of the Nepalese revolution can guarantee its outcome. However, it is important to note that recent CPN(M) maneuvers are not without precedent in history.

In 1917, the Bolshevik Party in Russia competed in elections and called for all power to the popularly elected Soviets—

councils of workers, soldiers and peasants—even though at the time it first raised this slogan, it did not have a majority of the delegates. But the Soviets were genuine organs of mass authority in contrast to the existing capitalist reform government, which had replaced the hated tsar but would not change the class or property relations that held down the masses.

After the Bolsheviks played a major role in resisting an attempted counter-revolution by the monarchist General Kornilov, they began winning majorities in the Soviets. Less than a month later, in a massive insurrection, they came to power and began to implement their program of peace, land and bread. Workers took over factories, peasants chased the landlords off the land, and the Soviet government took Russia out of World War I and brought the troops home.

The Communist Party of China also maneuvered politically while not giving up control of its liberation army when it joined a coalition government in 1946 with Gen. Chiang Kai-shek. Chiang had been a nationalist during the struggle against Japanese imperialism, but became a puppet of the U.S. after Japan's defeat. The 1949 War of Liberation brought the CCP to power across the country.

In both instances revolutionary communists used elections and posts in government not as a forum for compromise but as an arena to carry out the class struggle and to demonstrate more clearly to the masses the necessity of smashing the old bourgeois state as a precondition for real revolutionary reform.

The CPN(M) maintains that it is using the current period of power-sharing and constituent assembly elections to fulfill its revolutionary goals while avoiding unnecessary bloodshed. □

Iraq to Afghanistan

Continued from page 8

U.S.-led “Operation Mountain Thrust” in four southern provinces, which includes house-to-house searches for “Taliban insurgents” by Canadian troops. It's being called the biggest operation since the invasion that toppled the Afghan government in late 2001.

The U.S. empire's problems hardly end there. Popular resistance is spreading around the globe—from the streets of Venezuela to the mountains of Nepal. Anti-imperialist governments are defying Washington and Wall Street's dictates from Havana to Pyongyang and from Iran to Palestine.

From Ramadi to Tacoma, the resistance continues. □



The true committers of fraud

Study Finds Huge Fraud in the Wake of Hurricanes," read the June 14 New York Times headline.

The conclusion was based on a Congressional subcommittee investigation headed by Michael McCaul, a Texas Republican in the House of Representatives.

Did the study look for fraud in the huge contracts handed out like slabs of pork to giant contracting and construction firms and real estate agencies?

No. The subcommittee scrutinized individuals who received money from FEMA—the multi-billion-dollar agency under the Department of Homeland Security that initially offered hurricane survivors a measly \$2,000 per family after Katrina, and then reneged on that promise. And that's just the tip of iceberg of how FEMA callously abandoned the hurricane survivors in New Orleans and the rest of the Gulf Coast.

The study's findings, based on Government Accountability Office numbers, showed that \$1.4 billion in aid to Hurricanes Katrina and Rita evacuees—a quarter of the total amount—went to "undeserving" or "bogus" victims. These include 1,000 prisoners and eight people living in one apartment who requested multiple federal aid.

McCaul, a former prosecutor, was reported to be shocked and appalled by the findings.

But what's really outrageous is that federal officials are planning to demolish 5,000 public-housing buildings for the poor in New Orleans, the city hit hardest when Katrina struck last Aug. 29 because of sub-standard levees. (New York Times, June 15)

This move by the government would sabotage the chance for the mostly poor,

Black displaced population to return home, and would worsen their already deepening housing crisis.

Part of FEMA's sabotage is also its move to cut off housing subsidies for tens of thousands of evacuees by the end of June. At the same time the Department of Housing and Urban Development is eroding the right of housing for the poor under the Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher Program that was first signed into law in 1974.

Is there any doubt where the real fraud is coming from? It's from the government, with the help of big business, which is doing everything possible to criminalize and demonize the victims of the hurricane.

Why? To make it much easier for greedy, profit-hungry private developers to come into New Orleans to build luxury housing, condos, casinos and mansions, knowing full well that the costs are far out of reach for the poor, Black displaced population. This is tantamount to putting out a welcome sign to wealthy white people to move in and change the city's economic and political landscape.

But as a Katrina evacuee said, "The people of New Orleans will not go quietly into the night, becoming the homeless of countless other cities."

Hundreds of displaced residents from the most devastated areas of New Orleans, the Seventh and Ninth Wards, have reportedly braved going over razor-wire fences, risking injuries, to clean up their own homes and apartments, many of which are labeled as uninhabitable.

Nickole Banks from New Orleans summed up the role of the housing authorities this way: "They're not giving us help and we're tired of waiting. People want to come home." □

A blow against racism

It's a victory for Rep. Cynthia McKinney. On June 16, a grand jury in Washington, D.C., declined to indict her for assaulting a police officer.

It's a victory against racism. On March 29, a cop had stopped her at the congressional entrance, refusing to let her bypass the metal detectors as members of Congress are usually allowed. McKinney, a Black woman, explained that when the white male officer inappropriately grabbed her, she struck him in response. The "assault" wasn't enough for the cops to arrest McKinney during the incident, and police even had to initially apologize.

Other African-Americans on Capitol Hill have reported similar racist profiling at the security checkpoints.

It's a victory against police brutality. Police somehow later decided that they suddenly had enough evidence to charge McKinney with the felony charge of assault against an officer. As is often the case in struggles around police brutality, the cops tried to portray themselves as helpless victims and McKinney as the aggressor.

The president of the Capitol Hill police organization says that the grand jury's decision not to indict McKinney is a blow to officers' morale. No doubt the officers are surprised and disheartened that in this one instance, the "justice" system—

which upholds tyrannical police occupations in communities of color—worked against them.

It's an anti-imperialist victory. McKinney has been targeted for years by Republicans as well as reactionary Democrats for her outspoken stances in support of the Palestinian right to return, against the war in Iraq and more. In the arena of bourgeois politics, where most politicians have little or no interest in their constituents' needs, McKinney has consistently stood out by saying the war budget should be used instead to fund people's needs. She has also helped to expose imperialist corporate interests in Africa.

Grand juries meet in secrecy, so the racial makeup of the jurors who voted not to indict McKinney is not known. But the fact that the grand jury hearing took place in Washington, D.C.—an area with a 58-percent Black population—means the probability of Black jurors is high, and that may have contributed to the outcome.

The strength of the Black population of D.C. is also why the case of Rep. William Jefferson—the Black representative from Louisiana who has helped secure funds for the area in the aftermath of Katrina—has been moved out of Washington and into Virginia. □

Cuba's Alarcón speaks to journalists in Miami

By Deirdre Griswold

It was meant to be a trap. The head of Cuba's National Assembly, Ricardo Alarcón, was invited to speak by satellite hookup on June 14 to the National Association of Hispanic Journalists, which was meeting in Miami. He was questioned by New York Times reporter Mirta Ojito, who left Cuba with her family in the 1980 Mariel boatlift.

From her very first question—"Why do you continue to suppress freedom of the press in Cuba?"—the interviewer's hostility was apparent.

But Alarcón had no trouble showing that Cuba is not the repressive dictatorship that the exile community in the United States has painted it to be. And he cited CIA sources to describe how the U.S. government has been trying to bring about "regime change" in Cuba ever since the revolution.

To the right-wing claim that Cuba has jailed 24 journalists, Alarcón said the people mentioned were arrested not for writing or expressing views different from the government's but because they were U.S. agents. He then referred to CIA documents declassified in 1997 that describe the agency's Cuba Project, sometimes called Operation Mongoose, which began in 1961.

The documents give "fascinating details on money spent paying journalists in Cuba and South Florida," said Alarcón. "Cuba has been subjected to a 'propaganda offensive,' to use the CIA's own words," he added.

These details are described in the book "The Cuba Project: CIA Covert Operations 1959-62," published by Ocean Press.

Referring to those working for the United States in its long history of invasions, blockade and subversion against Cuba, Alarcón said: "They're dependent on the foreign power that has tried to destroy our country. We have the right to defend ourselves."

He also pointed out that, while "hordes of journalists have been killed in Latin America and other places" in recent years, not one journalist has been killed in Cuba since the U.S.-supported Batista regime was overthrown in 1959.

To a question about why, with Cuba's new trade deals with China and Venezuela, the U.S. embargo should still matter, Alarcón replied that, even though the world is changing, Cuba "still has to sell and buy—for example, parts for some medical equipment come only from the United States. ... The embargo forces us to pay more for what we buy."

Cuba knows that if a U.S. company merges with or buys out a firm from another country, it will cancel any com-



Ricardo Alarcón

mercial contracts that firm had with Cuba.

Even with the blockade, however, the Cuban economy is improving. Alarcón said housing is now a priority for the government, which is building more than 100,000 new housing units this year.

Ojito accused Cuba of keeping its people from getting on the Internet. Alarcón replied that the embargo contains specific laws restricting Cuban access to the Internet, which was first developed by the Pentagon. However, he added, every single classroom in Cuba, even in remote mountain areas, has computers for the students.

Another question implied that Cuba's efforts to build socialism were a failure and that emigration to the United States is increasing. Alarcón pointed out that before the revolution, in 1958, Cuba was second only to Mexico in the number of people who emigrated to the United States. In recent years that has been declining in relation to other countries in the area, even though, under the Cuban Adjustment Act, Cubans are automatically admitted to the United States if they put a foot on its soil.

"What would happen if there was a Dominican Adjustment Act or Mexican or Haitian?," he asked, adding that tens of millions more from Latin America and the Caribbean would flock to the United States because of the vast inequality of wealth in this hemisphere.

Alarcón's effectiveness in explaining his country's positions to an audience formerly closed to Cuban representatives may explain why the New York Times still has not written about this event even though its own reporter was involved.

However, a link to an audio of the exchange can be found in the online version of "Cuba's Alarcón blames U.S. for jailings" in the June 15 Miami Herald. □

MARXISM, REPARATIONS & THE BLACK FREEDOM STRUGGLE

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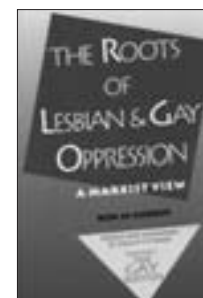


THE ROOTS OF LESBIAN & GAY OPPRESSION A Marxist View

By Bob McCubbin

This ground breaking pamphlet was originally published as the Gay Question in 1976, during the first flush of the modern lesbian and gay movement. Its unparalleled achievement was to offer a historical analysis of when, where, why and how lesbian and gay oppression developed.

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Democrats demote Rep. William Jefferson

A perfect storm of opportunism and racism

By Fred Goldstein

Crass political opportunism resulted in outright racism June 16 when Democratic Party leaders violated their own rules and precedent to oust Rep. William Jefferson from a key position on the powerful House Ways and Means Committee.

Jefferson, whose Capitol Hill office had been raided on May 20 in an unprecedented, unconstitutional police-state act by the FBI, has been accused of bribery by that racist, repressive agency but not charged.

Democratic Party rules and precedent require that no representative be forcibly removed from a special committee before being indicted. Jefferson, the first African American from Louisiana to be elected to the House since Black Reconstruction, is also the first Democratic Party representative to be involuntarily removed from a committee position by the party. A vote by the 50-member Democratic Party Steering Committee set the stage for a full caucus vote of 99-58 to remove Jefferson, leading to the full House vote that formally removed him.

The FBI claims to have videotapes, marked bills and confessions from Jefferson's associates regarding the bribery charges, which have to do with a small technology firm getting business in West Africa. The FBI is notorious for stings and frame-ups of Black political figures. Jefferson has not been charged with any crime yet and therefore has not had a chance to defend himself.

Whatever the charges against Jefferson, even if all true—and there is no reason to take the FBI's word for anything—the consequences of his alleged act are insignificant in comparison to the damaging racism displayed by the Democratic Party leadership, its humiliation of the Congressional Black Caucus—which called Jefferson's removal a discriminatory act—and its willingness to jump on the FBI bandwagon by echoing the unproven charges made in an affidavit and calculatingly leaked to the press

Furthermore, sending the FBI to raid Jefferson's congressional office, allegedly to stop corruption, ignores the pervasive corruption in Washington. Mainly white, male lobbyists are busy bribing politicians with political action funds, campaign donations, trips, dinners and promises of future jobs. The politicians then write legislation to benefit every monopolized, multi-billion-dollar industry in the U.S., from weapons to pharmaceuticals, oil, agribusiness and so on.

The drive to oust Jefferson was led by Nancy Pelosi of California, the House minority leader. The presumption of innocence was thrown overboard along with the party rules in order to pursue Pelosi's politically bankrupt electoral strategy of campaigning against the Republican "culture of corruption."

As part of the imperialist establishment, the Democratic leaders will never campaign against the police-state tactics of George W. Bush, the brutal colonial war of aggression, the racist treatment of Katrina survivors in New Orleans, the racist campaign against undocumented workers, and the imprisonment of a generation of African American and Latin@ youth.

Pelosi wants to run on the non-political platform of being against corruption—a slogan used ad nauseam by political dem-

agogues to evade attacking the real evils of capitalism—and threw Jefferson overboard in an unprincipled attempt to gain political advantage and big contributors in the 2006 elections.

Pelosi showed her racism and opportunism when confronted by Tim Russert on the May 7 airing of Meet the Press.

Russert pointed out that "The top Democrat on the ethics committee of the House of Representatives, Alan Mollohan of West Virginia, was reported, first by The Wall Street Journal, to have quietly directed at least \$178 million in taxpayer funds to a network of home-district friends, business partners, contributors, former employees. Along the way, he curiously became a multimillionaire in real estate, and federal investigators are looking at whether he failed to properly disclose scores of newly acquired assets.

"You have Congressman Jefferson of Louisiana, someone pleaded guilty and said he had paid him bribes. ... [T]he Democrats have ethical challenges, too, correct?"

Pelosi replied, "I've asked for the Ethics Committee to investigate Mr. Jefferson."

But she never responded to Russert's charges against Mollohan, who is accused of enriching himself to the tune of millions. That is because Pelosi and the

Jefferson's letter to Pelosi

June 14, 2006

Dear Leader Pelosi,

Last week's actions against me by the steering committee, at your request, and the subsequent aborted attempt to rush me off the Ways and Means Committee through a Democratic Caucus process not in accordance with the pertinent rules, has caused my constituents, my family, and me unbelievable and unnecessary anguish. As a party, our people disproportionately face challenges with the legal system, and, thus, as a party, we have always championed notions of fairness, due process, and the observance of time-honored tenets; such as the presumption of innocence. These ideals are not just niceties to be mouthed or recited, but deserve to be accorded real meaning through our daily observances of them, no matter how tempting it might be to do otherwise and whatever the high cause to justify ignoring them.

In spite of it all, however, I am still a Democrat and am concerned about the aspirations of my party to succeed. At Steering, I made three (3) principal arguments, which fall under the headings below. I herein propose a way to deal with each of them. Therefore, I am herewith making the following offer to you, and, through you, to our Democratic Caucus members to resolve the current dispute over my continuing membership on the Ways and Means Committee.

Precedent. I have pointed out, ad nauseam, that no precedent exists for the resignation of a member from any committee of the Congress, based on news reports and allegations from third parties, or even where the member is under indictment. While I think it is a very bad idea to go down the road of questioning the capacity of a member to serve on a committee in Congress while that member challenges accusations of wrong-doing against him or her, nonetheless, I am willing to abandon this point for the sake of peace and unity.

Fairness/Non-Discrimination. As an African American, it is impossible to relent on this principle. It must always be observed by our party, in actuality and in appearance. When an African American member of an exclusive committee is asked to resign his committee because of news reports or allegations of wrong-doing, it gives the appearance of unfairness and even racial discrimination if another member continues serving on an exclusive committee under Justice Department investigation as well, particularly if the other member is white, and is not subject to the same treatment. [Jefferson is referring to Rep. Alan Mollohan (D-WV) who, though under federal investigation, continues to serve on the House Appropriations Committee.]

Thus, I will take temporary leave of my Ways and Means seat, pending my clearing up criminal investigations and allegations against me, based on your request if any other member on an exclusive committee, whose actions are also under federal criminal investigation so takes leave under your request as well. A bright line rule must be established. One cannot get into making distinctions about the merits of Case A v. Case B, for example, because there is no way to truly ascertain the merits of a case without a trial or a closure of the matter by the investigating authority.

Covering My State's and My District's Interest. Since Katrina struck, I have been very active and successful in the development and enactment of policy for the recovery of my area—from tax relief, unemployment assistance, extending health programs, welfare assistance, to the availability of federal funds for long and short term recovery projects. My position on the Ways and Means Committee has been critical to my district and state in the success we have realized in these vital areas. In order to ensure that Louisiana and my district receive the attention they deserve at this critical juncture, I recommend that Charlie Melancon of my state be temporarily appointed as a placeholder for me, on the Ways and Means Committee. I have spoken to Charlie on this matter and he is agreeable to serve on a temporary basis. I have also spoken to Mr. Rangel and to Mr. Tanner about this idea, to which they interpose no objection. Charlie Melancon and I have adjoining districts that suffered similar damage, and he and I have a strong working relationship.

To conclude, if we can agree on handling numbers 2 and 3 in the manner that I have suggested in this letter, then, the dispute in which we are now engaged regarding my service on the Ways and Means committee is ended without the need for further distress, debate, discussion or divisiveness.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,
William J. Jefferson
Member of Congress

Democrats had negotiated a deal to get Mollohan to step down voluntarily from the Ethics Committee while keeping his seat on the powerful House Appropriations Committee.

Jefferson is not accused of using his position on the House Ways and Means Committee to violate the law. But Mollohan is directly accused of using his position on the Appropriations Committee for massive personal enrichment.

Pelosi publicly tried to force Jefferson to resign. When he refused, she and her cohorts forced him out. But Jefferson himself offered to step down on two basic conditions: First, that a uniform standard be applied, which would mean that Mollohan would also have to step down from an important committee post. And second, that a Louisiana representative be appointed to the committee in Jefferson's place in order to protect the interests of New Orleans, which is struggling for federal funds and assistance.

Pelosi callously turned down both requests. She chose to protect a white member of Congress and persecute an African American. And she chose to disregard the interests of the Katrina survivors, who are overwhelmingly Black. Opportunism and racism converge under the leadership of imperialist liberals such as Pelosi

and the Democratic Steering Committee.

Even if the Democratic leaders feared Jefferson could be proved guilty, they could have easily exposed the racist selectivity of the FBI campaign against him. For example, they could have demanded that, in the name of equal justice under the law, nothing be done to Jefferson until Dick Cheney and his gang at Halliburton were put behind bars for conspiring with the oil industry, the arms industry and the construction industry to defraud the masses of the U.S. out of billions of dollars.

They could have demanded that the offices of military contractors and their contacts in Congress and in the Pentagon be raided by the FBI to seek evidence of promoting multi-billion-dollar contracts for weapons systems, and that the investigation of Jefferson be put on hold until the billionaire criminals are brought to justice.

But it is an unwritten rule that no one in the political establishment of the ruling class is allowed to attack the class itself, nor are they allowed to denounce ruling class racism. This is the code that applies to high-level white politicians. It is part and parcel of the system of racism and national oppression that has existed in this country since slavery began. Pelosi and company are upholding that tradition with a vengeance. □

COLOMBIA

Huelga de trabajadores del carbón enfrenta escuadrones de la muerte

Por Berta Joubert-Ceci

Cuando l@s trabajador@s en Colombia se lanzan a la huelga en ese país, el más peligroso del mundo para líderes sindicales, lo hacen con gran riesgo para sus vidas. Sindicatos desafiantes, en particular aquellos que representan a l@s obrer@s que laboran en corporaciones transnacionales, son el blanco de los paramilitares, escuadrones de muerte —gángsteres muchas veces empleados por las mismas compañías como un arma en contra de los desafíos de l@s obrer@s organizad@s.

Con más frecuencia se ha reportado que los paramilitares tienen lazos con el gobierno y el ejército colombiano. Esto hace que el asesinato de sindicalistas sea algo nacional y hasta internacional. Los lazos entre el gobierno de los Estados Unidos, el gobierno colombiano, las corporaciones estadounidenses y los paramilitares en esas circunstancias, quedan claramente expuestos.

El presidente de los Estados Unidos, George W. Bush, invitó al presidente colombiano Álvaro Uribe Vélez a Washington el 14 de junio para discutir lo que un parte de prensa describió como, “una variedad de asuntos incluyendo el compromiso mutuo para el avance de oportunidades, seguridad, y el respeto a los derechos humanos en Colombia; la importancia del libre comercio para el sostenimiento del crecimiento económico; y la continua cooperación en áreas de interés mutuo.”

Mientras tanto, una intensa trama sobre los derechos humanos y laborales se ha venido desarrollando en Colombia. Unos 3.500 trabajadores representados por el sindicato SINTRAMIENERGETICA dejaron sus puestos después de que la estadounidense Drummond Coal Co. se rehusara a negociar con buena fe las demandas del sindicato.

Las demandas más cruciales por parte del sindicato están relacionadas a los derechos laborales, a la seguridad en el trabajo y a la inversión social en la comunidad. Esta última incluye la mejora de la educación, la salud, las viviendas y de otras necesidades básicas para los trabajadores y sus familias.

El sindicato también pide un incremento en los fondos de pensión y compensación por la ardua labor que dura un promedio de 12 a 18 horas diarias. Raúl Sosa y Estivenon Ávila, voceros de los trabajadores dicen: “Nosotros no pedimos aumentos desmedidos en nuestros salarios sino que queremos tener estabilidad laboral en la empresa, no queremos millones queremos soluciones integrales”. (www.drummondwatch.org)

Una demanda económica importante es el cambio de la fecha del incremento anual. Los trabajadores quieren que la compañía cambie la fecha para que el aumento comience en enero en vez de abril como se hace ahora, para que las familias puedan ajustarse mejor al aumento en el costo de vida que normalmente comienza en enero. Como muestra de la intransigencia de Drummond hasta en tan minúsculo punto,

según el mismo artículo, “La compañía ha reiterado su total desacuerdo y solo ha comunicado a los negociadores de los trabajadores que este punto no será negociado ni ahora ni en 20 años.”

¿Qué es la Drummond Coal Co.?

Está basada en Birmingham de Alabama en los Estados Unidos, siendo su propietario Garry Neil Drummond. Según su página web “Drummond Co., Inc. trabaja principalmente en el negocio de las minas, comprando, procesando y vendiendo carbón y sus derivados. ...Drummond controla reservas en un total de 2 mil millones de toneladas y envió más de 28 millones de toneladas en el año 2004. ...las operaciones mineras internacionales están localizadas en Colombia, sirviendo a clientes tanto en los Estados Unidos como en Europa.”

Drummond se trasladó a Colombia en 1994, después de cerrar la mayoría de sus minas en Alabama. Allí financió ferrocarriles y la infraestructura necesaria para extraer el carbón de la Mina Pribbenow, una mina de explotación a cielo abierto en La Loma, región del Cesar al noreste del país, y llevarlo al Puerto Drummond en la costa caribeña. Allí el carbón se carga en barcos gigantes, llegando en forma de ganancias a los bolsillos estadounidenses de Drummond.

Reuters reportó el 24 de mayo, tercer día de la huelga, que: “La mina, que produjo 22 millones de toneladas de carbón el año pasado, es la fuente más grande de la producción colombiana de carbón que llega a 55 millones de toneladas anuales. La venta del carbón representa el segundo ingreso más grande de Colombia por exportaciones que alcanzó la cifra de \$2,6 mil millones en 2005. El estado recibe ingreso por la exploración, pero no por las ganancias de las minas puesto que pertenecen a operadores extranjeros”.

Al criminalmente ignorar las demandas de los trabajadores, la gerencia ha mantenido altas las ganancias durante todos estos años. Muchos trabajadores han muerto. Otros han sido lesionados gravemente por equipos dañados o por condiciones de trabajo peligrosas.

Se requiere a los trabajadores que trabajen en turnos de por lo menos 12 horas diarias durante dos semanas completas alternando turnos de día y de noche. La compañía aumentó la carga de 22 a 32 toneladas, en los vehículos Caterpillar de carga frontal ocasionando una vibración extrema durante la operación de la máquina que resulta en lesiones severas de la médula espinal en los trabajadores. Algunos trabajadores quedaron lesionados permanentemente.

Drummond Watch, un portal del Internet que monitorea las acciones de la empresa reportó, “La compañía ha despedido a varios trabajadores con lesiones en

la médula espinal, e intenta evadir la responsabilidad diciendo que estas lesiones no están relacionadas al trabajo”.

En el año 2000, el colapso de una pared en una excavación enterró vivos a tres trabajadores. Ellos habían advertido del corte inseguro en la pared, pero los patronos ignoraron sus quejas y les mandaron a seguir trabajando en esas condiciones inseguras. Después del accidente, a pesar de que la compañía quería que los demás trabajadores sigan laborando, los trabajadores suspendieron sus labores por el resto del día para honrar a sus compañeros muertos.

El 12 de marzo de 2001, mientras estaban en negociaciones para buscar justicia por las muertes y mejorar las condiciones en la mina, Valmore Lacarno Rodríguez y Victor Hugo Orcasita Amaya, presidente y vicepresidente del sindicato respectivamente, fueron asesinados. Quince hombres, algunos en uniformes militares, habían parado el autobús de la compañía en el cual estaban viajando los trabajadores, que iban rumbo a Valledupar, alrededor de 30 millas de la mina, donde reside la mayoría de los trabajadores y sus familias. Los uniformados sacaron a Lacarno y Orcasita a la fuerza, bofeteando y disparando a Lacarno en la cara frente a sus horrorizados compañeros. Orcasita fue forzado a ir al bosque donde después fue encontrado muerto, con las uñas de las manos arrancadas.

Augusto Jiménez, el presidente de Drummond LTD en Colombia, había amenazado a ambos hombres anteriormente, diciendo, “El pez muere por su propia boca”.

Aunque Drummond hace disponible vivienda y transporte seguros para los ciudadanos estadounidenses que trabajan para la compañía, había rehusado los pedidos urgentes de Lacarno y Orcasita quienes pedían permiso para quedarse en la mina después de haber recibido amenazas de los paramilitares. Los dos activistas sindicales incluso habían enviado un pedido por fax directamente a Gary Drummond antes de ser asesinados.

Gustavo Soler, otro trabajador que asumió el peligroso liderazgo del sindicato, también fue asesinado después de recibir amenazas de los paramilitares. Él también había pedido refugio en la mina después del trabajo y nuevamente la compañía rehusó.

El gobierno colombiano provee todas las medidas de protección para la compañía mientras deja a los trabajadores a que se defiendan por ellos mismos contra los paramilitares criminales.

El 6 de octubre, 2003, un artículo en el Wall Street Journal reportó que “La compañía, una de los más grandes inversionistas extranjeros en Colombia, ha construido cuarteles para el ejército colombiano en La Loma y cerca del puerto. Más de 300

tropas del ejército colombiano están estacionadas en La Loma, donde Drummond les provee alimentos y petróleo subvencionados. Las tropas protegen las propiedades de la compañía y seleccionan a los trabajadores”, dice Drummond.

El caso legal que menciona el artículo es la demanda radicada en la Corte Distrital Estadounidense del Distrito del Norte de Alabama el 14 de marzo del 2002, por el Fondo Internacional de Derechos Laborales y el sindicato Trabajadores Unidos del Acero (USW) contra la compañía Drummond por parte de los parientes de Lacarno, Orcasita y Soler. La demanda acusa a la compañía de emplear a paramilitares armados para torturar, secuestrar y asesinar a líderes del sindicato.

Dan Kovalik, el abogado para el sindicato, recientemente visitó a Rafael García, el ex jefe del Departamento Administrativo de Seguridad (DAS), el departamento colombiano de inteligencia de la administración de Presidente Uribe. García está ahora en la prisión La Picota en Bogotá, acusado de borrar la historia criminal de traficantes de drogas en los archivos del DAS.

García atestiguó bajo juramento para el juicio entablado en Alabama, que él fue testigo presencial de una reunión en la que Augusto Jiménez dio dinero a representantes de las Autodefensas Unidas de Colombia — AUC, los paramilitares — para asesinar a Lacarno y Orcasita. Dijo también que él no ha testificado para el Sistema de Justicia Colombiano ya que ellos se han negado a garantizar su protección si él ofrece testimonio. Él ha acusado al ex director del DAS, Jorge Noguera de tener lazos con las AUC para el desarrollo de algunos proyectos, entre ellos “el asesinato de líderes sindicales, un plan para desestabilizar al gobierno venezolano, fraude electoral a favor del Presidente Álvaro Uribe en las elecciones del 2002”. (El Nuevo Herald, 1 de junio)

Actualmente los paramilitares están nuevamente amenazando a los huelguistas. No hay garantía de que la compañía o el gobierno provean la seguridad que ellos necesitan. La “Seguridad Democrática” de Uribe solo ha probado ser una inseguridad terrorista para l@s trabajador@s y para el movimiento que se opone a su política neoliberal.

El 9 de junio Leo W. Gerard, Presidente Internacional de la USW, envió una carta al Presidente Uribe, con copias a la Secretaria de Estado Condoleezza Rice y al embajador estadounidense en Colombia William Wood, en la que expresaba su preocupación sobre la petición de Drummond al gobierno colombiano de que “se declare que la huelga de estos trabajadores sea ilegal, haciéndola entonces un crimen que lleva el castigo de encarcelamiento para los trabajadores que continúen con esta huelga”.

Añadió Gerard, “Y nosotros reiteramos nuestro llamado al gobierno colombiano para que tome todas las medidas necesarias para proteger las vidas y el bienestar de estos trabajadores mientras continúen con sus actividades de huelga”. □

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