

## MUNDO OBRERO

El Líbano y Nueva Orleans 8

### Steelworkers lives, pensions at stake

WW editor in action 3

### IRAQ

Occupation falling apart 5

### BACK-DOOR DRAFT?

Marine reservists recalled to Iraq 4



### CAPITALISTS VS. PEOPLE

in Oaxaca, Mexico 7

### HAITI

Truckers strike, UN troops shoot 7

# Immigration debate stalls in Washington

## Local gov'ts repress foreign-born workers

By Teresa Gutierrez

In Washington, D.C., on Capitol Hill, the debate on immigration reform is at a standstill.

In spite of extensive bills presented in the Senate and the House of Representatives in the last year, and despite several policy proclamations by President George W. Bush, no major immigration legislation has been passed.

One bill was outrageously reactionary, attempting to criminalize immigrants and even anyone who assists an undocumented immigrant, including providing them water to drink.

What stopped the legislation in its tracks? The massive demonstrations of immigrants and their supporters that reflected a major sea change in this country. In the shadows no longer, immigrants—documented and undocumented—demanded their right to legalization.

#### No policy, lots of execution

Bill or no bill, however, immigration policy is being hotly debated across the country.

Immigration hearings that Republican officials called for in lieu of legislation have received a lot of media attention. Most of these hearings have been held behind closed doors. Few if any pro-immigrant activists have been allowed to speak.

What is most glaring, however, is that while immigration policy is at a standstill in Congress, throughout the country a massive wave of repression against immigrants is being carried out. From Hazelton, Pa., to Tucson, Ariz., a vicious and cruel immigration policy is being avidly implemented despite the stalemate in Congress.

The Dallas Morning News wrote on Aug. 26, "Efforts by cities and states to crack down on illegal immigration are gaining trac-

tion across the country as an overhaul of the nation's immigration laws stalls in Congress."

This demonstrates that one of the goals of the current immigration debate spurred on by the ruling class is unquestionably being accomplished.

That goal is to target immigrants, to turn them into scapegoats for every ill of this society, to drive them further underground, in hopes of making them too afraid to fight for their rights. And the goal is to create conditions that allow the appalling practice of racial profiling of immigrants of color that especially targets Latino, Muslim, South Asian and Middle Eastern immigrants.

In addition, the debate on immigration is baselessly and cynically turned into a debate about terrorism. One man at a Boston hearing told the media: "My son died at the World Trade Center on Sept. 11. We have to close the borders."

This kind of view dominates the airwaves, contributing to the criminalization of workers who merely come here in search of work.

#### Local ordinances target immigrants

In several cities throughout the country, local officials are passing or attempting to pass legislation that would wreak havoc on immigrants' lives. The Aug. 26 Dallas Morning News reported: "This year, municipalities have made at least three dozen attempts and state legislatures more than 550 to enact immigration policy on a patchwork basis."

Many of these ordinances—such as one that passed in Hazelton,

*Continued on page 5*



*Elvira Arellano, who has taken sanctuary in Chicago with her son, is a symbol of struggle for immigrants' rights.*

## KATRINA SURVIVORS MARCH ON ANNIVERSARY



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Some 1,000 people, mainly Katrina survivors, marched in New Orleans on Aug. 29—the first anniversary of the day Hurricane Katrina hit the city—from the site where the levees were breached in the Ninth Ward to a rally at Congo Square. They demanded "Justice for Katrina survivors," including the right to return and full reconstruction of the Gulf Coast. Young people, shown above, from the ninth ward stand in front of names of the victims who perished during Katrina at Congo Square.

—Story and photos by Monica Moorehead

# ON THE PICKET LINE

By Sue Davis

This week ...



## Detroit teachers vote to strike!

Chanting "No contract, no work," more than 6,000 out of 9,500 teachers voted Aug. 27 to strike immediately rather than accept an across-the-board 5.55 percent pay cut.

The teachers accepted \$70 million in concessions last year to avoid a strike, so they were in no mood to accept another \$88.9 million in concessions this year. Teachers were expected to report for work Aug. 28, with schools opening on Sept. 5. This is the first time since 1999 that the teachers have walked out.

"Last year we decided not to strike because of the children, but this year we are not working; no contract, no work," Emma Gibson, a teacher for 33 years, told the Aug. 23 Detroit News. "We are for our children. Last year we spent our [own] money getting supplies, books and paper."

The union is demanding 5 percent pay increases. Detroit Federation of Teachers President Janna Garrison, who has participated in 49 negotiations since March, said the school district is not taking advantage of \$114 million in cost savings that would cover the \$105 million budget shortfall. On Aug. 25 the DFT filed an unfair labor charge against the district.

The district said it would seek a court order to force the teachers back to work. Striking by public employees, which includes teachers, is illegal in Michigan, as in many states. The union can be fined \$5,000 a day, and teachers can be fined a day's wages for each day they don't report to school. However, that's seldom invoked because it requires individual hearings for each teacher.

A number of districts in Michigan remain without contracts. On Aug. 7, the Michigan Education Association said negotiations in 13 districts were at a critical stage—meaning bargaining had been unproductive. Stay tuned.

## NWA flight attendants picket in Detroit

Although the bankruptcy court refused to block a flight attendants' strike at Northwest Airlines, a federal judge invoked a temporary injunction stopping the strike on Aug. 25. But it didn't stop flight attendants and their supporters in Detroit from staging a spirited rally that day at McNamara Terminal.

Wearing lime green T-shirts emblazoned with CHAOS, which stands for the AFA-CWA rolling-strike strategy—Create Havoc Around Our System—the flight attendants affirmed that they were ready to go on strike at a moment's notice. Even though a permit limited pickets to 50 people, dozens more waited their turn or picketed in an area overlooking the gates.

Supporters included other unionists and NWA mechanics, who have been on strike since Aug. 20, 2005. The AMFA members provided shuttle service from nearby Auto Workers Local 174 headquarters. Sandra Williams, president of the Metro Detroit AFL-CIO, announced that the NWA flight attendants would lead its Sept. 4 Labor Day parade.

The issues at stake are huge. The airline is demanding \$195 million in givebacks, which amount to over 40 percent reductions in salary and benefits and as much as 25 percent additional work hours. The flight attendants voted down contracts with these terms not once but twice.

Four flight attendants interviewed in the Aug. 25 New York Times said they could not live on the reduced salary. Kerri Barz, who expected to make \$42,000 this year, said that the new pay scale would give her less than her starting salary six years ago. "It's insulting what they want us to make," she said. Richard McBride said accepting the contract meant "I would be subsidizing Northwest Airlines."

"Something is terribly wrong when a company that just made a quarterly operating profit of nearly \$200 million continues to insist on the same cuts it demanded from flight attendants when it was losing money," said Mollie Reiley, AFA-CWA interim Master Executive Council president. "Management and the courts can stall us, but they cannot defeat us. Our crusade to protect our careers has only begun. We will continue to fight for Northwest flight attendants and all flight attendants who will walk in our footsteps."

## Immigrant workers sue New Orleans hotel magnate

Guest workers from Latin America, hired to maintain 15 New Orleans hotels after Hurricane Katrina, filed a lawsuit on Aug. 16 charging Decatur Hotels' owner F. Patrick Quinn III with renegeing on their contracts.

The workers from Peru, Bolivia and the Dominican Republic were promised they would work 40 hours a week plus overtime. Instead they are working as little as 10 hours a week for as little as \$6.14 an hour. Under the terms of their visas, they are not allowed to take other jobs.

"The amount of money we are earning [is] not enough to get our investment back and to send money home—it's not enough to survive," Rodolfo A. Valdez-Báez told the New York Times. (Aug. 17) He had to borrow \$3,000 to get the job from an international recruitment company and to pay for travel to and from the Dominican Republic.

The lawsuit brought by the Southern Poverty Law Center on behalf of 82 workers asserts that Quinn's goal was to "drive down wages and working conditions."

*Additional reporting by Cheryl LaBash.*

### ★ In the U.S.

- Immigration debate stalls in Washington . . . . . 1
- On the picket line . . . . . 2
- Will steelworkers live to see their pensions? . . . . . 3
- Candidate speaks out on Michigan schools . . . . . 3
- Thousands attend Charlotte Pride . . . . . 3
- Marines forced to call up reserves for Iraq . . . . . 4
- FIST hosts youth forum in Los Angeles . . . . . 4
- Free speech isn't terrorism . . . . . 4

### ★ Around the world

- New U.S. offensive in Iraq fails . . . . . 5
- Protest of war on Lebanon . . . . . 5
- Jorge Farinacci Garcia . . . . . 6
- Colombian union under attack . . . . . 6
- Oaxaca, Mexico . . . . . 7
- Haiti: Truckers strike at border . . . . . 7
- European Union sends troops to Congo . . . . . 7

### ★ Editorials

- Bush and Katrina . . . . . 6

### ★ Noticias En Español

- El Libano y Nueva Orleans . . . . . 8

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## Listen to Workers World Forum online

Every week the talks from the Workers World Forums in New York are podcast on the Internet. These talks cover some of the most important political issues and struggles of the day. Speakers are leaders of the anti-war and anti-racist movements.

Following are some of the most recent talks, given at Workers World Forums on Aug. 18 and 25.

1. Israeli setback, Hezbollah victory & the meaning of the cease-fire: A watershed for U.S. domination in the Middle East Sara Flounders, *co-director of the International Action Center*

2. A tale of two rescues—New Orleans and Lebanon Joyce Chediak, *Lebanese-American activist and writer for Workers World newspaper.*
3. The U.S./UN sanction threats against Iran Ardeshir Ommani, *a founder of the American-Iranian Friendship Committee.*
4. Update on the Latin American struggle against U.S. imperialism LeiLani Dowell, *a leader of FIST and a managing editor of Workers World newspaper.*

These podcasts can be found at [www.workers.org](http://www.workers.org)

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## WW editor on WCI picket line

# Will steelworkers live to see their pensions?

By Martha Grevatt  
Warren, Ohio

A steel mill is and always has been a very dangerous place to work. Still, one would not expect a mill to become dramatically more dangerous overnight. Yet in the month of May the injury rate at WCI Steel in Warren, Ohio, skyrocketed.

Gary Gosser, the workers' compensation representative of United Steelworkers of America (USWA) Local 1375, says safety is now the major concern of WCI workers. In May, a steelworker was hurt every day for the first 18 days. The total injured for the month was 25, according to workers.

On May 1, WCI had emerged from bankruptcy after its former owner, Renco, relinquished control over the company to a group of note holders.

Renco is suing Workers World newspaper for defamation because the newspaper wrote in February that WCI Steel was using bankruptcy to "rob" workers' pensions.

Renco and its billionaire owner, Ira Rennert, had underfunded the pension plan by \$117 million, according to the Pension Benefit Guaranty Corp., but eventually agreed to make good the money as part of the deal with the new owners and the PBGC. At first Local 1375 welcomed the new arrangement, as it restored their pension fund to solvency.

But with so many workers hurt since the plant changed hands, it's obvious why any warm feelings toward the new owners were short-lived. What happened that caused the injury rate to go up?

### Fewer workers, more accidents

Part of the takeover deal included buy-out packages that allowed hundreds of workers to retire, none of whom were replaced. The number of workers at the plant has dropped to below a thousand. In addition, this summer WCI did not hire college students as vacation replacement

help, which it has usually done in the past.

The demand for steel, however, did not drop. Many workers still on the job are now being forced to work six and seven days, up to 16 hours per day. They also had to take over the tasks of the retired workers, often without proper training or equipment. The number of ironworkers, for example, has been reduced from 72 to 39 since the new contract.

The already dangerous work becomes life-threatening under these conditions, as does the workers' drive to and from the mill.

The most dramatic incident, say the workers, involved a man working on top of the blast furnace. He asked the crew on the ground to hand him an air hose, but the hoses weren't properly labeled and they mistakenly handed him a gas hose. The gas caused an explosion that blew the worker off the furnace. He was hurt twice—first by the flames and then by the fall.

WCI Steel's vice president for safety was recruited from AK Steel, which for months has locked out workers in Middletown, Ohio. His approach to safety is not preventive but purely punitive, say the workers.

The pension fund may be safe for the moment, but how many workers will be permanently disabled or even killed before they can hope to collect?

These issues are the reason Local 1375 holds a picket line outside the mill every Thursday. These "Big Rat Thursdays"—where a huge inflatable rat accompanies the angry workers—are in their fourth month.

### 'WCI steals'

On Aug. 24, a delegation from Workers World Party joined the steelworkers' picket line. Among them was WW newspaper editor-in-chief Deirdre Griswold, who was touring Ohio and Michigan to talk about Renco's lawsuit and the need for workers to unite to save their pensions.

Despite leaving WCI, Rennert has gone

forward with the suit, which is now in New York State Supreme Court. For its part, WW refuses to be intimidated, showing no shyness or remorse about telling the truth when billionaire companies leave workers high and dry.

WW learned a great deal from the conversations on the picket line and at a pizza reception afterwards at the union hall. For example, there has been an astronomical rise in productivity at the steel mill as a result of new technology—which is paid for out of profits earned from the workers' hard labor.

After the plant some years ago installed a basic oxygen furnace, steel output soared while the workforce shrank.

"We read all the time about what the bosses are doing, but we never get to hear about how the workers are resisting," Griswold told the workers, who gave her and others in the WW delegation t-shirts that say "WCI steals."

WW's Ohio bureau put out a news release announcing Griswold's visit. As a result, a local television station and the Warren Tribune covered the picket line. As the WW solidarity delegation was leaving, an officer at the union hall told them that the union president had just received a call from WCI's CEO, wanting to know why all the news media were out there.

The workers were glad that finally the media were paying attention. Their last words to the socialist editor were: "Come back anytime."

### Detroit meeting

Griswold also spoke to a well-attended meeting of Workers World Party in Detroit. She told the multinational audience how Rennert's mansion in the Hamptons actually cost more than what it would have taken to properly fund the WCI Steel pension.

Griswold discussed why a multi-billionaire like Rennert would sue Workers World



WW PHOTO: DEIRDRE GRISWOLD

Workers and rat.

newspaper. The ruling class, she said, has reason to fear that workers will develop an anti-capitalist perspective as they see how wage cuts and pension elimination are coupled with record corporate profits and executive salaries. She was greeted with great enthusiasm when she emphasized that Workers World newspaper would not be cowed or back down from telling the class truth.

Griswold also emphasized that new technology, while a weapon against the workers in the capitalists' hands, also offered great opportunities to the working class. One example is that Workers World's articles may now be seen by millions worldwide due to the Internet.

Griswold's talk was especially timely, sparking discussion on how Northwest Airlines flight attendants are preparing to strike against an onerous concession contract imposed by the bankruptcy court and how Delphi workers and retirees continue to struggle against the autopart supplier's use of bankruptcy to attempt to fundamentally reduce their wages and benefits.

*Additional reporting by Jerry Goldberg of Detroit.*

## Candidate speaks out on Michigan schools



WW PHOTO: CHERYL LABASH

Activists with the Michigan Emergency Committee Against War and Injustice (MECAWI), a prominent anti-imperialist, anti-war group centered in Detroit, have entered the November elections with a statewide Stop the War Slate on the Green Party of Michigan ticket. Some of the candidates, like laid-off teacher and teachers' union activist Kevin Carey, are also members of Workers World Party. Carey was also chairperson of the Southern Africa Freedom Committee and is currently president of the Committee for Corrections and Judicial Reform. Below are excerpts from a leaflet issued by Carey on education in Michigan:

I, Kevin Carey, candidate for the State Board of Education on the Green Party ticket, stand with the Detroit school teachers and education workers throughout Michigan in their fight for economic justice and decent working conditions.

As a former Detroit substitute teacher who was laid off in the last round of cut-backs, I have experienced first hand the hardships being imposed on teachers and school personnel.

If elected, I will use my position to defend the right of teachers to strike, promote legislation to increase teachers' pay 10 percent and impose a moratorium on layoffs and benefit cuts for teachers and all school personnel.

### End apartheid education

If I am elected to the State Board of Education, my top priority will be to fight for equal funding for public school districts throughout Michigan. Today, the districts

that need the most receive the least. For example, Detroit receives \$8,390 per pupil, while Birmingham receives \$12,740 and Bloomfield Hills receives \$13,379.

Cities and rural areas with high poverty rates, which have the most to overcome to educate their students, have the lowest funding rates. I will fight for immediate equalization of funding for students throughout Michigan, as well as special funding for those districts that have been under-funded till now.

I also stand for more multi-cultural classes in public schools. African-American, Latin@, Native American and Asian-American Studies should be taught in every public school. There should be Gay and Lesbian Studies to stop the harassment and stigmatization of students based on their sexual orientation.

I am for a tutorial program in all public schools. College work study should be provided to tutor students in subjects where they need help.

### Money for education, not for war

I am a member of the Green Party/Stop the War Slate. We call for an immediate end to the illegal and immoral U.S. wars on Iraq, Afghanistan, Palestine and Lebanon. The U.S. government has spent well over \$200 billion funding the war on

Iraq. If that money had been spent for human needs, not war, Michigan's share would be over \$8.7 billion. That would go a long way to providing equal, quality education for every student in Michigan. I oppose all military recruitment in public schools. □

## Thousands attend Charlotte Pride

By David Dixon

Organizers estimate as many as 6,000 lesbian/gay/bi/trans people and their straight allies attended this year's PRIDE Charlotte Festival in Uptown. The mission statement of the festival, printed on the program, read "Empowering all LGBT and Allied Peoples to stand as unique individuals and together as a community, with the purpose of uniting as a creative, social, economic and political force."

The One Voice Chorus, which works to increase understanding and acceptance of LGBT people in Charlotte, kicked off the festival. They were followed by a speaker from Time Out Youth, an active LGBT youth group in Charlotte's high schools and the community. Other speakers included Rev. Tonyia Rawls of Unity Fellowship Church, County Commis-

sioner Jennifer Roberts and the co-chairs of the Human Rights Coalition-Carolinas. The crowd was entertained by several live bands and went wild when the drag troop Macho Macho Men took the stage.

The hate group Operation Save America carried their signs of religious bigotry near the festival entrance. LGBT-friendly church and spiritual groups gave out a package of information titled "The Bag of Truth—What the Hate Groups Don't Want You to Know" as a counter to this. The hate group was prevented from entering or sneaking into the festival area by the "Enforcers of Peace," a group of volunteers set up for this specific purpose.

The PRIDE Charlotte Festival was sponsored by the Lesbian & Gay Community Center of Charlotte. They plan to make next year's event even bigger and better according to their website ([pridecharlotte.com](http://pridecharlotte.com)). □



# Marines forced to call up reserves for Iraq

By Larry Hales

The Marine Corps announced Aug. 22 that it would begin calling up troops from the Individual Ready Reserve (IRR) on an involuntary basis. The Marine Corps says the IRR has a pool of 34,000 soldiers, but President George W. Bush's order limits the call-ups to 2,500 at a time.

This announcement comes a little over a month after Nouri al-Maliki, prime minister of the puppet government in Iraq, addressed the U.S. Congress asking for more money and more troops. At that time, the number of U.S. occupying troops in Iraq was at 127,000. Currently, the number stands at 138,000.

Many of the people being called back into active duty have already been to Iraq two or three times. The Army says it has called up 5,000 people from the ready

reserve and has issued "stop loss" orders for several thousand more. Since the second half of last year, an average of 13,178 soldiers have been in Iraq for an extended amount of time via stop loss.

Since the appearance by al-Maliki, at a time when more and more people are growing tired of this capitalist adventure, the Army has issued a stop loss order for a Stryker Brigade out of Alaska and has called up forward troops from nearby Kuwait. The Army now has 2,200 IRR soldiers in Iraq; over 1,800 are there involuntarily.

According to the Aug. 23 Los Angeles Times, "When its involuntary call-ups began in 2004, the Army encountered problems when some mobilized ready reserve members failed to appear and others were disqualified from service for medical reasons."

This latest maneuver by the Marines, an outfit that prides itself as an all-volunteer, highly trained force that is "the first to fight," is a signal that the latest "pacification" of Iraq is failing.

The call up of more soldiers will not be able to stop the resistance. The numerous operations in Baghdad are failing, as they are across the country, and now the puppet Iraqi regime's army and the U.S. military are both, once again, embroiled in a fight with Moqtada al-Sadr's Mahdi Army.

The Mahdi Army fought U.S. forces to a standstill twice in 2004. Al-Sadr's party is now a part of the Iraqi puppet government, but the U.S. occupiers still consider him to be an opponent.

The resistance in Iraq has been resilient. Each time someone from either of the capitalist parties in the U.S. makes a statement about the successes of the



imperialist war in Iraq, the resistance grows stronger and throws it back in their faces. This has happened even though the Iraqi resistance itself is not united throughout the country.

Contrary to what is being said, the situation in Iraq is becoming more tenuous for the occupiers, and will increasingly become more so. The world has seen how the resistance fighters in Lebanon repelled the Zionist invaders. The Arab world is emboldened and this will show in Iraq.

The only way to keep more young men and women, whether Iraqis or the soldiers sent to fight them, from being destroyed because of the greed of a few is for the people in the U.S. to step up their demands for an immediate end to the war. □



From left, Sister Haero, Mary Tamburro and Sarah Al Nnan.

## FIST hosts youth forum in Los Angeles

By Jesse Fantoni and Mary Tamburro  
Los Angeles

Twenty-five people gathered at a youth forum hosted by San Diego FIST (Fight Imperialism Stand Together) in the office of the International Action Center in Los Angeles on Aug. 26, a year after Hurricane Katrina hit the Gulf Coast of the U.S. and showed the U.S. government's racist neglect of the people of the area, to talk about fighting U. S. imperialism's wars at home and abroad.

Sarah Al Nnan, a student at UCLA who is a member of the Muslim Student Association, the Lebanese Social Club, and the United Arab Society, gave her personal account of visiting her family in Lebanon when the Israeli Air Force began bombing last month. She talked of the fear that kept her awake at night, and that eventually led her to cross the border into Syria to come back to the U.S., which was by no means an easy accomplishment. She told us that after the first day of bombings and devastation, Lebanon was set back 15 years in terms of destruction of infrastructure.

A member of San Diego FIST gave an introduction to FIST and talked about how to get military recruiters away from the youth and out of our schools. The FIST organizer explained how to use "opt-out" forms to exclude a youth's personal information from being handed over to the military for recruiting purposes and encouraged those attending to make copies of the forms FIST handed out and give them out to family and friends.

"The United States government is the terrorist and the military rank-and-file are forced to become sheep that follow orders blindly. Do not let our youth become sheep," was her encouragement to listeners to get involved in the anti-recruitment struggle.

And as a special treat, the meeting ended with revolutionary chairperson Sister Haero offering a beautiful spoken word performance. One piece entitled "Black August" talked of political prisoner George Jackson and his brother Jonathon Jackson, who attempted to free George in August 1970 by taking a judge hostage, and of the struggle of African Americans throughout history in the month of August. □

## Free speech isn't terrorism

By Stephen Millies

Do you want George Bush to control what TV channels you can watch?

That's what's behind the Aug. 24 arrest of Javed Iqbal in Staten Island for allegedly providing satellite link-ups to the Al Manar television network.

Between 10 and 15 million people around the world watch this Lebanese TV station, according to the Wall Street Journal. Why can't people in the United States do the same?

Iqbal's indictment is another attempt by the White House to crush first amendment guarantees of free speech. It's the first time that the International Emergency Economic Powers Act has been used to shut down access to any media. Legal observers have noted this law specifically exempted any form of speech.

The Treasury Department decreed in March that Al Manar, which means "the beacon" in Arabic, was a "global terrorist entity." This TV station reflects the views of the Hezbollah political organization, which is a member of the Lebanese government.

For Washington, Al Manar's real crime is telling the truth about Israel's terror bombing of Lebanon that killed hundreds of children. That's why Israeli planes—made in the USA—bombed this television station six times.

Assistant U.S. Attorney Stephen A. Miller claimed that Iqbal was providing "material support for terrorism" for linking people up to Al Manar. Federal agents actually flew a helicopter over Iqbal's house and then sent an informer to buy a satellite package from him.

Radio host Bob Grant, a lowlight of U.S. talk radio, has called on the air for dropping atom bombs on cities in the Middle East, including Riyadh, the capital of Saudi Arabia. Millions of people would die if this were actually carried out.

Why isn't the United States Attorney's office investigating this genuine incitement to terrorism? Grant is a notorious racist who welcomed the drowning of Haitian refugees. He called former New York Mayor David Dinkins a "washroom attendant."

At the very least the Federal Communications Commission could lift the radio

license of Bob Grant's radio station, WOR-AM, which is owned by the family of right-winger William F. Buckley, Jr.

Javed Iqbal is a Pakistani-American who has lived in this country for 20 years. His arrest continues the racist scapegoating of people from South Asia, the Middle East and all Muslims, especially following the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks. In the hysteria following those attacks, an estimated 15,000 Pakistanis were forced to leave the New York area. Hundreds were rounded-up and imprisoned.

Suppressing freedom of speech is nothing new for the capitalist government. The U.S. Army investigated Martin Luther King Jr.'s grandfather during World War I for giving a sermon that denounced lynching.

Black labor leader A. Philip Randolph was jailed for publishing an anti-war newspaper called The Messenger. Randolph later founded the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters. One of its members—E. D. Nixon—organized the Montgomery bus boycott after Rosa Parks was arrested.

FBI Chief J. Edgar Hoover wanted Black newspaper publishers arrested for treason during World War II for reporting about the racist treatment of Black GIs, whose blood supply was segregated. The father of Emmett Till—the young man who was so horribly lynched in Mississippi—was framed up and hanged by Army brass. The publisher of the prestigious Chicago Defender newspaper, John Sengstacke, had to meet with Attorney General Francis Biddle to head off the threat of prosecution.

This attempt to shut down African American newspapers is documented in the 1998 film "The Black Press: Soldiers without Swords," available from California Newsreel.

Now George Bush wants to silence any criticism of U.S. wars of aggression in the Middle East. Allowing Javed Iqbal to be prosecuted and repressed will allow Fox News and all the other liars in the corporate media to keep their monopoly on providing information to the public.

For another source of the historical information, see "A Question of Seditious, The Federal Government's Investigation of the Black Press During World War II," by Patrick S. Washburn, published by Oxford University Press.

## Despite propaganda blitz at home

# New U.S. offensive in Iraq fails

By Deirdre Griswold

Donald Rumsfeld, Dick Cheney and Condoleezza Rice sought friendly, pro-military audiences at the end of August as a platform for favorable media coverage of the Bush administration's intransigence on the war in Iraq.

Rumsfeld told the annual convention of the American Legion—the most right-wing of the large veterans' organizations—in Salt Lake City on Aug. 29 that critics of the war were “appeasers.” He labeled groups

in the Middle East that resist U.S. and Israeli aggression a “new type of fascism.”

Rice, addressing the same group, said the U.S. must not leave the Middle East, which is making progress toward “democracy,” or the consequences would be “severe.”

Both Rumsfeld and Cheney one day earlier had taken a similar message to the Veterans of Foreign Wars convention in Reno, Nev. And Cheney followed this up with a trip to Offutt Air Force Base in Nebraska, where he said there must be no

retreat by “civilized nations.”

Presumably, he meant the U.S. and not Iraq, where every physical expression of its millennia-long civilization has been the target of obliteration since the U.S. invasion—beginning with the looting of Baghdad's famous archeological museum after Pentagon troops first took the city.

Meanwhile, in Iraq the resistance to U.S. occupation is spreading and the Iraqi puppet army that Rumsfeld says will take over from Pentagon troops is already beginning to rebel.

In Diwaniyah, a city 100 miles south of Baghdad, major battles erupted on Aug. 28 between puppet troops, backed by U.S. air cover, and militia from the Mahdi Army, whose political leader is the Shiite cleric Moqtada al-Sadr. Three days earlier, the so-called Iraqi Army had arrested three prominent supporters of al-Sadr. This was followed by attempts to raid neighborhoods defended by the Mahdi Army.

After 12 hours of intense fighting, “It was soon clear who had won,” reported the Washington Post of Aug. 29. The city was still “fully controlled” by the Mahdi Army militia.

Earlier in the month, U.S. and Iraqi puppet troops had attacked al-Sadr's stronghold in Baghdad, even calling in air strikes on the populous area. This was such a blatantly criminal act by the occupation that even Nuri Kamal al-Maliki, prime minister of the puppet government, had to denounce the U.S., saying he had not given permission for the raid.

### U.S. general admits rebellion

The offensive sparked a rebellion among Iraqi troops in the south who had been told they were being sent to Baghdad to “restore order” there, admitted U.S. Brig. Gen. Dana Pittard in a videoconference from Iraq on Aug. 28. Pittard oversees the U.S. training of Iraqi forces.

Pittard said the mutiny involved about 100 soldiers based in Maysan Province, which borders Iran.

“This is not the first time that Iraqi sol-

diers have refused to deploy to a distant area,” wrote the Aug. 29 New York Times. “A large number of soldiers from a predominantly Kurdish unit in northern Iraq, the Second Battalion, Third Brigade of the Second Iraqi Division, refused to go to Ramadi, where American Army troops have been involved in a tough fight to take the city back from insurgents, General Pittard noted.”

The Times article adds that many Iraqi soldiers quit, leaving the strength of some divisions as low as 35 percent.

Even though severe unemployment and poverty drive young men into the army, the strength of the resistance and the anger of the people at collaborators with the occupation drive many out again.

The attack on Baghdad's Sadr City was part of the latest U.S. military operation, called Together Forward, that is supposed to break the resistance. The plan sounds like something lifted from the Nazi manuals for occupying forces during World War II.

“Under the plan, American and Iraqi forces are working their way through the city, neighborhood by neighborhood, in an effort to clear it of insurgents and militias. Once the areas are secured, the plan is to hand them over to the Iraqi police, who will work with American advisers. Millions of dollars of Iraqi and American funds are to be spent to restore vital services, create jobs and, essentially, try to build good will for the new Iraqi government.

“An additional 12,000 troops have been sent to Baghdad to carry out the operation, 7,000 of whom are Americans. Some of the American troops have been diverted from other parts of Iraq. The Iraqi soldiers who refused to deploy from the Maysan areas were to have been part of the Iraqi reinforcements.” (New York Times, Aug. 29)

This offensive has already led to greater casualties among Iraqi civilians and troops on all sides.

The latest propaganda blitz by the Bush administration cannot alter the reality: its effort to conquer Iraq has failed.

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## Immigration debate

Continued from page 1

Pa., on July 13 or legislation proposed in Farmers Branch, Texas—prohibit landlords from leasing housing to undocumented workers, and make English a city's official language. The Hazelton ordinance takes effect Sept. 11.

In Farmers Branch, city officials want to eliminate subsidies for children of the undocumented who participate in summer youth programs.

Other ordinances target day laborers and ban workers' gathering sites. Such ordinances are always accompanied by a racist campaign blaming day laborers for all the ills of society, including unhealthy conditions and a rise in crime, although there is no evidence of the connection.

In Cornelius, Ore., such racist efforts were met with protests by U.S.-born workers as well as many of the day laborers.

The immigration debate has been so whipped up against immigrants that many local law officials are now acting as immigration agents themselves. In Rhode Island, a state trooper turned in 14 immigrants to federal immigration authorities after stopping them merely for failing to signal for a lane change. (Aug. 21 Westerly Sun) The American Civil Liberties Union has filed an objection

stating that the state trooper overstepped his bounds, and that he may have been racial profiling.

In El Paso, Texas, protesters defeated a resolution that would have authorized county employees, including the sheriff's office, to ask people their immigration status. Mexican/Chicano community leaders pointed out that if such measures pass, families experiencing domestic violence, for example, would be afraid to call for help if anyone in the family was undocumented. (The El Paso Times, Aug. 23)

The backlash against immigrants has worsened their living conditions.

For fear of being deported, many immigrants who are robbed, beaten or victimized by landlords are not reporting these crimes. In southern Florida, because many immigrants get paid in cash, there are so many robberies of these workers that they are referred to as “walking ATM machines” in the press.

Immigrant-rights activists across the country are reporting a rise in fear of deportations.

The Immigration and Customs Enforcement agency of the Department of Homeland Security states: “Nearly 600,000 immigration fugitives are in the U.S., most of whom simply disappear when their deportation orders come.”

The deportation issue is intimately tied to children's rights. The case of Arkade-

phia, Ark., highlights the cruel effect deportation has on immigrant families.

In 2005, immigration officials raided a poultry plant near Arkadelphia. They arrested over 115 immigrants, leaving many children stranded at schools or in daycare centers, including a 1-month old baby, and deported the parents of 30 children.

The Pew Hispanic Center states on their website that of the estimated 12 million undocumented workers in the United States, 1.8 million are children. The center also estimates that 3.1 million children born in the United States—who are thus U.S. citizens—have undocumented parents.

Imagine if anti-immigrant legislation passes around the country making it illegal for landlords to rent to undocumented people. There would be a wave of homeless families and thousands, including many children, forced to live in substandard housing.



Elvira Arellano

### The case of Elvira Arellano

No wonder then that the struggle for immigrant rights has produced an Elvira Arellano. Her case has become a symbol for all the families that could be deported.

Arellano was taken into custody by immigration agents in Chicago while working as a janitor at O'Hare Airport with a false Social Security number.

Due to the intervention of supporters as well as some legislators, including Rep. Luis Gutierrez, Arellano was granted a stay of departure because of the medical needs of her 7-year old son, Saul, who has health problems. Saul is a U.S. citizen.

Elvira Arellano is currently taking sanctuary at Adalberto United Methodist Church in Chicago. She took shelter there rather than surrender to immigration authorities to be deported back to Mexico, her native country.

The Aug. 27 Christian Science Monitor wrote: “The Rev. Walter Coleman, the pastor who took Arellano in, estimates that nearly 6,000 supporters have come to the church in the past two weeks.” Her support committee reports that not only Latinos have come by; Korean and Polish people and Muslims have stopped by to show support.

On Aug. 24, a group of prominent African-American church leaders who are part of the broad coalition called Clergy Speaks Interdenominational, held a news conference at the church in Chicago on Arellano's behalf and said she is contesting an immoral government policy as Rosa Parks did. (Chicago Tribune, Aug. 25)

The case of Elvira Arellano highlights that a major demand of the immigrant-rights movement must be a moratorium on all deportations now. □



### Protest of war on Lebanon

A protest in Queens, N.Y., on Aug. 26 condemns the U.S. and Israel for aggression against Lebanon and demands the end of the occupation of Palestine and Iraq.

—Photo and story by G. Dunkel

## Bush and Katrina

It's impossible to consider George W. Bush pathetic. He has his hands on too much destructive power. He uses it. He is arrogant. He lies with nearly every breath.

But watching him bumble through the Gulf Coast and New Orleans on the one-year anniversary of Hurricane Katrina's powerful strike and the U.S. government's worse-than-empty response creates a feeling of unreality. Can he really be saying those things? Does he believe empty phrases work for him?

Take his major comment: "I've come back to New Orleans to tell you the words that I spoke on Jackson Square are just as true today as they were then." That's when he promised all the government aid necessary to rebuild New Orleans. So little came in over the past year that few could find his new promise to help the people of the region comforting. It was a lie then. It is a lie now.

He had one moment of sincere regret. His friend, the racist millionaire Mississippi Senator Trent Lott, lost his seaside mansion to the storm. Bush could empathize with this loss. This was one of his own.

The rest is an act, an attempt to feign concern and care. Touring the still unreconstructed disaster area, where almost no help has arrived, Bush tried in vain to

spin the events to make himself look good.

He laid his hand on the shoulders of local politicians, visited the renowned Fats Domino, appeared on television with a few repaired homes in the picture—while half the people remained dispersed and the homes wrecked last year lay rotting just outside the well-framed images. Does he believe this will recoup his political losses?

Bush seems detached from the reality of his current position. He and his cronies in the administration act as though nothing has changed since 2003, when Commander-in-Chief Bush declared "Mission accomplished" from the deck of an aircraft carrier.

Since then, they have failed to stabilize their occupation of Iraq, leaving it an open sore. They have lost control of Afghanistan. They backed Israel's failed attack on Lebanon. And they so botched up the Katrina disaster last year that a large section of the population consider them either incompetent fools or evil ones.

The Bush gang is still dangerous because U.S. imperialism can't accept defeat. But the Katrina disaster has exposed its racism and its inability to organize society to help the population. It has already exhausted any legitimacy it might have had in the eyes of the world.

## Colombian union under attack

# U.S. trade unionists extend solidarity

By Berta Joubert-Ceci

Several U.S. labor representatives have denounced attacks against Colombia's food industry union, SINALTRAINAL, in an Aug. 25 letter to Colombian president Alvaro Uribe Vélez.

The letter of solidarity was in response to an urgent appeal from SINALTRAINAL's international department that revealed the latest round of assaults against the organization and its members. Under the headline, "Offensive Against SINALTRAINAL Sharpens," the message from the Colombian union read: "A series of attacks against the very existence of SINALTRAINAL have occurred in different regions of Colombia, ranging from a raid on the union's national headquarters in Bogotá, to the assassination of one of our activists. These incidents are an example of President Álvaro Uribe Vélez's policy of 'democratic security' and take place at a difficult moment due to labor conflicts with the transnationals Nestlé and Coca-Cola."

Long-time SINALTRAINAL member Carlos Arturo Montes Bonilla was viciously murdered Aug. 17 near his home in Barrancabermeja. He is survived by his wife, Maria Elvia Álvarez Delgado, and seven children. He had worked in the Infants' Club for the children of the workers of ECOPEPETROL, the state oil corporation, also participating in many protests against Coca-Cola in its attempt to destroy the union.

Edgar Páez, head of international relations of SINALTRAINAL, said in the recent communiqué: "Our comrade was a member of SINTRAHOCAR and of SINALTRAINAL, a double membership that he had as a legal mechanism to protect the existence of SINALTRAINAL, due

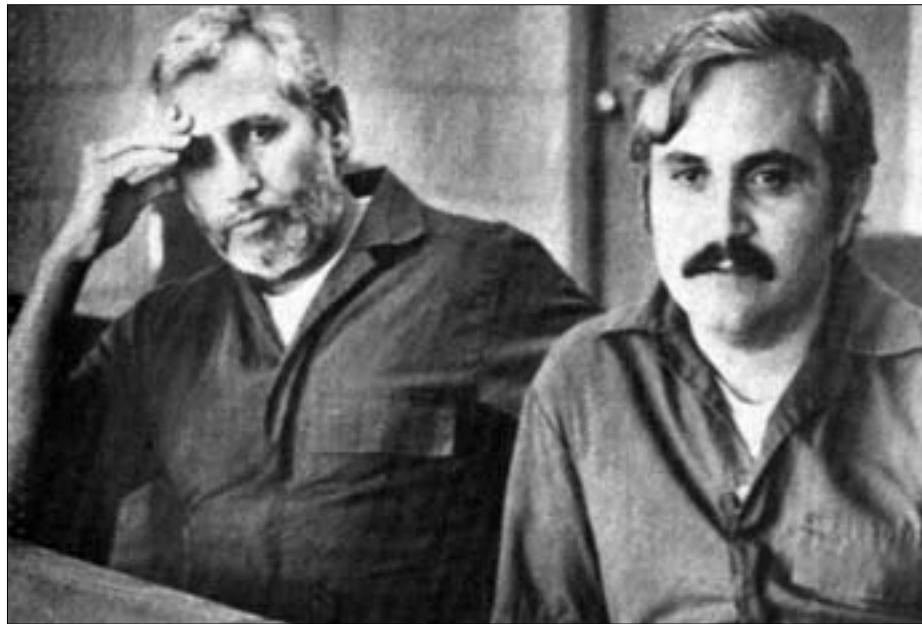
to the attacks by corporations like Coca-Cola that have been implementing a criminal policy against the union by revoking the union's statutes, impeding the membership of executive committee members, lifting trade union conventional rights and activating a judicial plan to block our right of association under the so-called 'abuse of the law thesis'."

Montes Bonilla's murder occurred just two weeks after uniformed men without a legal warrant raided the Bogotá headquarters of SINALTRAINAL. The men identified themselves as members of SIJIN, a judicial police intelligence unit, and justified the action as a "preventive operation" in preparation for the Uribe's Aug. 7 inauguration for his second term as president. They avoided the need for a warrant by classifying the raid as an "act of voluntary search."

SINALTRAINAL's message explains, "The raid took place at the very moment that we were informing the world of the good results of the campaigns against Nestlé and Coca-Cola and public protests against the permanent threats and possible judicial actions against our members."

A day after the murder, on Aug. 18, a "sympathy" card signed "Death to Trade Unionists/ Muerte a Sindicalistas" was left in the home of Hector Jairo Paz, a SINALTRAINAL leader in Bugalagrande who works for Nestlé de Colombia, S.A. Ten days before, another union member was threatened while he was peacefully protesting in front of the Nestlé plant against the unjustified firing of 90 temporary workers and four workers with indefinite contracts affiliated with SINALTRAINAL.

Evidence surfaces every day showing the connection among transnational cor-



Jorge Farinacci García, right, with Filiberto Ojeda Ríos, imprisoned in the late 1980s for revolutionary activity.

## JORGE FARINACCI GARCÍA

*Jorge Farinacci García—a former leader of the revolutionary Puerto Rican pro-independence group known as the Macheteros, a labor lawyer and a leader of the Puerto Rican Socialist Front—died of cancer Aug. 26 in San Juan. An appreciation of his contributions will appear in a future issue of this paper. Workers World's National Committee sent the following letter of condolence to his family and to the Socialist Front.*

The leadership and members of Workers World Party of the United States wish to express our deepest sympathy to Rose, Tito and the comrades of the Socialist Front over the death of dear comrade Jorge Farinacci García.

Fari, as he was affectionately known, leaves behind a sea of lessons and political experiences that have enriched revolutionaries not only in Puerto Rico but also right here in the heart of the empire, whose colonial cruelties he very much helped to expose.

We remember with extreme gratitude and honor the many times he addressed our members so they could stay current with the events in Puerto Rico. He was never too tired to engage in a dialog on politics, on the class struggle. He was always available to respond to a consultation, a call, a question, an interview, to do everything that could forward the struggle.

Like all great revolutionaries, Fari was also an internationalist. On two occasions he honored us with his presence as a jurist in anti-imperialist tribunals. In June of 2000 he was one of 16 judges who found the U.S. and NATO guilty of

war crimes because of the criminal assault against Yugoslavia the previous year. Then, in June 2001, Fari participated again, this time in a moving event in which 50 years of silence were broken when victims of the crimes of the U.S. war against Korea could finally, for the first time, give their testimonies.

His good natured and simple attitude, without boastfulness, managed to establish instant communication with each person, making a reality of Che's rule that "Revolutionaries are guided by great feelings of love."

Now Fari has gone to that special site for those who do not die, who are there encouraging us to continue the fight to obtain that other world which, although it is possible, will only be obtained through socialism.

Thank you, Fari, for all your work in the struggle, for all the good examples you have given us.

**Jorge Farinacci, ¡PRESENTE!**

National Committee,  
Workers World Party  
New York  
Aug. 28, 2006

porations, particularly U.S.-based, the U.S. and Colombian governments and the paramilitaries. Since Uribe has been in office, a series of laws have been passed with deceptive names like "Democratic Security" and "Justice and Peace." These laws provide more impunity for the well-known paramilitaries' crimes against the civilian population, and in particular against labor leaders.

Affirming that "an injury to one is an injury to all," the U.S. labor representatives say in their Aug. 25 letter, "We stand in complete solidarity with our Colombian union brothers and sisters and in particular with the members of SINALTRAINAL who are the victim of a concerted effort to annihilate the union." The letter demands that the Colombian government and the corporations involved stop at once the threats and assassination of union members and immediately cease the so-called "voluntary searches." It demands the punishment of all the parties responsible for the threats and assassination.

They continue, "As Labor Day approaches in the United States, a day when most major cities in the U.S. have large workers' gatherings, we will make sure that the issue of SINALTRAINAL and

in general the attack on workers' rights in Colombia is prominent."

The letter was signed, among others, by the president and vice president of the Boston School Bus Drivers, Steel Workers Local 8751, Frantz Mendes and Steve Gillis, respectively; National Teamsters Black Caucus Chair and Teamsters Local 808 Secretary/Treasurer Chris Silvera; National Co-Chair of the Million Worker March Movement and Local 10 International Longshore Workers Union past Secretary/Treasurer Clarence Thomas; President of the Philadelphia chapter of the Coalition of Labor Union Women Kathy Black; Philadelphia AFSCME District Council 47 President Thomas Paine Cronin; and labor supporters, the Most Rev. OFSJC Bishop of the Northeastern Diocese of St Francis of Assisi, CCA, Felipe C. Teixeira; Boston Rosa Parks Human Rights Day Committee Co-Chair Dorothea Manuela; and International Action Center Co-Director Teresa Gutierrez.

Letters of protest can be sent to Colombian President Dr. Alvaro Uribe Vélez, Fax: (57-1) 566-20-71, Email: auribe@presidencia.gov.co, with copies to areainternacional@sinaltrainal.org. For more information, visit www.SINALTRAINAL.org. □



## OAXACA, MEXICO

# Governor threatens people's movement

By John Catalinotto

Confrontations continue in Oaxaca, Mexico, between local state police and extra-legal gangsters hired by local capitalists and officials on one side and a coalition of popular organizations representing striking teachers, peasants, women and their supporters—and much of the population of Oaxaca—on the other.

Oaxaca's state governor, Ulises Ruiz, has threatened violence to crush the unarmed but broadly popular movement known as the Popular Assembly of the People of Oaxaca (APPO). The Human Rights Network and Amnesty International have reported on the regime's attacks on human rights and the danger of a blood-

bath. (Aug. 27, La Jornada)

APPO arose after police made a violent raid on June 14 on a rally of people supporting a teachers' strike that had occupied the central plaza of the city of Oaxaca. APPO supports the teachers' demand that Ruiz resign.

Some of the popular demonstrations supporting APPO and the teachers, who began their strike May 22, have been as large as 800,000 people. The state of Oaxaca, one of the poorest regions of Mexico, has a total population of about 3.6 million, about half of whom are Indigenous. The right-wing Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI) has run Oaxaca's state government for the past 71 years and is known for its corrupt connections with the local

ruling class and electoral fraud.

One can argue with justification that APPO is an alternative government with far more popular support than Ruiz's regime.

A group of about 500 women activists in APPO had seized a television station on Aug. 1 for six hours to break the big capitalists' monopoly on the media by showing a home video of police attacking demonstrators. Following another police attack on APPO during which a teacher was shot, the popular assembly then sat in at another television station and a dozen radio stations. As of Aug. 27, the movement had to cede five of the radio stations.

La Jornada reported an incident that illustrates the nature of the class conflict in Oaxaca. A movement leader addressing a march of Indigenous peasants toward the city of Oaxaca asked the farmers to "raise their arms." They held up their hoes, machetes, pieces of wood and their newspapers—mainly their instruments of work. The speaker emphasized that this was a mass, peaceful movement.

But this also showed that the state authorities and the still-reactionary national regime have a monopoly on force and violence.

Armed groups have attacked groups of APPO supporters during demonstrations but especially in the hours between 2 and 4 a.m. At least four APPO activists have been killed or wounded and some of the

leaders have been arrested by the police.

The struggle in Mexico's southwestern state of Oaxaca takes place while the battle throughout Mexico over the July 2 national election continues. Progressive candidate Andrés Manuel López Obrador has refused to concede to the electoral fraud of the government party, the PAN, and its candidate, Felipe Calderón. Even with the regime's manipulation of the ballot boxes, Calderón's official lead was only 0.6 percent and this diminished after a tenth of the ballots were recounted.

The electoral commission said it would announce results of ballot challenges on Aug. 28. López Obrador has insisted on a complete recount and further mass protests are expected on Sept. 16.

Regarding Oaxaca, López Obrador has spoken out against the state authority's repression and the governor, while Calderón has attacked APPO.

Meanwhile, in another poor and 30 percent Indigenous southern state, Chiapas, where the Zapatista uprising took place in 1994, the electoral commission awarded the governor's seat to a candidate from López Obrador's party following another very close election. The right-wing PRI and PAN—the National Action Party—have refused to recognize this victory, which they lost by 1 percent of the vote even though they had most control of the ballots.

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## HAITI

# Truckers strike; UN troops shoot

By G. Dunkel

When Haitians in the United States heard that the truck drivers who bring supplies from the Dominican Republic to Port-au-Prince went on strike to demand the firing of Jeantal Clervil, the director of customs at Malpasse (Malpaso in Spanish), they suspected Clervil was enforcing all of the required import duties, and perhaps imposing some additional ones that he made up.

They were certain this was the case when they heard that Clervil has raised the collection of duties from 9 million to 57 million Haitian gourdes a month. (38.4 gourdes equal \$1 U.S.)

But then the strike lasted a month. And the strikers pushed back the cops from Haiti's national police SWAT team with barricades of burning tires, rocks, bottles and gunfire. The workers had no intention of folding and taking down their barricades. They also ignored a couple of armored personnel carriers from the United Nation's MINUSTAH occupation force parked near the border post.

Not only were the import businesses in Port-au-Prince and the export businesses in Santo Domingo hurting, but custom duties—a major source of income for the Haitian state—were lagging. Striking workers told Ives Marie Chanel, a special correspondent for Haiti's AlterPress Agency, that they had a chance of winning.

Chanel talked to a group of Haitian drivers on the Dominican side of the border. They said that the impulse for the strike was Clervil's abuse of authority and over-taxation.

While representatives of the strikers have talked with President René Prével, who is also in charge of internal security, it appears that the government has adopted a "wait-them-out" policy.

### Political prisoners freed

On the political front, Prével's government did not appeal a judge's ruling that freed four prominent Lavalas militants: Paul Raymond, Georges Honoré, Yvon Antoine, whose nickname is Zapap, and Annette Auguste, who is better known as Sò Ann.

At a news conference held after their liberation, according to the August 23-29 weekly *Haïti-Progrès*, the four expressed satisfaction over their liberation, as well as

their intent to continue struggling for justice and reparation in order to achieve "unity, peace and national reconciliation."

Lavalas is the party that supports ex-President Jean-Bertrand Aristide. The four demanded the return of Aristide, the rehiring of thousands of employees fired because they were Lavalas supporters, and the release of significant numbers of Lavalas supporters who were thrown into prison on trumped-up charges by the previous, illegitimate government.

### Human-rights abuses

An International Human Rights Delegation was in Haiti in late August to examine the current situation and to see if significant changes in the human-rights situation had taken place since Prével assumed power May 15.

At an Aug. 25 news conference, they reported how United Nations "peace keepers" attacked the community Simond Pele, in the commune of Cité Soleil, on the morning of Aug. 24

Six of the international observers witnessed this attack at close range. They said Brazilian MINUSTAH troops in four APCs fired multiple rounds of heavy-caliber ammunition in a densely populated residential area. The only other presence seen on the streets were unarmed civilians, including small children.

U.S. trade unionist David Welsh, a member of the delegation, said: "The indiscriminate UN attacks on civilians in the poor neighborhoods have got to stop. The residents of Cité Soleil have repeatedly said they want an end to the violent repression of the country's poor by Haitian police and the UN occupying force."

The delegation also witnessed MINUSTAH sealing off Simond Pele in a fashion that was used when paramilitary forces employed by the previous illegitimate government conducted massacres.

"Representatives of popular organizations we spoke with said they want all political prisoners freed and they want their constitutional government returned to office, which is why they voted en masse for René Prével," said Pauline Wynter, representative of the Congolese Ota Benga Alliance, "and for the return of Jean-Bertrand Aristide, and the reinstatement of government officials and civil servants sacked by the coup government."

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## REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO

# EU sends troops

By G. Dunkel

The European Union has exploited instability in the Democratic Republic of the Congo to send 1,200 troops from its Rapid Reaction Force into the DRC to reinforce the 17,500 troops there under United Nations command. This represents an open penetration of imperialist-led troops into the mineral-rich Congo.

A day after results for the July 30 elections in the Congo were announced Aug. 20, fighting broke out between the presidential guard of Joseph Kabila and vice-president Jean-Pierre Bemba's militia, which lasted for nearly three days and inflicted heavy casualties.

Joseph Kabila, the current president and son of former President Laurent Kabila, who was assassinated in January 2001, got 45 percent of the vote. Laurent Kabila was associated with the earlier struggle against the pro-imperialist dictator, Joseph Mobutu.

Jean-Pierre Bemba, who is associated historically with Joseph Mobutu and who led one of the groups opposed to the government during the civil war between 1998 and 2002, the so-called Movement for the Liberation of the Congo, got 20 percent.

During that civil war, between 3 and 4 million Congolese died, mainly civilians.

Both sides blamed the other for provoking the recent conflict. The Kinshasa newspaper *L'Avenir* points out that Bemba doesn't have much of a chance of getting enough votes to win in the second round set for Oct. 27.

Most of the United Nations' 17,500 soldiers are in the eastern part of the DRC, supposedly to ensure security for the election. The U.N. commander called on the European Union troops two months ago to supply a rapid reaction force, which oper-

ates under the name EUFOR.

According to a guest column written by the EUFOR commander in the Kinshasa newspaper, *Le Potentiel*, EUFOR consists of Polish and Spanish soldiers. He also mentioned that a helicopter-equipped force of Dutch and German troops was moved to Gabon, a neighboring country, in case further intervention is required.

Colin Stewart, who is co-director of the observation mission called the Carter Center, set up by ex-President Jimmy Carter, and who was sent to the DRC, commented to Reuters on the success of EUFOR and the United Nations in ending the fighting. He said, "We are prepared to launch the next election since we have separated the belligerents."

The imperialists let the United Nations spend \$450 million to hold the election July 30 and will spend a few hundred millions more before the second round is finished. The European imperialists put together an armed force when the U.N. military command expressed doubts about keeping the lid on—17 members of the EU, headed by France and Germany, contributed troops. The U.S. even sent some officially "unofficial" observers from the Carter Center.

All of the imperialist powers have a material interest in exploiting the vast natural riches of the Congo, potentially the wealthiest country in sub-Saharan Africa, and having troops present puts them in a position of arranging what happens there. Their governments are well aware that Angola and Zimbabwe decisively intervened in the Congo to maintain Laurent Kabila in power during the civil war, while Uganda and Rwanda, which have close ties with U.S. imperialism, intervened against Kabila.

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## El Líbano se reconstruye mientras Nueva Orleáns aguarda

Por Joyce Chediac

En el Medio Oriente, después de un mes de bombardeo israelí, el pueblo del Líbano se está levantando de las ruinas y luchando por regresar a sus hogares. En los Estados Unidos, a un año entero después de que el huracán Katrina destruyera todo un pueblo, l@s residentes de Nueva Orleáns todavía están luchando para hacer lo mismo: regresar a sus hogares.

Parecerá extraño el comparar estas dos situaciones. Después de todo, el Líbano se está recuperando de una guerra y Nueva Orleáns de un desastre natural y de diques rotos. Pero eso es solo la crónica superficial. Un vistazo a los esfuerzos de ayuda y a sus resultados muestra que el derecho de regresar a sus hogares de la gente pobre se ha convertido en una batalla igual a la del Líbano.

En los Estados Unidos, los esfuerzos de socorro para Nueva Orleáns fueron liderados por la Agencia Federal para Asistencia de Emergencias, (FEMA por las siglas en inglés.) En el Líbano están siendo organizados por Hizbolá, el movimiento popular de resistencia libanés al cual George W. Bush le llama "terrorista".

¿Cuál grupo usted quisiera que ayudara a conducir los esfuerzos de socorro si usted perdiera su hogar? Veamos como comparan estos esfuerzos.

### Los rescates

En Nueva Orleáns, la gente que no podía salir por sí sola, incluyendo l@s enferm@s y l@s muy pobres que no podían costear un auto, fueron dejad@s a su suerte cuando las aguas subieron. Much@s de l@s más vulnerables se ahogaron en sus hogares.

Las decenas de miles de personas ancianas, enfermas y convalecientes que fueron instadas por la ciudad a refugiarse en el Superdome hasta que la tormenta pasara, permanecieron allí abandonadas por cinco días. No tuvieron asistencia médica ni higiene, y muy poca agua y alimentos. Muchas de ellas murieron. Unos 3.000 sobrevivientes atrapados en el Centro de Convenciones sufrieron la misma suerte.

Todo el día las cadenas de televisión mostraron pietaje de gente varada sobre los techos de sus casas mostrando letreros que decían "ayúdenme", y a la gente en el Superdome suplicando que les dieran agua y medicina para l@s ancian@s moribund@s. Sin embargo, el presidente de FEMA, Michael Brown dijo que él no tenía idea de la crisis hasta cuatro días después de rotos los diques. Aún así, él se tomó cuatro días más para rescatar a l@s sobrevivientes.

En el Líbano, el Hizbolá, las fuerzas que luchan y defienden al pueblo, comenzaron a ayudar a la población tan pronto como comenzó el bombardeo por los israelitas.

La resistencia libanesa proporcionó ambulancias y decenas de rescatadores que ayudaron a encontrar gente debajo de los escombros. Ellos ayudaron a organizar para que decenas de miles de personas pudieran tomar refugio en escuelas, parques públicos y casas privadas. (Christian Science Monitor, 16 de agosto)

Solo en Beirut, Hizbolá organizó 10 equipos móviles médicos responsables de 14 escuelas cada uno, en rotación de dos días, ayudando a 48.000 personas. Otras 70.000 fueron cuidadas en las casas por otros profesionales.

En una cocina organizada por Hizbolá cerca del centro de Beirut, l@s voluntari@s preparaban 8.000 servicios de comida al día—parte de un total de 50.000 comidas diarias que distribuían en todo Beirut, según el reporte del Monitor.

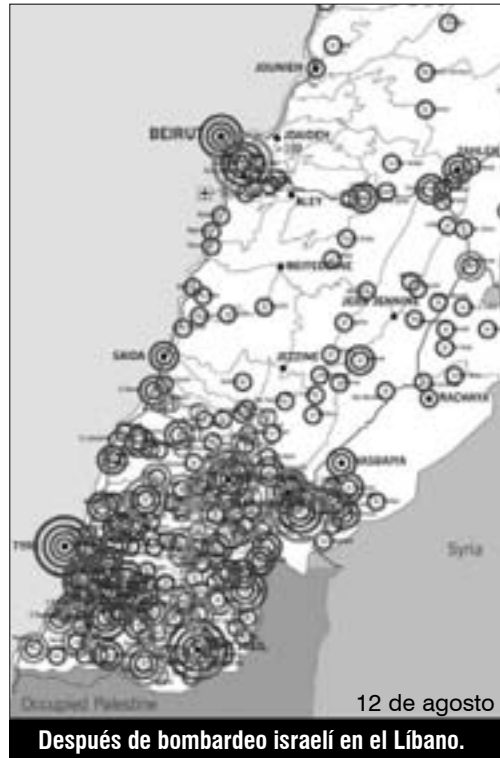
En Nueva Orleáns, las familias evacuadas del Superdome, el estadio deportivo, y del Centro de Convenciones, fueron

dispersadas a través de todo el país. Los padres a veces fueron separados de sus hijos. Algunos no sabían si sus seres queridos estaban vivos o muertos. Tres meses después de que azotara Katrina, 6.500 personas todavía estaban desaparecidas, y 400 cadáveres quedaban sin identificar, según el Centro Nacional de Adultos desaparecidos.

En el Líbano, apenas a 24 horas del alto al fuego del 14 de agosto, Hizbolá había establecido una línea de emergencia para ayudar a l@s refugiad@s, y de ese modo podían comunicarse entre sí basándose en su lugar de residencia, según la televisión libanesa. ([www.foreignpolicy.com](http://www.foreignpolicy.com))

En el Superdome, los cadáveres quedaron por cuatro o cinco días en temperaturas de 100 grados Fahrenheit. Los parientes que velaban los restos de sus seres queridos fueron forzados a abandonarlos durante la evacuación, algunos a punto de pistola. Los cuerpos sin vida fueron dejados en la inundación, muchos para ser descubiertos por sus seres queridos cuando regresaron meses después. Las personas evacuadas que lo habían perdido todo no podían pagar un entierro digno para sus muertos. Los parientes en luto enviados a diversas partes de la nación no podían consolarse entre sí.

Después del alto al fuego en el Líbano, el encontrar a los muertos y enterrarlos con dignidad se volvió en una prioridad. La resistencia de inmediato comenzó a desenterrar a los muertos entre los escombros e identificarlos. Se guardaron los restos hasta que volvieran los familiares. Fueron organizando actos fúnebres en masa, pagados por la resistencia, para que l@s vecin@s pudieran consolarse y contar con el apoyo de la comunidad. El 18 de agosto, una caravana de autos iba de una ceremonia fúnebre a otra. Dijo el clérigo chiíta, el jeque Shoue Catón, "Se decidió que se programarían los entierros para



Hombres en tractores niveladores se ocupaban de abrir camino a través de gigantescas pilas de escombros. Los caminos bloqueados con los remanentes de edificios estaban completamente transitables, apenas un día después de que el alto al fuego comenzara.

Las acciones de la administración de Bush y de las corporaciones indican una determinación para prevenir que l@s afroamerican@s de Nueva Orleáns vuelvan a sus comunidades.

En septiembre, la gigante aseguradora de viviendas Allstate rechazó rembolsar a l@s dueñ@s de casas de Nueva Orleáns que tenían pólizas de seguro por inundación. La compañía alegó que los hogares fueron destruidos por el viento, no por la inundación. (MarketWatch, 20 de sept, 2005)

En octubre, la administración de Bush rompió su promesa de proporcionar millares de hogares móviles

como vivienda temporal para l@s refugiad@s que regresaban. (New York Times, 31 de octubre 2005)

Luego de prometerle a Nueva Orleáns préstamos federales de vivienda para reparación y reconstrucción, se hizo evidente que no se había dispuesto ningún préstamo especial para las víctimas de la inundación y que la Casa Blanca propulsaba préstamos para la recuperación luego del desastre del huracán a una tarifa más alta que cualquier otra administración en los últimos 15 años. (USA Today, 15 de marzo)

En relación a la vivienda pública, en un velado ataque racista, el secretario del Desarrollo Urbano y de Viviendas (HUD) Alfonso Jackson dijo en abril que solamente los "mejores residentes" deben ser permitidos volver a la vivienda pública. (USA Today, 25 de abril) Y en junio, HUD, que había divulgado previamente que tenía 7.381 apartamentos públicos en Nueva Orleáns, ahora dijo que tenía solamente 2.000, y que demolería el resto.

### El derecho a regresar

Mientras tanto en el Líbano, un portavoz de Hizbolá anunció que "Tenemos información completa sobre todos los edificios que fueron destruidos o que se han dañado. ... pagaremos por edificios nuevos o reconstruiremos los edificios que fueron destruidos." (Aljazeera.net, 19 de agosto)

Representantes del Jihad al-Binaa, el departamento de construcción de Hizbolá, están viajando por el sur para determinar los daños y para comenzar a reparar y a reconstruir. (Beirut Daily Star Aug. 22)

¿Y qué de l@s que no podían esperar y han vuelto a casa en las áreas devastadas del sur antes de que las reparaciones esenciales sean hechas y los servicios restaurados? "Hay gente de Hizbolá que viene regularmente para ver cómo estamos y darnos pan y otros artículos básicos," dijo Mohammad Bazih, de 30 años, de la aldea de Baakline. Residentes de Zabqine, donde se cultiva tabaco, dijo a la prensa que Hizbolá les proveía de servicios básicos. (Beirut Daily Star, 22 de agosto) □



El Distrito Nueve en Nueva Orleáns.