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# Rightwing targets choice in South Women to defend Birmingham clinics

By Kathy Durkin

Alabama Reproductive Freedom Summer is underway. National women's organizations have issued a "call to action" for women's rights activists and supporters to go to Birmingham, Ala., from July 14-22. Their clarion cry is: Defend the clinics from a right-wing siege! There are two vital women's health clinics in that

city—the New Woman All Women Health Center and Planned Parenthood.

The so-called Operation Save America (OSA), a virulent anti-abortion group formerly known as Operation Rescue, has mobilized its followers to come to Birmingham for that week to shut down the clinics, threatening to push them "into a deep grave."

The National Organization for Women

website, in calling for volunteers to go to Alabama, states that the OSA is a "religious hate-group, a group of bullies who spend their time harassing and intimidating women, and spewing hatred toward the gay community and immigrants, among others."

But a strong response is being organized. Local activists plan clinic defense, with

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## PHILADELPHIA

### Mumia supporters demand his freedom

July 4th is a symbolic day in the frame-up of death row political prisoner, Mumia Abu-Jamal, because it was July 3, 1982—25 years ago—when a Philadelphia jury rendered the death sentence against him for a crime he did not commit following a sham of a trial. Abu-Jamal's lawyers and his supporters are currently awaiting a federal ruling on whether he will be granted a new trial or not.

This year's protest, which took place on July 4th, was located across the street from the remains of the house where George Washington kept nine enslaved Africans during his presidency.

Interspersed among frequent chants for Mumia's freedom were a number of speakers on U.S. political prisoners and the Iraq War. The day of protest ended with a march to the federal prison, where demonstrators were able to hear the prisoners' shouts and bangings on the narrow prison windows in solidarity with the demonstration. Read more about Mumia's case on page 3.

—Story and photo by Joe Piette

## Bloody storming of Pakistan mosque

# Bush pleased as Gen. Musharraf yields to U.S. pressure

By Deirdre Griswold

On July 10, even as a third U.S. aircraft carrier, the Enterprise, was on its way to the Gulf to threaten Iran and other countries in that besieged region, the Pakistani army, under orders of President Gen. Pervez Musharraf, was storming a mosque in the center of its capital city, Islamabad.

The assault on the Lal Masjid mosque—with tanks, heavy machine guns, teargas and explosives—killed scores of its defenders, including young women students from the seminary, or madrassa, located inside the large compound.

This brutal and bloody end to what had started months ago as a seemingly minor issue over a land title involving

the madrassa can only further enflame popular outrage at the Musharraf regime. Musharraf, who first took power through a military coup in 1999, was already widely seen as a tool of the Bush administration's offensive against militant Islam and a collaborator with imperialist powers bent on expansion throughout the region.

### U.S. pressure torpedoed negotiations

The mosque had been under siege by the army for seven days. On July 9, a delegation of prominent figures, including Muslim clerics, tried to negotiate a peaceful end to the standoff. After nine hours, however, the area around the mosque was cleared and negotiations were broken off

under orders of the army.

The assault began at 4:30 a.m. on the 10th. By that evening, the mosque had reportedly been occupied by the soldiers; its leader, Abdul Rasheed Ghazi, was killed along with his mother and other relatives. However, fierce resistance coming from the women's seminary was still being reported as of the next day.

Asia Times Online headlined its July 10 story about the storming of the mosque: "Pakistan's iron fist is to the U.S.'s liking." Written by the paper's Pakistan bureau chief, Syed Saleem Shahzad, the article suggested that negotiations with mosque leader Ghazi had been broken off and the assault begun as a result of direct U.S.

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# New York Pride Day

## Lesbian ejected from restaurant

By Brenda Ryan



Khadijah Farmer felt safe. She was in the heart of Greenwich Village, historically a center of New York's lesbian, gay, bi, transgender communities. And it was Pride Day, the annual event celebrating the LGBT movement and the victories it has won against bigotry and oppression.

So Farmer, a Black lesbian, was stunned when a bouncer at a local restaurant ejected her from the bathroom and demanded that she and her friends leave the premises. Why? Because, said the bouncer, she looked like a man.

Farmer and her fiends had gone to Caliente Cab Company, a restaurant in the Village, after the June 24 LGBT Pride march. While she was in the bathroom the bouncer burst in and banged on the stall door, telling her that a customer had complained that a man was in the women's room.

Farmer her friends offered to show him her driver's license as proof. He responded, "That is neither here nor there," Farmer told the New York Blade. He then ordered Farmer and her friends to pay the bill for their meal and ejected them from the restaurant.

Farmer—together with her mother and the Transgender Legal Defense and Education Fund—held a news conference July 2 conference outside the restaurant, announcing that they had demanded that the restaurant take action to prevent such discrimination in the future.

"I felt violated," Farmer was quoted in the Daily News. "I really thought that especially in New York City, especially in the heart of the Village, things like this had stopped happening."

TLDEF has filed a lawsuit against the restaurant demanding that it enforce a policy prohibiting discrimination on the basis of gender identity, gender expression and sexual orientation; train its staff to comply with laws protecting lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people; and compensate Farmer for the violation of her civil rights.

The legal group won a similar battle against New York's Metropolitan Transportation Authority last year. Helena Stone, a 70-year-old transgender woman, had been arrested three times by the MTA for entering the women's restroom. In October, the MTA settled the lawsuit TLDEF brought on Stone's behalf, agreeing to allow people to choose the restroom that is consistent with their gender expression, to conduct gender training and sensitivity programs for its employees, and to pay Stone

\$2,000 in damages.

Farmer's experience in the Village comes at a time when the area is undergoing gentrification. People of color, homeless and transgender communities have faced curfews and police brutality. Last year after the Halloween parade New York City police beat and arrested several people of color in sweeps on Christopher Street.

And it is in the West Village that a man attacked a group of African-American lesbians when they rebuffed his advances. The young women defended themselves and two men subsequently ran over to help them. At some point in the struggle the attacker was stabbed in the abdomen and subsequently underwent surgery. The women, rather than their attacker, were prosecuted, and in June, four of them—now known as the Jersey 4—were convicted and received sentences of from three-and-a-half to 11 years in prison.

These cases show that despite the many victories of the LGBT community, bigotry and violence have not been eradicated. The struggle has won the enactment in many states of laws that make it illegal for companies to fire, or refuse to hire or promote someone based on sexual orientation. However, only 17 states and the District of Columbia protect gay and lesbians in the work place and only 10 states provide protections based on gender identity.

While New York does not have such a law on the books the New York City human rights law bars transgender discrimination.

There is no federal law barring discrimination against lesbian, gay, bi or trans people. In April, members of the U.S. House of Representatives introduced the Employment Non-Discrimination Act, which would outlaw workplace discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity. A similar measure was introduced in 1994 but failed to pass.

June Brown, communications coordinator of the Sylvia Rivera Law Project in Manhattan, told Workers World: "The law as it stands protects people regardless of their gender identities to use the bathrooms of their choice. For someone to deny a person this unalienable right to use the bathroom based upon an assumption is an inhumane and ignorant act that should be dealt with immediately."

SRLP is a legal advocacy organization created and run by trans attorneys and activists who have been at the forefront of fighting discrimination against people of color who are trans, intersex or gender non-conforming in New York City.

Farmer's experience shows that it is only by fiercely mobilizing to demand justice that laws will be enacted and enforced to prevent the discrimination and humiliation she endured. □

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## 'Sicko' are lack of health care & the war

The Campaign for Healthcare, Not Warfare, a project of the Troops Out Now Coalition, launched an effort inspired in part by the recent movie "Sicko" to demand the war be shut down and health care be made free for everyone.

In literature, meetings and emails, the group has pointed out that "one-fourth of the Iraq war budget alone could fund health care for the close to 47 million uninsured people."

They have also pointed out that "the trillions spent on occupation and destruction could provide free medicine for all of our seniors and chronically ill or change the statistics of infant mortality in major cities like Detroit, Baltimore and Washington D.C. or provide health care for low wage workers and immigrant families."

Health care workers, nurses, doctors, home health aides, patients and patient advocates will be joining with anti-war, community, immigrant rights, student and union activists and converging in Washington D.C. on September 29th to demand an immediate end to war and occupation. The campaign will set up a special "Health care, not warfare" tent at an encampment that will precede the September 29th march.

Volunteers are urging activists and those who agree to download flyers from their web page at www.troopsoutnow.org/HWN.pdf and distribute flyers to friends, co-workers and to attend "Sicko" film showings armed with flyers to urge attendees not just to watch but to act.

—Sharon Black

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## New York City

# Black self-determination under attack

By Minnie Bruce Pratt  
New York

The struggle of Black communities against oppression continues in New York City, following the Bedford Stuyvesant community's renaming of a Brooklyn neighborhood street for Sonny Abubadika Carson, a staunch activist against racism and police brutality.

Carson was a founding member of the December 12th Movement, a Brooklyn-based Black organization whose central purpose is self-determination for Black and other nationally oppressed people.

Carson, who died at age 66 in December 2002, was internationally known for his organizing, from fighting for community control of schools in the 1960s to founding Black Men against Crack in the 1980s. His life was profiled in the 1974 movie, "The Education of Sonny Carson."

The most recent struggle is against New York City Council Speaker Christine Quinn's political attacks on Viola Plummer. Plummer is a leader of the December 12th Movement and chief of staff for City Councilmember Charles Barron, a former Black Panther who has remained a freedom fighter.

Plummer and December 12th led the community effort to honor Carson through a street name campaign. Thousands of residents endorsed the effort through signing petitions. The local Community Board voted 39 to one in favor of this effort. The board forwarded the petitions to their City Councilmember Albert Vann, who approved the motion and submitted it to the full New York City Council.

But in an unprecedented action, Quinn removed Carson's name from a group of 50 submitted for street changes. Quinn accused Carson of being "divisive" and "anti-white."

This argument, also known as "reverse discrimination," was popularized by white reactionaries such as Allan Bakke in his 1978 Supreme Court case, and is frequently used to attack Black people's demands for self-determination and

against ongoing racism.

Quinn, who is the first woman and first openly gay person to be elected speaker of the Council, is rumored to be jockeying to run for mayor of New York City.

On May 30, Vann put forward a resolution on behalf of the thousands in Bedford-Stuyvesant who wanted Carson honored as one of their great heroes.

But the resolution was defeated—with 24 of the 25 white council members, including Quinn, voting "no" to Black self-determination. A majority of members of the Black, Latino and Asian Caucus voted in favor, with some abstaining or absent.

Plummer, Barron, and other members of the African American community called the vote undeniably racist.

In a strong act of will the Bedford-Stuyvesant community persisted, and renamed Gates Avenue for Carson in a vibrant street action attended by hundreds of people on June 16 in the midst of torrential rain.

Since that action the New York Post and the New York Daily News have targeted Plummer and Barron with racist attacks. A web site "frequented by police officers," according to NY1 News, has posted death threats especially against Barron.

And Quinn has ratcheted up her campaign against Black self-determination. During the last week in June, Quinn sent Plummer a letter threatening to fire her from her position as Barron's chief of staff, unless Plummer agreed to her own suspension. According to a July 10 report from NY1, Quinn actually sent that letter to Plummer.

Plummer has replied by filing a lawsuit against Quinn in U.S. District Court. Plummer's lawyer, Roger Wareham, also a December 12th Movement member, charged Quinn with abuse of power, racial discrimination, violation of the First Amendment and violation of due process.

Imani Henry, International Action Center organizer and long-time Brooklyn resident, emphasized the importance of the street renaming for the entire Bedford-Stuyvesant community: "The street nam-

ing is an important step forward in recognizing not only the leadership of Sonny Carson, but also the importance of Bedford-Stuyvesant as the Black cultural and political hub that it has been historically. The community has been an activist and anti-war center for generations.

"And it is also known for having a strong lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender community of longtime residents, Caribbean, African, and African-American families who have lived there and called it home. The denial of the street naming for Carson is an act of divide and conquer. The New York City Council, and in particular Christine Quinn, should be aware of this."

### Fighting division and racism

In an April 23 press statement at the beginning of the street-naming campaign, the December 12th Movement said the council "cannot hide that there continue to be two New Yorks—one Black, one white: A Black community without rights; a community where over 50 percent of Black men are unemployed, over 50 percent of young Blacks drop out of high school and a young unarmed Black man can get shot 50 times the night before his wedding."

The shooting death of Sean Bell, an unarmed 23-year-old African American, last Nov. 25, was a flagrant example of police racism in New York City. Multiple protests against this outrage brought tens of thousands of people, mostly African American, into the streets during the early months of 2007. The December 12th Movement was key to organizing these protests and others against other police killings, such as that of 19-year-old Timur Person last Dec. 12.

Along with Quinn's legal and political attack on Plummer, there have been other recent racist attacks by police against activists in the city. On June 21 civil rights attorney Michael Tarif Warren and his partner, attorney Evelyn Warren, were brutally beaten by police and arrested for verbally protesting a police assault on a handcuffed Latino teenager.

Tarif Warren has handled many cases of police brutality and misconduct against the Black community. He was the lawyer who defended the five young Black teenagers who were falsely convicted, and ultimately exonerated, of raping the white woman known as the "Central Park Jogger." He also supports the freedom of death row political prisoner Mumia Abu-Jamal.

The beating and arrests of the Warrens came as activists were also protesting that New York police used racist profiling to arrest hundreds of young Latin@s during the Puerto Rican Day parade earlier in June.

In an interview with Workers World, Larry Holmes, a national leader of Workers World Party, emphasized the importance of seeing the New York City struggle as part of a larger broader fight:

"The racist witch hunt aimed at Viola Plummer, along with the recent arrests of Michael Tarif Warren and Evelyn Warren, has national implications in the larger context of the struggle against national oppression and for self-determination. Outrages continue against Black activists and the Black community as a whole, as in the case of the police shootings of Sean Bell and the wholesale war on Black youth and youth of color, not only in New York City, but around the country.

"We must fight state terrorism against oppressed people. We must fight at home for Black people and all oppressed nationalities, for immigrant workers, prisoners, the youth being beaten in the streets and in their schools, for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people, for women. We must fight against the war at home, and against the U.S. war abroad, the war on Iraq, Afghanistan, and Palestine. We must fight for the liberation movements throughout the world and in the U.S. We must fight the division and racism that will hurt us all if we do not do battle."

*Minnie Bruce Pratt is a white Southern anti-racist lesbian activist. She attended the Sonny Abubadika Carson street naming on June 16. □*

## Legal appeal exposes police frame-up of Mumia

By Betsey Piette  
Philadelphia

The struggle to free Mumia Abu-Jamal is breaking out on many fronts. Following up on the important May 17 hearing before the Third Circuit Court of Appeals, in early June attorney Robert Bryan filed an appeal with the Eastern District Supreme Court of Pennsylvania to reverse a decision of a lower court that dismissed Abu-Jamal's post-conviction petition as being "untimely." (Read the entire appeal at [www.millions4-mumia.org](http://www.millions4-mumia.org))

Not willing to sit and wait for the courts to do the right thing for U.S. political prisoner Mumia Abu-Jamal, hundreds gathered July 4 opposite the Liberty Bell and took to the streets to demand his freedom while providing information on his case to people visiting the area for the city's official "independence day" celebration. Speakers also raised the cases of Leonard Peltier, the MOVE 9, the Cuban Five and Puerto Rican nationalists. (See page.)

A week earlier a tape from Abu-Jamal was played several times during the gathering of more than 10,000 people at the U.S. Social Forum in Atlanta, Ga. In New York, activists have launched a peti-



tion campaign to have a street in Harlem renamed for Mumia.

### Newest appeal charges police fraud

The latest appeal filed by Bryan argues that newly discovered evidence shows the state manipulated witnesses to give false testimony against Abu-Jamal in violation of his rights under the U.S. and Pennsylvania constitutions. The appeal charges that the lower court erred in dismissing Abu-Jamal's Post Conviction Relief Act petition as untimely.

Bryan states that prosecutorial and police fraud seriously undermined the fairness of the 1982 trial, and that the

Pennsylvania courts were complicit with their dismissal without hearing a December 2003 PRCA petition filed on Abu-Jamal's behalf seeking relief based on this new evidence.

The 2003 petition offered newly discovered evidence from two sources. Former prostitute Yvette Williams testified that Cynthia White, a key "eyewitness" for the prosecution at Abu-Jamal's 1983 trial, admitted to Ms. Williams that she lied and committed perjury after receiving both money and threats from police officers. At the time of Abu-Jamal's trial, White, also a prostitute, had several criminal matters pending against her. While sharing a prison cell White told Williams that police officers threatened to seek maximum penalties if she didn't testify that she saw Abu-Jamal shoot Daniel Faulkner, a white police officer.

Another declaration, from Kenneth Pate, challenged court statements made by his step-sister Priscilla Durham that she heard Abu-Jamal confess to killing Faulkner while he was being treated for a gunshot wound in the hospital emergency room where Durham worked as a guard. According to Pate, after the trial Durham admitted to him that she had also lied because of pressure exerted by the police.

The December 2003 petition was dismissed in June 2005 by Philadelphia Court of Common Pleas Judge Pamela Dembe

for not being "timely." Bryan asserts that this evidence of monstrous police and prosecutorial misconduct was not known at the time of Abu-Jamal's 1982 trial and had it been available then or at his direct appeal it would have dealt a severe blow to the state's case.

The information provided by Williams that police coerced witnesses including Cynthia White to give false testimony is further supported by photographs taken at the scene of Faulkner's shooting in December 1981 which recently came to light. The 26 pictures by a freelance photographer reveal police manipulation of the scene and serve to discredit testimony of key prosecution witnesses.

The photographer also reported that eyewitnesses he interviewed at the scene immediately after the shooting claimed that Faulkner's shooter fled the scene. Not knowing that Abu-Jamal had been shot and thinking he was the fleeing man, the photographer offered to provide his photographs and testimony to the prosecution, but was never called.

### Challenges to death sentences on the rise

Abu-Jamal who has been on Pennsylvania's death row for 25 years, is currently awaiting a ruling by the Third Circuit Court of Appeals on whether he will be granted a

*Continued on page 6*



# Judge Roberts: the roots of his bigotry

By Stephen Millies

What do Janet and Michael Jackson have in common with U.S. Supreme Court Chief Justice John G. Roberts, Jr.?

They all grew up in Indiana and had fathers who were employed in the steel industry. There are some differences though.

Joseph Jackson, Janet and Michael's father, was born into a sharecropper's family in Fountain Hill, Ark. Joseph Jackson moved north and worked as a crane operator at U.S. Steel's Gary, Ind., works before becoming full-time manager

of the "Jackson 5."

John G. Roberts Jr. was born in Buffalo and is the son of Bethlehem Steel executive John G. Roberts Sr. The elder Roberts was sent to open up Bethlehem's newest plant in Burn Harbor, Ind.

This steel boss moved his family to the exclusive community of Long Beach, Ind., which for decades was off-limits to African-American and Jewish people. "Restrictive covenants" once banned selling or leasing property to "any person who is not a Caucasian gentile."

The future Supreme Court justice grew up in this atmosphere. He attended a pri-

vate boarding school.

Unemployment rates for Latin@ and African-American youths are 80 percent or more. Summer job programs have shriveled.

But John Roberts Jr. was always able to land a good-paying summer job at Burns Harbor between semesters at Harvard. He was no more qualified than thousands of Black youths in nearby Gary, but Roberts got the job because his daddy was the plant manager.

Such favoritism didn't prevent this hypocrite from writing memos attacking affirmative action against discrimination when he was one of Ronald Reagan's White House lawyers.

President George W. Bush appointed Roberts to the Supreme Court. In a show of bi-partisan racism, exactly half of the Democrats in the Senate voted to confirm this bigot.

Steel and meatpacking were the first two northern industries in which African Americans were able to get jobs during the First World War. "Black membership in the USWA"—United Steel Workers of America—"totals from one-fourth (overall average) to two-thirds or more in varying locations," wrote Cal Bonner in Workers World newspaper back in 1972.

The jobs held by African-American and Latin@ steelworkers were the most dangerous. Black workers were the majority in the coke ovens, where coal is heated up to remove impurities. These workers were 15 times more likely to get cancer.

African-American and Latino men were kept out of skilled jobs while Black and Latina women weren't hired at all. The 1974 "Fairfield Decision" opened up jobs but came too late for tens of thousands of workers who thrown out of work when dozens of steel plants were shut down.

John G. Roberts Sr. was an enforcer of Bethlehem Steel's apartheid hiring practices at both the Lackawanna and Burns Harbor works. Vince Copeland, a founding editor of Workers World newspaper, fought against them.

Copeland, who died in 1993, led wild-cat strikes of Black and white workers at Bethlehem's Lackawanna works outside

Buffalo before being fired in 1950. He wrote about the successful struggle to get Black workers in previously all-white repair gangs in the pamphlet "The Blast Furnace Brothers."

Milt Neidenberg, a contributing editor of this newspaper, fought Bethlehem's racism as a unionist at Lackawanna in the 1950s and 1960s.

The late Ed Merrill, a founding member of Workers World Party, worked at Lackawanna on a track gang. He estimated that by 1970 there were 5,000 African Americans employed at Lackawanna.

It was a different story at Bethlehem's newest facility at Burns Harbor. Built in the late 1960s, Burns Harbor is the last "integrated" steel mill to be opened in the United States. It takes iron ore and other raw materials and turns them into steel, unlike "mini-mills" that melt scrap metal.

Burns Harbor is located just ten miles from the majority Black city of Gary. Forty years ago, 5,200 African Americans were employed at U.S. Steel's Gary Works.

Yet Bethlehem Steel scoured southern Indiana, Illinois, Kentucky and Tennessee to hire whites. It used biased psychological and aptitude tests along with interviews to keep out African-American applicants.

The biggest weapon in the corporation's racist arsenal was the scientific-technological revolution. Corporation executives could cherry-pick job seekers because of the radically shrunken need for workers. By 1999 less than 5 percent of those hired at Burns Harbor were Black. ("If you ask me...Bethlehem turns back clock on equality," People's Weekly World, Sept. 4, 1999.)

Burns Harbor ultimately doomed the Lackawanna plant. Thousands of Black and white steelworkers lost their jobs there.

On March 31, 2003, Bethlehem Steel ripped off health benefits and life insurance from 95,000 retired workers and their families.

Judge Roberts wants to turn back the clock on all poor and working people, just like his father did to Black workers at Burns Harbor.

It will be up to the struggle to overturn every one of his hateful decisions. □

## Vietnamese liberation fighter

# Nguyen Van Quy

By Sara Flounders

A painful reminder of the continuing toll of a U.S. war that is long past came with the announcement of the death of Nguyen Van Quy on July 7 in Hai Phong, Vietnam, at age 52 from Agent Orange-related illnesses including stomach and liver cancer.

Mr. Quy's death came just nine days after he traveled to the U.S. although he knew he was in the terminal stage of cancer. Using a wheelchair, he attended the June 18 oral arguments for continuing the lawsuit against Monsanto, Dow Chemical and 35 other chemical companies for their role in supplying the poisonous chemical defoliants used in Vietnam.

The suit in U.S. Federal Court was initiated by a massive grass roots campaign throughout Vietnam demanding justice. The suit charges that U.S. chemical companies manufactured defoliants that they knew contained dioxin, the most toxic chemical known. These companies, which made enormous profits on the Pentagon contracts, are liable under international law and must provide compensation.

The Pentagon sprayed defoliants, including Agent Orange, over vast areas of south

Vietnam's forests and fields in an effort to defeat the national resistance movement by starving the population and denying ground cover to the liberation forces.

The Vietnam Association for Victims of Agent Orange, VAVA, has gathered documentation and studies that confirm that over 4 million Vietnamese still suffer the harmful effects of exposure to dioxin sprayed by the Pentagon on Vietnam's countryside more than 40 years ago.

### Heroism & quiet determination

Nguyen Van Quy is an example of the determination and quiet heroism that led to Vietnam's victory in resisting U.S. and earlier Japanese and French imperialism. From the age of 17 to 20 years Nguyen Van Quy served in the Vietnam's Peoples Army as a communication line repairman and platoon commander on the famous Ho Chi Minh trail.

As part of the Liberation Army he ate the crops and drank the water in provinces in south Vietnam that were being continually sprayed with deadly defoliants. Quy suffered intense headaches, exhaustion and rashes at the time. Now Nguyen Van Quy has two children

*Continued on page 9*

# Women to defend Birmingham clinics

*Continued from page 1*

security and escorts so staff members and patients will be safeguarded from harassment and abuse. Activists from around the country will join their sisters and others from throughout Alabama and the South to march and rally in Birmingham. An abortion-rights speak-out, community outreach and a tour of the Birmingham Civil Rights Institute are also included in the week-long events.

At a June 21 meeting of the Birmingham Peace Project, which focused on LGBT concerns, organizers for the Alabama Reproductive Freedom Summer revealed that OSA has also announced plans to target the local lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender communities. They summoned all activists—LGBT, anti-war and anti-racist—to join with them in defeating the right wing and defending the clinics.

For many years the New Woman All Women Health Center has stood up to right-wing violence and provided women with quality health care and comprehensive reproductive services, including abortions. In 1994 the staff, with the help of hundreds of pro-choice activists, defied a week-long OSA siege and stayed open.

In 1998 the clinic was bombed, killing a security guard and severely disabling Emily Lyons, the director of nursing, Eric Robert Rudolph, an avowed white

supremacist and misogynist, is now serving a life sentence without parole for that murderous act.

Rudolph bombed the Atlanta Olympics in 1996, killing one woman and injuring 100 others, and also bombed a women's clinic and a lesbian bar in Atlanta. Rudolph's racist ideas and actions are a continuation of white supremacist violence during the civil rights struggles of the 1950s and 1960s. These attacks brought so much death and destruction to the Black community of Birmingham that the city was dubbed "Bombingham."

After the 1998 bombing, the New Woman All Women Health Center quickly rebounded and rebuilt with the support of women's rights and other groups. It has continued to serve women throughout Alabama, and from Georgia, Mississippi and Tennessee.

The two Birmingham clinics have also withstood legislative attacks. In Alabama, reactionary legislators have long maneuvered to undo women's reproductive rights. Their goal of a total ban has not succeeded. But they have pushed through restrictive state abortion laws, harming many women, especially the young and poor.

The Bush administration continues to give a green light to anti-woman forces by its all-out war on reproductive rights

for women. The Supreme Court ruling in favor of the Federal Abortion Ban and the appointments of anti-choice justices John Roberts and Samuel Alito have emboldened the ultra-right in its campaign to overturn women's rights.

Before his high court appointment Roberts gave legal support to Operation Rescue when it organized to shut down women's clinics in Buffalo, N.Y., and actually endorsed a plan to hold "memorials for aborted fetuses." (Washington Post, 8/16/05)

Alito issued a legal opinion that a married woman must have her husband's approval to obtain an abortion. (DemocracyNow.org)

And this political and ideological campaign against women's rights also occurs within a larger reactionary program—the imperialist war drive; racist campaigns against immigrants and other people of color, including youth and Katrina survivors; bigotry towards the LGBT community; and attacks on workers' rights and civil liberties.

But pro-choice organizers in the South have won against these reactionary forces. In addition to the 1994 Birmingham victory, in 2006 a diverse coalition of pro-choice forces kept reproductive services available to women and their families in Jackson, Miss.

The ultra-right aimed to shut down the women's clinic in that city.

A strong mobilization by coalition forces including African-American and Asian women and men, LGBT people and many young people pushed back the bigots. Their unified power kept open the only clinic that performs abortions in the state, as well as providing vital reproductive health care for poor women, Jackson NOW told Workers World.

Reproductive rights activists nationwide, including clinic staff, have bravely fought for years to defend the right of women to have access to quality health care. Right-wing attacks have been brutal and dangerous, resulting in deaths of health care workers, doctors and escorts.

The courage of these fighters for women's rights is admirable. And they are showing the way to stand up to and defeat the right wing in this country—those both in and out of the White House.

The Alabama Reproductive Freedom Summer hotline is (205) 251-9623. Send messages of support and offers to participate to stoposainbham@yahoo.com Send donations to: Alabama NOW (mark the check ARFS), P.O. Box 826, Huntsville, AL 35801, and to New Woman All Women Health Care, 1001 17<sup>th</sup> Street South, Birmingham, AL 35205. □



# The way forward for reproductive rights

By Kris Hamel

Increasing attacks on women's reproductive rights, including greater restrictions on abortion, are taking place in dozens of U.S. states as well as nationally. The threat that the 1973 Roe vs. Wade decision will be overturned has grown more ominous with the Supreme Court's April decision in Gonzalez vs. Carhart, which upheld the 2003 federal ban on certain types of post-first-trimester abortions.

The high court's reactionary decision threw out decades of legal precedent by allowing no provision to protect women's health and safety. The five to four majority ruling also blurred the distinction between pre- and post-viability, and thus opened the door to further restrictions on abortion rights. "Viability" has been defined as the point at which the fetus is able to live outside the womb.

The Supreme Court's April decision has been roundly condemned by women's-rights activists for its paternalistic and condescending opinions about women.

The concurring opinion, written by Justice Clarence Thomas and joined by Antonin Scalia, baldly stated that "[t]he Court's abortion jurisprudence ... including ... Roe v. Wade ... has no basis in the Constitution." ([www.supremecourt.us.gov](http://www.supremecourt.us.gov))

The Guttmacher Institute reports that more than 1,000 pieces of state legislation relating to reproductive rights were introduced in the first quarter of 2007. Most of them are anti-choice. Abortion bans that would take effect upon the overturning of Roe vs. Wade ("trigger laws") were introduced in 11 states and passed in North Dakota and Mississippi. Laws increasing funding to abstinence-only programs and anti-choice "crisis pregnancy centers" were introduced in 15 states and passed in six.

Twenty-three states introduced laws for state-mandated counseling or lectures prior to abortions, with four states enacting the measures. Many included a compulsory "waiting period" for women before having an abortion.

Laws restricting young women's right to choose were introduced in 13 states and enacted in three. Thirty-five states now require minor women to obtain parental consent and/or notification.

Anti-choice ballot initiatives are also under way in several states.

Most state legislatures have adjourned for 2007. Most of the reactionary bills will not be carried over to next year. However, the Supreme Court's April decision will make 2008 a free-for-all in most states, with even more legislation introduced to severely restrict or prohibit women's right to choose abortion. The green light from the high court has encouraged the right-wing campaign to outlaw all abortions, whether wholesale or piecemeal.

While the right to abortion is under constant attack, those who claim to care about the "pre-born"—a term used by anti-choice forces who supposedly value life above all else—do absolutely nothing for children once they are born. These abortion foes are never heard demanding free health care and quality education, affordable housing or any other necessity to sustain life. Many are comfortable being "pro-life"—and for the death penalty and the war on Iraq.

The thin veneer of their "pro-life" label is easy to see through and exposes what they really are — anti-woman, racist and sexist to the core.

Yet a new tactic in their campaign is the claim they are the "true feminists" who really care about women. Their "feminism" defines women as unable to think and decide for themselves, in need of protection and sheltering in order to fulfill their "natural role" as mothers and nurturers.

## Anti-abortion tactics and racism

The religious right did not initially use the issue of abortion as the centerpiece of its reactionary program. The rise of Jerry Falwell, the "Moral Majority" and associated right-wing political movements in the late 1970s and during the Reagan era put abortion rights into the spotlight. But according to religion expert Randall Balmer, "The [r]eligious [r]ight arose as a political movement for the purpose ... of defending racial discrimination at Bob Jones University and at other segregated schools." (Thy Kingdom Come, 2006)

Faced with judicial setbacks in maintaining racist segregation, right-wing leaders held a meeting and conference call in the early 1980s to discuss a new plan of attack. Balmer states: "Several callers made suggestions, and then ... a voice on the end of one of the lines said, 'How about abortion?' And that is how abortion was cobbled into the political agenda of the [r]eligious [r]ight."

It's no surprise that a May 2007 Supreme Court decision, Ledbetter vs. Goodyear, essentially legalized pay inequity and gutted Title VII for women workers and all workers of color. Title VII is the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which laid the basis for many equality struggles as it outlawed "discrimination in public facilities, in government, and in employment" against people of color and women.

Working-class women and women of oppressed nationalities today face profound problems in a system that is legally stacked against them—whether it is the daily struggle to survive on low wages while trying to pay for costly rent, transportation, child care, high utility bills and food prices, medical care and education; experiencing constant racism, sexism and anti-lesbian oppression on top of that; and on top of that having to deal with any unplanned, unwanted pregnancy in the face of every kind of anti-choice obstacle placed in their way.

What can working-class and oppressed women do to safeguard the right to choose, achieve equality with men in capitalist society, and move forward instead of being constantly pushed back by reactionary judges and legislators and the right-wing social movements behind them?

## Moving forward for reproductive rights

The Democratic Party is not the answer. Like the many broken promises Democrats made to end the war in Iraq, so too have they failed women, especially in the area of reproductive rights.

In a June 14 Women's eNews article, Allison Stevens wrote: "Even though the

## One year later

# March set to highlight power outage

By Mary Owen  
Queens, N.Y.

After a new series of Con Edison power outages swept through the New York metropolitan area this month, the utility giant will soon face a reminder of last year's 10-day outage in Queens.

On July 17 the Western Queens Power for the People Campaign will hold a Flashlight March on the first anniversary of last year's outage, which plunged more than 174,000 people in western Queens into darkness during a sweltering summer heat wave.

The march will begin at 7 p.m. at Thomas P. Noonan Playground in Sunnyside, Queens (at Greenpoint Avenue and 43rd Street near the 40th Street-Lowery stop on the 7 local train line).

House and Senate are now controlled by Democrats—a party that officially backs the right to abortion—the majority of lawmakers still oppose full reproductive rights, according to NARAL Pro-Choice America, the Washington-based pro-choice lobby. Of the 435 members of the House of Representatives, 219—a slight majority—currently oppose abortion rights, and another 51 members have a mixed record on the subject. In the Senate, only 35 of the 100 senators have strong pro-choice records; 48 strongly oppose abortion and 17—including Majority Leader Harry Reid of Nevada—have mixed views." ([www.womensnews.org](http://www.womensnews.org))

Leaders of some U.S. women's groups have placed high hopes on a Democratic-controlled Congress to preserve women's rights and abortion rights. But Stevens quotes Kim Gandy, president of the National Organization for Women as well as a spokesperson from the Planned Parenthood Federation of America, and Eleanor Smeal, president of the Feminist Majority Foundation, as being forced to acknowledge the truth about the Democratic-controlled Congress in which they had placed such high hopes for preserving women's rights and abortion rights in particular.

Advocates of equality and reproductive freedom for all women face a daunting task 34 years after the U.S. Supreme Court legalized abortion as part of a woman's right to medical privacy. The right to choose abortion was a victory forced from the high court in 1973 after years of militant struggles against imperialist war, racism and segregation, and for women's and lesbian, gay, bi and trans liberation. Women and their allies marched by the millions to demand safe, legal abortion. They recognized that liberation and equality could not be achieved unless women had the right to determine the destiny of their own bodies and their own lives.

So electoral and legislative arenas, political lobbying and online petition campaigns to try to persuade politicians to protect women's reproductive rights are not enough. Women of all nationalities must

continue to take up the banner for equality and reproductive freedom for every woman. These demands must include no forced sterilizations, the right to LGBT marriage and adoption, as well as the social programs and supports necessary to raise children if they are desired so that the basic human needs of families are met.

A strong movement in the streets—demonstrating, protesting, sitting in and other actions—is what will force even a right-wing Supreme Court to back down.

This struggle is beginning to rejuvenate. Activists from around the country will converge on Birmingham, Ala., July 14-22 to defend clinics against "Operation Save America," formerly known as "Operation Rescue." Organizers with the National Women's Fightback Network, an affiliate of the International Action Center, are publicizing the struggle in Alabama nationally and helping to get the word out for solidarity and assistance.

The National Women's Fightback Network is also issuing a call for women around the country to mark Women's Equality Day—Aug. 26—by demonstrating for women's equality and reproductive freedom, and against the sexism, racism, homophobia and transphobia, and poverty that put such dreadful limits on women's lives.

Activists with the NWFN are urging women in cities and towns across the country to call demonstrations, hold meetings or have other actions on Aug. 24-27. Women in Detroit, Boston and other cities are beginning to discuss demonstrations to support the struggle for reproductive rights and to revive a militant women's movement in the U.S. that is crucial to winning the war at home against the working class and oppressed.

For more information on the August 24-27 Women's Equality Day Call to Action, contact the National Women's Fightback Network at [womenfightback@action-mail.org](mailto:womenfightback@action-mail.org).

*The writer is a leader of the Detroit Action Network For Reproductive Rights (DANFORR).*

## Cheers for anti-war protesters at parade

Anti-war protesters from Iraq Summer, Michigan Emergency Committee Against War & Injustice and Raging Grannies crashed the Clawson, Mich., July 4 parade wearing protest t-shirts and carrying signs. The protesters estimated that over half the crowd watching along the parade route cheered as they went by.

— Workers World Detroit bureau



PHOTO: IRAQ SUMMER

and immigrant communities organized to fight the super-rich utility company. Since then, PFP has petitioned, held public meetings, mobilized for and spoken at public hearings, and participated as a community voice in the state investigation of the outage.

In May, PFP joined the Women's Fightback Network and the Million Worker March (East) in a picket of Con Ed's stockholder meeting in Manhattan to protest the utility's outrageous rate increase request. Now the group is planning to take that message into the communities of Western Queens with the July 17 Flashlight March.

For more information or copies of the flyer in English and Spanish, go to [www.powerforthepeople.info](http://www.powerforthepeople.info). □

Along the route through Sunnyside to Woodside, marchers will pass out an open letter to the state Public Service Commission and Con Ed for people in the community to sign. The letter will tell Con Ed: Accept fault for last year's outage. Pay us what you still owe us (for non-food losses and damages). And NO 17 percent rate hike—use your \$12 billion in profits to pay for upgrades.

Con Ed has amassed \$12 billion a year in profits and \$25 billion in assets while neglecting infrastructure upgrades in Queens and elsewhere. Now the utility giant claims it needs the biggest rate hike in its history to fix the system: 17 percent for residents and 10.5 percent for businesses. PFP was launched on the sixth day of the July 2006 Queens outage when residents and workers in the affected working-class



# IMMIGRANT RIGHTS: a

By Teresa Gutierrez

David Ritcheson was an 18-year-old Chicano. He was not an immigrant, documented or undocumented. He was born in Texas and lived in Galveston.

But he is nonetheless another casualty of the racist and violent anti-immigrant backlash sweeping the country.

David is dead. And even though he took his own life, his executors are the Lou Dobbs and Tom Tancredos of the U.S., who along with the Bush administration have waged a vicious national campaign on immigration policy that has resulted in some of the most vile, racist attacks against immigrants of color.

Under the guise of securing the borders and protecting U.S. jobs, the media, the government and the right wing have over the last few years carried out an aggressive debate on immigration policy. The debate and proposed legislation in Congress have resulted in one of the most vicious anti-immigrant climates in U.S. history.

It is not the first time such a climate has been fostered. Any time the capitalist class no longer needs cheap labor or when that labor needs to be further controlled for easy exploitation, the vile and racist anti-immigrant monster rears its ugly head.

David Ritcheson was the product of this climate.

Last year, white skinheads beat and raped this youth in Texas after he tried to kiss a young white woman at a party. He was raped with a patio umbrella pole and suffered severe internal damage. He survived the attack only to commit suicide on July 3, one year later.

At the time of his attack, the Southern Poverty Law Center reported that hate crimes against Latin@s were on the rise. The report declared that aggressors were using the immigration debate as an excuse to incite violence. The number of hate groups, they reported, had risen by 30 percent since 2000.

Latino immigrants of course are not the only targets. Racial and religious profiling of Muslim, South Asian, Caribbean and African immigrants also rose. Whole neighborhoods in the Pakistani communities of Brooklyn, N.Y., for example, were devastated by this insidious witch hunt.

## Legislation stalls, policies carry on

On list serves of the many dedicated and hard-working activists who are committed to defending immigrant workers, there is a common thread—a growing sense of frustration and desperation.

On the one hand, the hope that many had of legislation that would legalize and decriminalize workers has for now been smashed, despite the many protests and activities demanding legalization.

On the other hand, immigration policy, despite the stalemate in Congress, is being implemented every single day around the country. Federal, state and local policies are carried out every minute adding to the climate of desperation while Congress sits on its hands.

According to the National Conference of State Legislatures, at least 1,100 immigration bills had been submitted by lawmakers this past May. That was more than double from last year. The number is expected to grow.

Adding to the sense of desperation is how much the anti-immigrant debate is being handled through the far-right in this country. It is terrorist organizations like the Minutemen who get access to the air waves, not the pro-immigrant activists.

The number of right-wing groups has exploded according to the Center for New Community. Anti-immigrant groups grew by 600 percent in the last two years. In 2005, there were fewer than 40. Today there are more than 250.

Legislation proposals that are being

taken up, according to the Washington Post (June 25, 2007) “limit immigrants’ ability to obtain jobs, find housing, get driver’s licenses, and receive government services.” They give states the right to authorize law enforcement agencies to ask immigrants about legal status.

There are also attempts such as that by Home Depot to stop local legislation that accommodates day laborers who often gather at these stores to obtain work. The Georgia-based company asked Sen. Johnny Isakson, a Georgia Republican, to help curtail a practice where various city councils around the country are forcing Home Depot to build facilities for day laborers.

On July 2, the governor of Arizona, Janet Napolitano, signed into law House Bill 2779, the employer sanctions bill, which states that business licenses could be suspended or revoked for hiring undocumented workers.

According to Fox News, Gov. Napolitano stated that “I signed the legislation out of the realization that the flow of illegal immigration is due to the constant demand of some employers for cheap, undocumented labor.”

Immigration rights activists are organizing against Napolitano’s bill.

Paul Teitelbaum, an immigrant rights activist in Arizona, told Workers World, “HB 2779 also emboldens the Minutemen and other racist militias that roam Southern Arizona. It sets a precedent for other states to take ‘the immigration debate’ into their own hands. The solution is to mobilize a fight back, denounce the law and show solidarity with immigrants.”

He continues, “We can expect this law to result in an increase of workplace abuse and racial profiling. This bill was signed as temperatures reached 110+ degrees and a record number of bodies were recovered from the Arizona desert. The fact that a Democratic governor signed this bill has added to the feeling of betrayal by the Democratic Party that is growing among some of Tucson’s Latin@s.”

Implemented immigration policy today

## GI dissidence spreads to Baghdad

By John Catalinotto

GI resistance is continuing to grow even as the popular opposition to the occupation of Iraq does. Below are some updates on ongoing cases and some new resisters, including one in Baghdad.

On June 21, the news broke of the first U.S. war resister stationed in Iraq, **Spc. Elonai “Eli” Israel**, who sent out an SOS on his blog making known his presence and delicate situation in Iraq and indicating he was surrounded by hostile forces, apparently meaning within the U.S. chain of command. Spc. Israel is stationed at Camp Victory in Baghdad with JVB Bravo Company, 1-149 Infantry of the Kentucky Army National Guard. He wrote, “I have told them that I will no longer play a ‘combat role’ in this conflict or ‘protect corporate representatives,’ and they have taken this as ‘violating a direct order.’” Spc. Israel will seek a discharge as a conscientious objector. He received immediate support from groups like Courage to Resist, Iraq Veterans Against the War (IVAW) and GI Special, and announced the next day that he felt relieved for the time being.

A military judge in Ft. Lewis, Wash., ruled July 7 that **Lt. Ehren Watada**, the first Army officer to refuse orders to Iraq and publicly announce it in June 2006, could be again brought to trial. At his first court-martial, which ended in a mistrial last Feb. 7, Watada attempted to bring up his moral and political objections to the war in Iraq and his responsibility to the men he was supposed to be leading into battle.

The judge at that court-martial, Lt. Col. John Head, made all decisions in the first days of the trial to prevent the lieutenant from bringing up his principled opposition to the Iraq war as part of his defense. When the prosecution case seemed weak, lead prosecutor Capt. Scott VanSweringen asked for the mistrial, and Lt. Col. Head granted it. Watada’s attorney, Eric Seitz, has argued that trying Watada again would be “double jeopardy,” and that the Army should drop the case.

While Watada may face another trial, he has been picking up more and more popular support, especially on the West

Coast. A new group now supporting him is composed of Japanese-Americans known as the Heart Mountain draft resisters, who refused the draft during World War II, saying they would fight only if the Japanese-Americans held in camps by the U.S. government at that time—who had committed no crimes—were all released and were treated as first-class citizens. These elders congratulated Watada for his principled position and encouraged him to keep on with his struggle.

Rev. Lennox Yearwood, Jr.

PHOTO: COURAGE TO RESIST

**Sp/4. Eugene Cherry**, a soldier in the 10th Mountain Division, a unit whose home base is Fort Drum in upstate New York and which is now breaking into homes in Baghdad, had a good result. He had been facing a bad conduct discharge and a year in prison for going AWOL and was to face court-martial on July 9. On July 2, Tod Ensign of the “Different Drummer” center in Watertown, near Fort Drum, sent out an e-mail announcing that the Fort Drum command has, belatedly, decided to drop “its plans to court-martial Sp/4 Cherry for being AWOL. It will, instead, allow him to request an administrative Other than Honorable discharge.”

Cherry, an African American from Chicago, has medical documentation that he suffers from post-traumatic stress disorder. The “Different Drummer” is modeled on the Vietnam era anti-war coffee houses set up near military bases.

Cherry’s supporters in Watertown had planned meetings and protests as the court-martial was to start, including the presence of Col. Ann Rice and the final stop of the IVAW bus, which had made an 11-stop tour mostly of military bases in the eastern part of the U.S., from Georgia to Watertown, but also including the U.S. Social Forum in Atlanta. At Ft. Benning, Ga., and Ft. Jackson, S.C., some of the anti-war veterans were arrested by the



military authorities. The arrests demonstrated how the command fears contact between experienced dissidents whose word will carry weight and the active-duty troops.

An officer, this one in the U.S. Air Force Reserve and right here in the U.S., has been threatened with

discharge for his outspoken opposition to the war. **Rev. Lennox Yearwood, Jr.**, an African-American hip-hop artist, writes that on March 26 the Air Force notified him they are taking action to honorably discharge him on the basis of “behavior clearly inconsistent with the interest of national security.” The letter arrived six days after Yearwood publicly announced the launching of a national “Make Hip Hop Not War.”

Rev. Yearwood faces a hearing on July 12 at Robins Air Force Base in Georgia. He says that Cindy Sheehan will be there to lend solidarity.

In February 2003 Yearwood preached a sermon he titled, “Who Would Jesus Bomb?” He is an eloquent writer with a powerful message that he sent out in a recent release:

“This moment in history is our generation’s lunch-counter moment—Iraq is our Vietnam and New Orleans is our Birmingham. Our generation could be the generation to defeat racism, poverty and war, but only if we come together as people of conscience. In the movements of the 60’s, solidarity among the civil rights movement and the anti-war movement was never truly achieved. As the ‘Hip Hop generation’—a generation where the sons and daughters of former slaves work side by side with the sons and daughters of former slave owners—we have the ability to bridge the gap and link movements for peace, justice, civil rights and the environment in true solidarity.”

As the last-but-not-least item, the **Appeal for Redress**, an pro-withdrawal statement signed by active-duty GIs, surpassed 2,000 signatures in mid June, and as of July 9 had reached 2,028. □

## Police frame-up of Mumia

Continued from page 3

new trial, have his conviction overturned, or see his death sentence reinstated. The Third Circuit is one of the last appellate stops for death row inmates.

Abu-Jamal is one of many Pennsylvania inmates challenging death sentences. In the past seven years, 50 of Pennsylvania’s 225 death row prisoners have had their sentences overturned. Since 2000, about 75 have scored significant interim victories—new sentencing hearings or retrials, three only in recent weeks. The bulk of reversals have turned on legal errors in the original trials, and most were in Philadelphia cases dating to the early 1980s and early 1990s.

So far 24 of the reversals were in cases heard by now deceased Common Pleas Court Judge Albert Sabo, who presided over trials that ended in 32 death sentences including Mumia Abu-Jamal’s. Sabo, a notorious racist, was overheard by court stenographer Terri Maurer-Carter telling another judge regarding Abu-Jamal, “I’m going to help them fry the n\*\*\*er.”

Philadelphia Common Pleas Court Judge Benjamin Lerner, chief defender in Philadelphia from 1979 to 1990, told the July 1 Philadelphia Inquirer that city cases from the 1980s have been reversed for good reason: “The court system frequently trampled all over the rights of defendants.” □



# In anti-imperialist issue

has a wide punitive character. There is an unprecedented rise of detention centers being built to detain and imprison more and more immigrants. These detention centers are mainly owned and operated by the Corrections Corporation of America, a public company that receives at least \$2.8 million each month from ICE.

The North American Congress on Latin America obtained affidavits from some of the detainees and insufficient medical care, depression and guard abuses were documented.

A detention center in Raymondville, Texas, one of the largest in the country, houses 2,000 immigrants who are inhumanely locked up for 22 hours a day and costs \$65 million. They not only house adults. They incarcerate children as well, and orange uniforms are issued, exactly like those in prisons around the country. It is a sign that today more and more incarceration or the military are the only options for the working class, while the rich, who are the real criminals, are free to do anything they want.

Over 230,000 people move through the detention system each year.

## Raids & Deportations continue

On June 24, the Associated Press reported that during the height of the immigration debate last year, from April through June of 2006, the number of arrests of immigrants more than doubled over the same period in 2005.

Nearly 5,000 immigrants were arrested according to information obtained by the AP after filing a Freedom of Information request.

In 2006, almost 20,000 workers were deported. Agents from the Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) Agency raided factories and communities across the country. They often beat down doors of people's homes in the early morning hours or entered factories with machine guns and face masks.

What is the face of the people experiencing these raids? They are humble immigrant workers on a construction site in Bethlehem Township, Penn., from Brazil, Honduras and Guatemala.

They are Mexicans working strawberry or lettuce fields in California, many without housing or access to toilets in the fields.

It is a five-year-old child from El Salvador named Karla Morales Solis whose family resides in Revere, Mass. Karla is one of the youngest clients her immigration lawyer has ever had, her lawyer, Victor Maldonado told the Boston Globe.

Karla is an example of the thousands of families who are forced apart, as some become legalized and others do not. Karla may be deported and separated from her parents, one who is documented, the other not.

"It's so unusual that you are suddenly sitting in the defense chair and your client is a 5-year-old peanut," Maldonado said.

According to the Globe, "Karla came to the United States, several years after her father first made the journey seeking relief from low wages and poor schools in El Salvador. In 2004, Karla's mother also came north, but there was not enough money to pay for Karla's passage. Settled in Revere, the family last year hired a 'coyote' to bring Karla to them. She was caught with the smuggler near the Texas border and transferred to a detention center for immigrant children in Texas."

And then there is the case of Amadou Diallo, an African immigrant gunned down by a hail of bullets by New York police in 2000.

Adding to the fearful climate is news such as this: The Miami Herald reported on July 8 that there are 630,000 immi-



PHOTO: ALEX MAJUMDER

May 1 Solidarity with All Workers and Immigrants Rally in New York. Teresa Guiterrez, shown third from right.

grants who are believed to be living in the U.S. and have been issued deportation orders.

These are mothers, fathers, sons and daughters, wives, husbands, and lovers—workers all—who are living in profound fear as the raids and deportations continue while the hope of obtaining legalization dims.

## Laws ignore the real culprit: U.S. imperialism

None of the legislation or any of the mainstream debates addresses the real issues.

The overwhelming majority of immigrants who come to the U.S. do not come because they want to. They come because they have to. They come risking their lives due to U.S. economic and political policies that have devastated their homelands. They come because of U.S. sponsored terror in their homelands, like U.S. policy in Central America in the 1980s and the kidnapping of President Aristide in Haiti in the 1990s.

The largest percentage of immigrants today comes from Mexico. Between 2000 and 2005, Mexico lost 900,000 rural jobs and 700,000 in industry, all because of the U.S. trade agreement NAFTA.

Immigration policy today represents a phenomenon way beyond the themes touched on nightly by fear-monger and

racist Lou Dobbs. The productive forces of capitalism today and imperialist economic expansion are often referred to as "globalization." Around the world, the masses on every single continent of the oppressed world have risen up to demand an end to globalization.

The anti-immigrant hysteria is a worldwide phenomenon that can be seen in all the developed capitalist countries. In France, for example, African or Turkish immigrants are also attacked and beaten.

Why is this an international phenomenon? Because there is a cross border flow of migrant labor that today has reached more than 200 million people around the world. It is a wave of movable labor, the forced migration of a huge portion of humanity that has reached epic proportions.

It is the result of the capitalist system, which is in deep and profound crisis. The ruling class of capitalists cannot stop the resistance of the Iraqi people who are heroically fighting their occupiers. It cannot stop the flow of humanity fighting against desperate conditions around the globe.

It is a crisis where the commodities it offers for sale more and more cannot be bought by the very workers that produce them.

It must count on racism to divide a multinational working class so that their anger and energy can be turned on one another instead of against the capitalist class. It

must attempt to stop the "browning" of the U.S., seen as a real threat because of the history of oppression against people of color.

What is the solution to the desperation and frustration gripping immigrant rights activists? To build an independent movement free of both pro-capitalist parties. They have shown time and time again for all of history that they will defend capitalist interests over the rights of the people over and over.

The immigrant rights movement must have confidence that there is power in the people united, and not by counting on the powers that be. Legalization and full rights for immigrant workers will not come from the lobbies in Washington, D.C., but from the streets of this country.

The immigrant rights movement in the U.S. cannot advance without building the necessary connections with other struggles here at home. That means solidarity: with women, Katrina survivors, Delphi workers, with the movements against the war, against racism and sexism and LGBT oppression. As militant labor activists say again and again: immigrant rights are worker rights.

In the seeds of that struggle is the foundation to build a world with no borders, free of exploitation and war.

The writer is a leading organizer of the May 1st Immigrant Rights Coalition in New York.

## Fourth of July stops neither ICE raids nor protests



PHOTO: INDY MEDIA

Over 30 people demonstrated in solidarity with immigrants being held in the Houston ICE Detention Center on the Fourth of July. Despite constant rain, protesters chanted and drummed for two hours.

The action was called by Houston Sin Fronteras to commemorate the one-month anniversary of their action that shut down the facility for almost 3 hours on June 4 and to "demand liberty, equality and the

pursuit of happiness for all people."

After the activists had finished protesting and held a short rally, a Homeland Security bus brought in immigrants they had just rounded up. The protest began again with loud chants aimed toward those inside of the bus, which had pulled into a heavily secured area surround by fences with rolls of razor wire on top.

A few days earlier, Ashley Turner and Ben Browning, the two youth who were

arrested on June 4 for locking themselves to the detention center's entrance and exit gates, received the good news that the federal grand jury had not billed them on the felony charge of Manufacture of a Criminal Device. The two still face misdemeanor charges of trespassing which carries a fine of \$2,000 and six months in jail.

The Houston detention center is run by the Corrections Corporation of America, CCA.

—Gloria Rubac



# Death toll continues to rise in Afghanistan

By G. Dunkel

The Pentagon killed many civilians in an air raid it conducted in the Helmand Province of Afghanistan at the end of June. The U.S. and NATO estimated that 45 civilians were killed. The Associated Press and the Afghan governor in Helmand estimated 130.

Helmand in the best of circumstances is a difficult, inaccessible place to travel. With a brutal war going on, it is extremely dangerous. So it is unlikely that independent journalists are going to be able to investigate the incident and come up with

a verified estimate.

Helmand, in southwest Afghanistan, borders both Iran and Pakistan. It is the richest producer of opium in the country.

Since the first of the year, according to the AP and Afghanistan Human Rights Watch, about 500 people have been killed by U.S. air raids. This has stoked the anger of the Afghan people.

NATO held a two-day conference July 1 and 2 in Rome, with some major imperialist players, to discuss how to strengthen their hold on Afghanistan. At the conference U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations Zalmay Khalilzad—who served

as an advisor to the giant oil company Unocal while the Taliban was the government in Afghanistan—said it was “unfortunate” that civilians have been caught up in the NATO-led military operation in Afghanistan.

NATO Secretary General Jaap de Hoop Scheffer, titular Afghan President Hamid Karzai who is another former Unocal advisor, UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon and Italian Foreign Minister Massimo D’Alema also spoke on how to strengthen the current puppet government appointed during the U.S.-led occupation of Afghanistan.

Afghan anger is fueled by the brutal actions of U.S. soldiers, who break into homes and arrest young men, rough them up and needlessly destroy personal property.

The July 6 Los Angeles Times described an incident that captures this attitude. After a late June suicide bombing on the outskirts of Kabul that targeted a U.S. military convoy and killed two Western security officers—most likely contract mercenaries—Afghan police anxiously waved journalists away.

“Don’t go close,” they warned. “The Americans might shoot you.” □

## Bloody storming of Pakistan mosque

# Bush pleased as Gen. Musharraf yields to U.S. pressure

Continued from page 1  
pressure.

Shahzad wrote that the negotiators and Ghazi had arrived at an agreement whereby all those inside the compound would be guaranteed “safe passage” if they left. Rafi Usmani, one of the negotiators and also the Grand Mufti of Pakistan, told Asia Times, “[T]he talks were successful. The draft was written. Abdul Rasheed Ghazi was to be allowed a safe passage, but then the draft was sent to the president and he amended it. Things were back to Square 1 and the talks failed.”

What had happened? Wrote Shahzad, “Asia Times Online contacts claim that the situation was complicated by the sudden appearance of a delegation of members of Parliament belonging to the government’s

coalition partners, the Muttahida Quami Movement. They are believed to have met with a U.S. official at his official residence, after which the situation changed within an hour.”

The article also cited an unnamed source as saying that Musharraf, when ordering the assault, explained he was “heavily under duress from his allies,” meaning Washington.

President George W. Bush, asked by reporters about what had just happened in Pakistan, replied: “Musharraf is a strong ally in the war against these extremists. I like him and I appreciate him.”

While the military said at least 60 people died in the storming of the mosque, “Abdul Sattar Edhi, head of the private relief agency Edhi Foundation, said the

army had asked him to prepare 400 white shrouds used for covering the dead.” (aljazeera.net, July 11) There is no independent source yet for the casualties, and the army barred media from the area.

Ghazi, according to Asia Times Online of July 11, “enjoyed widespread popularity in Pakistan, although he was not a mullah—he had a master’s degree in international affairs from Quaid-i-Azam University in Islamabad, as well as a master’s in political science. He worked as an assistant director in the United Nations Children’s Fund but after the murder of his father in 1998 he chose to become deputy prayer leader at the mosque.”

In his final words to the media, Ghazi said by cell phone, “The room is full of smoke and I am having difficulty in talking. I appeal to the nation to stand up against this system of exploitation and work for an Islamic system of life. ...

“I know my martyrdom is certain and I tell you that the government was never sincere in talking to us. After every sentence [while negotiating] they threatened us. They don’t want talks. They just want to break us and humiliate us, so we prefer death.”

Right after this bloody event, more than 100 armed local people and religious students near Batagram, in northwest Pakistan, joined a protest over the storming of the mosque by temporarily blocking a road leading to China.

Another 500 Islamic school students in the eastern city of Multan blocked a main road and burned tires, chanting “Down with Musharraf.”

The Musharraf regime has been losing its grip in many of the rural areas of this strategic country, which has 165 million people and borders on Iran, Afghanistan,

Tajikistan, China and India.

Western imperialist news sources are treating the storming of Lal Masjid as a move by a friendly government against al Qaeda and other “foreign militants” allied with Afghanistan’s Taliban. According to their accounts, the mosque and madrasa were recruiting and training “terrorists,” who had to be stopped.

However, many opponents of the Musharraf regime, including secular forces in the democratic movement, see this terrible tragedy as a deliberate plan by the regime to flex its muscles while taking the limelight away from growing opposition to the dictatorship at a time when Musharraf is maneuvering to get himself re-elected.

During the second week of July, an All-Party Conference was being held in London of parties opposing the Musharraf dictatorship. This meeting came after the general’s dismissal of Chief Justice Muhammad Chaudhry in March had provoked a mass movement. A car caravan led by Chaudhry was greeted by hundreds of thousands of people along the way. As lawyers throughout Pakistan began boycotting court procedures and opposition parties organized huge rallies, some of which met bloody police repression, the demand was growing for Musharraf to step down.

Then came the siege and storming of the Lal Masjid mosque.

### Military dictator turned ‘ally’

Musharraf first came to power eight years ago in a military coup that overthrew the elected government. He quickly got himself declared president and soon dissolved the Senate and both National and Provincial Assemblies. He was an

Continued on page 9

## BRITAIN

# Anti-war forces tell new P.M.: ‘Out now!’

Tony Blair, George W. Bush’s main outside prop for his wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, has handed over the post of British prime minister to the former exchequer, Gordon Brown. Blair had become hated in his own country for both his domestic and foreign policies.

On June 24, thousands of anti-war protesters marched past the Special Labour Party Conference in Manchester where Blair was stepping down. The leaders of the Stop the War Coalition (StWC) and Military Families Against War (MFAW) handed over a letter addressed to Brown

calling for a radical change of policy and an immediate withdrawal of British troops from Afghanistan and Iraq.

MFAW leader Rose Gentle requested a meeting with Brown on behalf of the Military Families, whom Blair had consistently refused to see. The answer was “evasive and non-committal,” according to the StWC Web site.

At the same time, the MFAW was also holding a loud protest in London outside 10 Downing St., the prime minister’s residence. They carried large portraits of their loved ones.

—Deirdre Griswold

## Vietnamese liberation fighter

# Nguyen Van Quy

Continued from page 4

who suffer from genetic damage from the dioxin. His son Nguyen Quang Trung and his daughter Nguyen Thi Thuy Nga are both severely physically and developmentally disabled. They are unable to care for themselves, to walk or attend school. By a decade after the war, Quy became too sick to work.

Quy was one of the first three Vietnamese plaintiffs in the lawsuit against the U.S. chemical companies. After U.S. Judge Jack Weinstein’s decision three years ago to dismiss the Vietnamese suit, Quy, in an interview, pledged to press on.

“I’m determined to pursue the case until the end, because this is justice,” stated Quy. “I’ll fight, not just for myself, but for

millions of other Vietnamese victims. ... Those who produced these toxic chemicals must take responsibility for their actions.” (Associated Press)

Quy was a mass leader and a Communist Party activist in his community. Merle Ratner of the Vietnam Agent Orange Relief and Responsibility Campaign, who organized the trip of the Vietnamese delegation in the U.S., described Quy as a true internationalist with a great sense of optimism who was very knowledgeable about revolutionary and Marxist theory and deeply interested in the movement for peace and justice in the U.S.

At a reception for the Vietnamese delegation on June 16 held at the 1199 SEIU union hall in a moving display of solidarity forged by determined opposition to U.S.



Federal Court of Appeals hearing June 18 calling for compensation for victims of Agent Orange. Nguyen Van Quy in wheelchair with Sara Flounders, right.

WW PHOTO: ELLEN CATALINOTTO

legal suit. “I think that most people in America and around the world believe that the Vietnamese people have been wronged, that this was unjust

and unfair, and I’m confident that a U.S. court will agree that this was unfair and that compensation has to be paid to these victims, and that something has to be done to remove this contamination so that it will not continue to be a threat to future generations here in Vietnam.” □

war, Dave Cline of Vets for Peace presented Nguyen Van Quy with the Purple Heart he had been awarded based on his service and injuries in the Vietnam war.

Constantine Kokkoris, an attorney representing the Vietnamese survivors in federal court, is determined to continue the



# Chilean militant fights detention by U.S.

By Arturo J. Pérez Saad

Revolutionary Chilean activist Victor Toro was detained by Border Patrol (ICE) agents in Rochester, N.Y., on July 6 and finally set free on bond on July 10 after four harrowing days.

Workers World was able to interview Toro and his life partner and partner in the struggle for social justice, Nieves Ayress, on July 8. This is their story.

Toro, who has lived in the Bronx, N.Y., since 1984, co-founded La Peña del Bronx in 1987, a community grass roots organization serving the poor and the needs of the community. While in a passenger

*Continued from page 8*

embarrassment to the West and sanctions were voted against the regime.

However, soon after 9/11, British Prime Minister Tony Blair met with Musharraf in Islamabad, promising him economic and humanitarian aid. U.S. Secretary of State Colin Powell also met with him and got his “indefinite support” for Washington’s “war on terror.” The sanctions were eased and Musharraf agreed to let U.S. forces use two airfields near the Afghanistan border.

Last year Musharraf himself publicly described how then-U.S. Deputy Secretary of State Richard Armitage had called Pakistan’s intelligence director shortly after 9/11 and threatened military action if Pakistan did not support the U.S. According to Musharraf, Armitage warned: “Be prepared to be bombed. Be prepared to go back to the Stone Age.” (Interview with CBS News “60 Minutes,” Sept. 24, 2006)

By the end of October 2001, after protests erupted over Musharraf’s support for Washington, he barred the use of mosque loudspeakers at anti-government rallies. In November of that year, when the U.S. was bombing Afghanistan heavily, he closed Pakistan’s borders with that country, cutting off approximately 300,000 refugees seeking asylum.

While this angered Pakistanis, it played well in the U.S. and Britain, the former colonial power in South Asia. “The man who was denounced as a tin pot dictator by many in the West when he ousted then Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif became, almost overnight, a pivotal player on the world stage, a close ally welcomed in Washington and London alike as a statesman of international standing.” (BBC News, Sept. 24, 2004)

He followed the neoliberal, pro-privatization agenda of Western corporations, allowing them easier access to Pakistan’s economy and markets. In 2004 Musharraf nominated Shaukat Aziz, the finance minister and a former joint president of Citibank and head of Citibank Private Banking, as prime minister.

## View of Pakistanis abroad

An activist with the Pakistan-U.S. Freedom Forum told Workers World that the community in exile in the U.S. had wanted a peaceful resolution of the mosque struggle, but now “the whole country is in turmoil.”

“This situation is the responsibility of 16 army generals who now control Pakistan,” said Comrade Shahid. “But we also see it as a replay of the Indonesian disaster of the 1960s, when the U.S. was behind a bloody military coup. Then it was the communists who were repressed; today it is the Muslims.

“We who believe in independence and freedom of speech don’t want to live under outside rule. We don’t want to be used against our neighbors, like Iran. We want democracy and self-determination.” □

train returning from a six-month community building and organizing campaign in California, he was arrested July 6.

He was soon transferred to the detention center at Cayuga County Jail in Auburn, N.Y. A fellow passenger gave Ayress a call and left the message of Toro’s arrest. Soon afterwards attorney Carlos Moreno discovered where Toro was and filed a “habeas corpus” brief asking that the authorities set bond to allow Toro’s release.

The state then accepted the brief and requested a \$5,000 bond. On July 9, Ayress and other family members drove for eight hours to Auburn to post bond.

What about his case is different from the millions of workers without U.S. papers?

## Victor Toro’s story

Victor Toro is one of 13 children. He grew up in Chile under very poor conditions. His father was a miner. Most immigrants from Latin America have this poverty in common. What distinguishes Toro is that in the 1960s he co-founded the Movement of the Revolutionary Left (Movimiento de Izquierda Revolucionaria—MIR) and organized poor workers without housing to collectively take, occupy and develop unproductive and abandoned land. MIR thus became known as one of the most radical underground organizations in Chile at the time. The MIR gave critical support to the pro-socialist government led by President Salvador Allende, who was democratically elected in 1970.

In 1973, the U.S. sponsored an illegal overthrow led by Gen. Augusto Pinochet on Sept. 11. His forces killed, disappeared and tortured thousands of Chilean activists up until 1990, when his military dictatorship finally ended. Toro and Ayress had been captured by the fascist dictator’s repressive forces and held in jail for three

years. During that time, they were tortured and held in bondage for one year, all without any outside contact.

In 1976, the Chilean government gave eight of the MIR’s political prisoners, including Ayress and Toro, exit-only passports and told them that they would not survive if they returned. Ayress said that they traveled to Cuba, Sweden and other countries, and that Toro entered the U.S. through the southern border. While Ayress was naturalized a long time ago, Toro is not a U.S. citizen. Thus, she said, because there is no progress on the immigration bill in the U.S. Senate, “the U.S. government is ripping my family apart by detaining him now and we demand the immediate release of Victor.”

Ayress also said that this would not have happened if immigrants had been given “amnesty” or legalization as they have been demanding of the government “and what we need to do is demand the government to legalize all immigrants here immediately, as we demanded on May 1, 2006.”

In 1978, in a maneuver peculiar to the Pinochet dictatorship, the Chilean government pronounced Victor Toro dead and published his obituary. Toro and Ayress did not find out about this until 2005, when Toro went to renew his Chilean passport from the Chilean Consulate for the third time since his stay here in the U.S. Unlike the prior two times where his passport was renewed with no problem, this time they told him that he was dead and that he could not renew his passport.

The two wrote to Michelle Bachelet, Chile’s current president, but nothing much has been done to resolve the matter, says Ayress. Yet, what is clear is that Victor Toro and Nieves Ayress were victims of the nefarious Operation Condor

and are still haunted by it. Operation Condor was sponsored by the U.S. State Department and directed by the CIA from 1970 through the 1980s. Many believe that either Condor is still in effect or vestiges of it are.

Operation Condor was the U.S. plot to promote military dictatorships in South America in that period, including those in Argentina, Chile, Brazil, Paraguay, Uruguay and Bolivia. One can charge Operation Condor with being behind the killing of 50,000 political and union activists, torturing another 30,000 and imprisoning over 400,000.

On Sept. 17, 2006, in Argentina a 76-year-old militant, Jorge Julio López, was disappeared. The note found where he was last seen was signed by “Condor.”

López was disappeared and tortured 32 years ago for two-and-a-half-years and lived to tell about it. This time just before his disappearance, López was a key witness in a trial of some of the leaders of the Triple A, a fascist organization, which was given free reign to kill and torture under the bloody U.S. sponsored military dictator of Argentina Jorge Rafael Videla (1976-1983).

Toro is not disappeared in the U.S., but if he is deported to Chile he is at risk, especially since he had been declared dead in 1978. His family and friends fear that he too could end up as López did. Even with a “democratic” bourgeois government in Chile, they believe it does not have total control over all sectors of the state.

A press conference has been called for July 11 at Carlos Moreno’s law office, where the family, friends and supporters will join Toro and Ayress as they demand that the U.S. government drop the deportation charges and grant Toro political asylum. □

# Colombia’s repression, U.S. gov’t collusion

By Berta Joubert-Ceci

If the immense suffering of the Colombian people were not so terribly real, Colombia these days would be the perfect expression of the “magical realism” of its most famous writer, Gabriel García Márquez.

Extreme poverty coexists with the enrichment of the oligarchy allied to U.S. and other imperialist financial interests that for the most part use paramilitary forces to guarantee their profits, leaving behind massacres, displacements, and labor and human rights advocates assassinated.

But there also exists an armed insurgency that has defended the country’s sovereignty for more than 40 years and a growing social unarmed movement of peasants, Indigenous people, unions, Afrodescendants, women, students and others struggling against privatization, and for peace with social and economic justice—who, in spite of seeing their efforts marred by the state repression that is in collusion with the paramilitaries, continue courageously struggling in the streets.

And lately, all these forces are framed within the exposure of the political scandal of corruption in the government where the paramilitary infiltration is being proved and which the current Colombian president Álvaro Uribe tries unsuccessfully to cover up his complicity with.

And the political situation of Colombia extends way beyond its borders. Not only to neighboring countries like Ecuador

where the Colombian military, in its war against the insurgency, irresponsibly aerial sprays glyphosphate, thereby poisoning Colombian and Ecuadorian people, vegetation and drinking and irrigation waters.

It also affects Venezuela, although in a different way, through the involvement of the deadly Colombian paramilitaries who are being used as part of the U.S.-backed destabilization campaign against the Bolivarian government of Hugo Chávez.

And it also travels north, right to the U.S. where the war in Colombia was first created and sustained. An example has been the extradition and trial in U.S. federal court of Ricardo Palmera, alias Simón Trinidad, an important member of the FARC-EP (Colombian Revolutionary Armed Forces-People’s Army) who was their peace negotiator.

Trinidad was extradited to the U.S. in 2004, and tried for the first time last year in Washington, D.C., resulting in a hung jury. After the recusal of the first judge for giving preferential treatment to the prosecution to the detriment of the defendant, Trinidad faced U.S. prosecutors for the second time last month; but this time, the U.S. government was determined to convict him.

For that they brought Colombian police officer John Frank Pinchao, who had recently escaped after being retained by the FARC along with others. The FARC’s purpose in retaining military, police or government officials is to have a lever to negotiate with the Colombian government and attain a prisoner exchange.

The U.S. was hoping that Pinchao’s

testimony would link Trinidad to the three U.S. military contractors held by the FARC, and therefore “prove” that Trinidad was part of the kidnapping of the three. However, in spite of the attempts of the U.S. officials who had been keeping Pinchao close to them, rehearsing his lines, in his testimony, Pinchao, who had been held with the three U.S. contractors, when asked by the prosecution if he had seen Trinidad, responded “never.” (www.Cambio.com.co)

This trial was developing somewhat similarly to the first one, when all the efforts of the prosecution and the judge to portray Trinidad as a violent and terrorist person failed. During the first day of the second trial, a juror quit, stating that she was “feeling too much sympathy for the accused” and that she “recognized that she was including him in her prayers.”

After days of deliberations, the jury handed a note to the judge saying that, “At this point we are at an impasse and do not believe that we will be able to reach a unanimous verdict.”

The judge, a Republican conservative, sent them back to continue deliberating. The prosecution had stated that the possibility that Trinidad may never have seen the contractors didn’t matter because he tried to negotiate a prisoner swap using the contractors as leverage.

On July 9, Trinidad was found guilty of complicity in the kidnapping of the three contractors. The jury will continue deliberating other charges, among them, terrorism. □



## 'Card-check' legislation

By obtaining only 51 of the 60 votes needed in the Senate on June 27 to stop a Republican filibuster, the Democratic leadership was unable to pass the "card-check" legislation that the House had passed in the spring.

This defeat for a pro-union bill is a setback for U.S. workers that will require a new round of struggle to reverse. It also throws additional light on the limitations of the ties between the Democratic Party and organized labor.

The "card-check" bill would demand that the National Labor Relations Board recognize a union once that union could show that more than 50 percent of the workers at a shop had signed cards asking for the union to represent them. Under the current reactionary anti-labor law, all that these cards win for the union is an election. If you read the propaganda from the Chambers of Commerce, bosses' trade journals and any of the rightist press that support every thought of the National Association of Manufacturers on this, you will find a strident defense of the "secret ballot." Such a union election and "secret ballot" at plants like the giant Smithfield hog slaughterhouse in North Carolina allow the bosses to fire workers who are the strongest union organizers, threaten to bring in the state against

immigrant workers, bully and otherwise intimidate enough workers so that the union loses the election.

That's why anyone who is pro-labor and who wants to see unorganized workers win their own union to defend their rights should be for "card-check." It's why all the bosses were and are against it and why George Bush threatened to veto it. It's why every pro-business lobby in Washington—and that's 99 percent of the lobbies—urged the Republicans to fight the bill and demanded that the Democrats not put up the kind of knock-down, drag-out fight that could turn the debate in the Senate to a popular mobilization.

Democrats—including the presidential candidates, seven of whom supported the bill—present themselves as "friends of labor," but they all want contributions from business. Remember that Democrats passed the anti-labor NAFTA trade act during the Bill Clinton administration. They only passed a modest increase in the minimum wage this year by tying it to the reactionary bill funding the occupation of Iraq.

It's apparent that to pass "card-check" rules, organized labor will need more than "friends" in Congress; it will need a popular mobilization. □

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## Court overturns challenge to warrantless wiretapping

By Jaimeson Champion

In a ruling delivered on July 6, a federal appeals court overturned an earlier decision by a lower court, which had deemed the Bush administration's warrantless surveillance programs unconstitutional. The reversal helps clear the way for the current administration's shameful expansion in domestic spying programs.

In a 2-1 vote, a three-judge panel on the Federal Court of Appeals for the Sixth Circuit in Cincinnati ruled that the plaintiffs—a coalition of groups and organizations including the ACLU, The Council on American Muslim Relations, and a host of scholars and activists—did not have sufficient evidence proving they had been targets of the government's wiretapping program, and therefore, had no legal standing to sue in court.

The majority decision seemingly ignored the obvious difficulty any plaintiff would have in proving that they had been wiretapped, given the secretive nature of the National Security Administration or NSA-led programs. By choosing to rule on the plaintiffs' legal standing, the court avoided dealing directly with the legality of the domestic spying programs.

The federal appeals court decision vacates the August 2006 ruling by Detroit U.S. District Judge Anna Diggs Taylor, which had asserted that the NSA's practice of eavesdropping on telephone and e-mail communications without a warrant violated both the Bill of Rights and the 1978 Federal Intelligence Surveillance Act, or FISA.

FISA supposedly mandates judicial oversight of domestic spying programs as a check to the power of the U.S. intelligence agencies. But true to form, the Bush administration, which has flouted countless laws and statutes in its quest to advance its brazen ruling-class agenda, simply ignored the FISA law.

Even after Judge Anna Diggs Taylor's August 2006 ruling, the Bush administration continued the programs unabated while they sought appeal. The July 6 federal appeals court decision simply removes a legal hurdle to programs that have been

continually active since September 2001, if not earlier.

Sen. Patrick Leahy (D-Vt), recently made national headlines for his role in subpoenaing the Bush administration for documents related to the warrantless surveillance programs. In statements released on July 6 after the federal appeals court ruling, many of the plaintiffs expressed their hopes that the Democrat-controlled Congress would apply more pressure on the Bush administration to halt the warrantless surveillance programs.

But, this Congress, which was put in office by a massive anti-Bush/anti-war vote in the November 2006 elections, has already proven beyond a doubt that it is not going to challenge Bush on questions relating to war and repression. The same Democratic politicians that made campaign promises to end the war have continued to give Bush billions of dollars in war appropriations. Any posturing by Democrats in Congress regarding a true halt to Bush's warrantless surveillance program is empty rhetoric. The Democratic and Republican parties are both representatives of the same ruling-class interests, even if they don't always agree on just how to do this. That class believes its interests are served by a repressive state apparatus, including surveillance.

The federal appeals court decision to vacate the challenge to Bush's warrantless surveillance programs is certainly a setback. But it would be a bigger tragedy if the judicial green-lighting of the programs helped to further instill a culture of fear among oppressed populations in the U.S. In the coming months, it is imperative for the anti-war/anti-imperialist movement in the U.S. to take to the streets in greater force, and prove, that despite every tool the ruling class uses to stifle dissent, it is committed to ending the criminal war in Iraq, and putting a stop to imperialist domination across the globe.

It is time to move from protest to resistance. The Encampment and March on the White House which has been called for Sept. 22-29 by the Troops Out Now Coalition is a good place to start. □

## 'Freeway Blogging' raises Palestine issue

By Gloria Rubac  
Houston

Every Wednesday afternoon during five o'clock rush hour, a group of activists gathers on the Mandell Street Bridge that passes over U.S. Highway 59 in Houston. A retired man wearing a crisp straw hat carefully takes the folded signs from the trunk of his car and distributes them.

Bob Carter, third from the left in the photo, has mastered the art of this new phenomenon called freeway blogging. With his dogged support for the Palestinian struggle and his artfully hinged signs that are 4 and 5 feet tall, thousands of Houstonians stuck in traffic are educated weekly about the role of Israel and the U.S. in the plight of the Palestinian people.

In conservative Houston, Texas, home of the former President Bush and home to a booming petrochemical industry, many people do honk in agreement or wave to those on the overpass.

Freeway blogging began in Houston when anti-war activists looked for creative but low cost ways to reach a large number of people with a political message. They began to stand on freeway overpasses holding signs. They learned that signs usu-



PHOTO: DAVID CARTER

ally used in marches weren't big enough to be read by passing motorists. They discovered that during rush hour, when cars were forced to drive at a very slow pace,

and not during mid-day, the signs could be more easily read. They tinkered with signs until they were carefully worded and lettered. The least number of words and

the biggest letters on huge cardboard were the best.

"The participants on the Mandell Street Bridge believe that the oppression and exploitation of the Palestinian people for over 40 years by successive Israeli governments supported unconditionally by the U.S. government is the predominant cause of anti-Semitism, radical Muslim terrorism and anti-Americanism. The average American is essentially uninformed about the apartheid in Palestine imposed by the Israeli government. We believe it is time to shed a small light in this darkened area of human rights violations. The truth ultimately will be revealed and it should benefit everyone, Palestine and Israel as well," stated Carter.

On Tuesdays and Fridays anti-war and impeachment activists take to the Montrose Street Bridge for their freeway blogging. Cindy Sheehan joined them on July 10, as she kicked off her march to Washington, DC.

"Our Wednesday blogging for Palestine is not as popular as the impeachment blogging. Everyone hates Bush! But we are educating the people in Houston, and support for the Palestinian people is slowly growing," Carter told Workers World. □



## 'Butterflies on the Scaffold'

# How La Güinera made room for more gender

By Leslie Feinberg

"Butterflies on the Scaffold" ("Mariposas en el andamio"), a 1996 documentary, offered a profoundly thoughtful and moving account of how Cuban women construction workers literally made room for cross-dressing performance art in the workers' cafeterias in their neighborhood on the outskirts of Havana, called La Güinera. The film was directed by Margaret Gilpin and Luis Felipe Bernaza.

Gilpin reported that the preliminary cut had to be shown 11 times at the Havana Film Festival in December 1995 to accommodate the crowds. In April 1996, the film won the best documentary and the popularity award at the lesbian and gay film festival at Turin.

The word "butterfly" ("mariposa") refers to male-bodied Cubans whose femininity is either a part or the whole of their gender expression.

"Butterflies on the Scaffold" came out at the same time that a contingent of gay transgender Cubans were asked to lead the massive May Day march in Havana that year. Two U.S. queer-focused activist delegations were invited to join them in the procession—one from Bay Area Queers for Cuba, the other from New York's Center for Cuban Studies.

Cuban women—"the revolution within the revolution"—built La Güinera from the ground up.

For 10 to 15 years after the 1959 revolution, La Güinera remained undeveloped. The land was in the shadow of a meat factory, surrounded by bushes and insects.

Documentary footage explained, "Squatters came from the provinces and formed an association. They said, we'll build your house today and mine tomorrow."

Women made up 70 percent of the construction brigades.

A local family doctor said to the interviewer, with pride, that by the time of this 1995 documentary, the local infant mortality rate was so low that only two babies had died in the neighborhood clinic.

### 'We saw the show and we liked it'

Marisela, a young woman of African descent on the construction staff, recalled that cross-dressing performance artists "had a show in a private house. They invited the girls from the [workers'] dining room. We went, we saw the group, the show, and we liked it."

One drag artist spoke from his home, the site of performances. "We used sheets for fabric, no sequins, nothing. The dressing room was in the bedroom and we acted here. When the show moved to the backyard we used this as our dressing room.

We had more room and air for us and for the public. The public brought their own chairs. Marisela even brought a sofa! In the short time we worked in my backyard this was the headquarters, the cradle of cross-dressing in Havana. Hundreds of drag queens came through here who never thought they would do this work."

The local security chief, on camera with his young daughter, expressed a backward view: "Personally, I don't think these things should increase. On the contrary, I think they should diminish. Children go there and see a person who is a man in normal life or who goes around as a man and later they see him dressed as a woman. That child will want to experiment and that's not what I want to see.

"Also, they charged admission for the parties they gave at home." In fact, noted one party participant, the funds at one event were collected for the troops of the territorial militia—for the defense of Cuba.

The security police chief called off the drag shows. But in a workers' state, that's not the end of the story.

Marisela explained, "After the police stopped the parties there was no place for them to perform. In solidarity I began to collect protest letters and petitions. The only option was Fifi. To bring them here so everyone could see them. I was convinced they were good."

Marisela was referring to the lead organizer of La Güinera's construction brigade effort—Josefina Bocourt Díaz, affectionately known as "Fifi."

### 'Fifi should be honored by us'

The woman whose co-workers and neighbors call her "Fifi" is a Cuban of African descent. As a child, before the revolution, she had to start work at the age of 9. She explained, "I was one of the 70,000 maids that Cuba had before 1959. I couldn't enjoy much of my childhood. Now I've had the opportunity to work on the development of La Güinera and I feel like a new woman."

She narrated how her consciousness about transgender/homosexuality changed qualitatively while in a position of social leadership.

Fifi remembered, "Marisela and the others came to see me. 'We want them in the cabaret. If you haven't seen them you can't object.'

"At first I rebelled," Fifi said, recalling her arguments: "I'm an older woman. I wasn't accustomed to running around with this 'class of people.' I said, 'No, keep them away. I don't want to hear about people who run around with a double façade.' ... I said, 'No, please, I can't be around you

guys. I wouldn't be doing my duty to society. I'm too old for this stuff. I've never been involved in these things."

But Marisela persisted. She said, "Fifi, I saw a show. Fifi, they should start at once here in the workers' cafeteria."

One drag performer said of Fifi, "She opened a cabaret in the workers' cafeteria and brought us into it. She made us face the 'herds' of public we were afraid to face. She reassured us. She said, 'Do it, face them, you'll see. Nothing will happen.'"

Another performer added, "Fifi should be honored by us. She'll always be close to our hearts for the wonderful way she treated us."

### 'A right to live as they wish'

This documentary was made during the "special period" in which Cuba had lost virtually all its trade when the USSR was overturned.

The U.S.-led economic blockade of Cuba also impacts on every aspect of life on the island: Performers use acetate because eyelash glue is not available. They create eyelashes out of horse hair or cut from carbon paper. Their nails are glued on with a shoe adhesive.

"Butterflies on the Scaffold" is packed with footage of indoor and outdoor drag performances in front of an audience of virtually all their co-workers and neighbors, family and friends. People of all ages attend the drag performances, arriving early for a good seat, or climbing onto a tree limb for a last-minute seat.

The performers take their bows to cheers and ovations.

A local congressional representative says, "[T]hey're giving the people something that others who aren't like them don't give."

A construction worker agreed. "They're the people who are giving this neighborhood a new level, a new character. Sometimes there's nothing to do and no place to go."

The performers play many other important roles in their community. They include a cook in a cafeteria for mechanics, a dentist, a baker, a dressmaker, a soldier just returned from an internationalist mission in Angola, a carpenter, a nurse, a horse trainer, a professor of Spanish literature and a professor of military topography.

These worker-sponsored drag shows in turn have been a fulcrum to lift consciousness about cross-dressing and male-bodied femininity and same-sex love. The process of change is apparent.

One young girl child of a cross-dressing performer, unequivocal and eloquent, told the interviewer: "I love my father with my life. I don't want anyone to be disrespect-

ful to him. He's what he is. He wants to be that way, and he's a person, and people have the right to live as they wish."

A parent said, "I never deceived my kids. I tried to help them adapt to how things were, to how I felt—I never disguised myself as a 'man'—to know me as I am, to accept my friends. They need their own lives. My world is my world. But I don't want them to be estranged from who their father is and the work he does."

The pain in some families was palpable. One mother said when she found out her son was gay, "I felt real bad. Like all mothers, one wants the best for your children. We know he chose a difficult path ... but in reality, it's not out of this world. ... [H]e's my son and I would give my life for him."

A young man who says he is gay but not ready to do cross-dress performance said, "I have a fabulous family. They know all about me. They've known about me for 10 years and I'm not 27. My family is exquisite. Up to now I haven't had problems. At first it was rough but once they realized it was my path, they accepted it and my friends, with their virtues and defects."

His father, working in the background, is asked, "What do you think of your son?"

The father answers, "No one's better. I couldn't ask for a better son. I'm grateful and proud he's my son. He's a good kid. He hasn't got any problems. He's A-1. Better than me and I'm his father."

After those words tumble out, the father and son hug each other.

The local doctor summed up, "The transvestite phenomenon marks a new era with perspectives for the union of humanity in love and mutual respect between human beings."

Fifi stressed, "I think this type of work should go on all over the country, because of the respect, pride and responsibility with which they work. If the nation accepts these cultural workers, these workers for the society, as we did here in La Güinera, we'll be successful as a nation."

Fifi concluded, "I think that our kids will grow up according to what we teach them. We have to explain the variety of life-styles in the world. They have to choose among them. If our kids get used to seeing men in drag, they'll see it as normal. We'll explain what a transvestite is and that child will choose a path to which their education leads and we'll create 'the new man.' Besides the new man will be brought up completely without any taboos!"

*Next: 1990s: More and more progress in Cuba*

*To find out more about Cuba, read parts 86-104 of Lavender & Red at workers.org.*

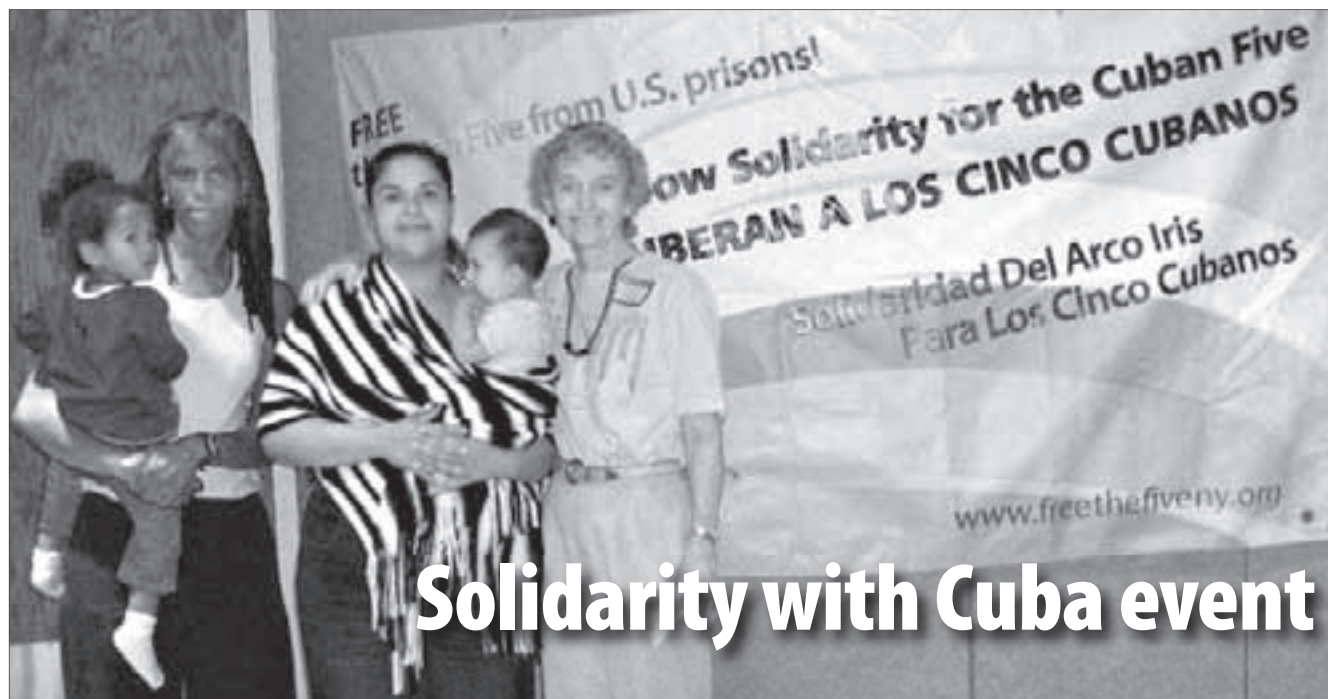
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## SAN DIEGO

It was a full house at the Malcolm X Library July 9 when San Diegans gathered to welcome West Coast caravanistas with the 18th Cuba Friendship Caravan, initiated by Pastors for Peace, on their way to Cuba with medical and other humanitarian aid. In the photo, from left to right, Ananda and her grandmother, Gloria Verdieu of the International Action Center, who spoke on the case of the Cuban Five; Emiliana and her mother, Catalina Garcia, of San Diego FIST—Fight Imperialism Stand Together, who will be part of the FIST delegation to Cuba this month; and Kathy Hughart of Friends of Cuba and the International Action Center, one of the main organizers of Malcolm X Library event. The event was sponsored by San Diego Friends of Cuba and co-sponsored by Activist San Diego, the San Diego Peace and Justice Coalition, the Peace & Democracy Action Group and the International Action Center.

—Report and photo by Bob McCubbin



Solidarity with Cuba event



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## Corte Suprema de Justicia avanza agenda derechista

Por Deirdre Griswold

El primer período completo de la Corte Suprema de Justicia encabezada por el Juez Principal John G. Roberts, hijo, terminó el 28 de junio con una lluvia de decisiones derechistas. Llegaron después de meses de decisiones que erosionaron las libertades civiles e incrementaron los poderes de las corporaciones y del estado.

Como resultado, los movimientos progresistas de toda clase están discutiendo cómo dar vuelta atrás a esta intensificada ofensiva derechista.

La administración de Bush está totalmente desacreditada entre las masas, y tod@s l@s senadores y representantes que van a buscar su reelección o que tiene ambiciones presidenciales, tienen que trabajar mucho para desasociarse de los últimos seis años de guerra y represión. En este clima político, el tercer pilar del gobierno, el poder judicial, se ha presentado para profundizar los ataques contra los pueblos oprimidos, la clase trabajadora en general y también secciones de la clase media.

A tod@ estudiante se le enseña que el gobierno de los Estados Unidos fue diseñado para compartir los poderes del estado entre las tres ramas: ejecutiva, legislativa, y judicial. Este sistema político de “controles y balances” supuestamente protege al pueblo de cualquier rama que se volviera en un instrumento de tiranos con ansias de poder.

Pero lo que no enseñan, sin embargo, es que la extrema y creciente concentración de riquezas en un polo de la sociedad, y pobreza en el otro, como resultado natural de un sistema capitalista donde todo—hasta el agua que tomamos— eventualmente se vuelve en la propiedad privada de los ricos, también determina cómo estas ramas del gobierno funcionan.

Mucho se ha escrito en años recientes

sobre “la presidencia imperial” que ha emergido en los EEUU, donde el presidente y sus socios en la rama ejecutiva han evadido al Congreso y la Constitución repetidamente iniciando guerras y otras intervenciones hostiles alrededor del mundo.

Pero las decisiones hechas por la Corte Suprema de Justicia en este período demuestran que ella también tiene vínculos con los ricos y poderosos y está torciendo la ley para controlar aún más cualquiera que pueda desafiar el orden establecido. ¿Y cuál es ese orden? Una dictadura de clase, principalmente de hombres blancos dueños de riquezas fabulosas que están concentradas mayormente en la propiedad de corporaciones gigantescas e instituciones financieras que dominan la vida económica.

### Se repite la segregación de las escuelas

La decisión de la corte que tendrá el impacto más amplio invalidó programas en Louisville, Kentucky, y en Seattle que han ido asignando alumn@s a diferentes escuelas para promover un balance racial. Programas semejantes existen en cientos de distritos escolares alrededor del país.

La decisión histórica de 1954 “Brown vs. Junta de Educación” de la Corte Suprema de Justicia, había ordenado el fin de la segregación en las escuelas de los estados sureños, determinando que el antiguo argumento segregacionista de escuelas “separadas pero iguales” era un fraude. Pero el racismo en viviendas y empleos existía en los estados del Norte también, donde no había leyes de segregación. Incluso después del fin de la segregación formal, alumn@s negr@s a través del país siguieron concentrad@s en los distritos donde a las escuelas les faltaban fondos y

estaban descuidadas.

Para los años 1970, en el cenit de las luchas masivas y militantes para los derechos civiles y para la liberación de la gente negra, los programas para lograr un balance racial en todas las escuelas, del Norte y del Sur, quedaron establecidos para implementar la decisión judicial de 1954. Esos programas ahora han recibido un duro golpe.

Un editorial del New York Times del 29 de junio sobre la reciente decisión de la Corte Suprema de Justicia, intitulado “Re-segregación Ahora”, destaca que mientras que EEUU es ahora más diverso que nunca, las escuelas ya se estaban volviendo más segregadas que antes de esta decisión judicial. También destaca que más de uno en cada seis niñ@s negr@s “ahora asisten a escuelas que son 99 hasta un 100 por ciento compuesto de estudiantes minoritarios” y predice que “Esta re-segregación probablemente se va a volver peor como resultado del fallo de la corte”.

La cuestión aquí no es si es mejor o no la integración o la separación para la comunidad africana-americana. Esto queda para que la gente negra lo decida. Muchos padres y líderes en la comunidad pueden preferir escuelas modernas, con fondos adecuados más cerca de casa, donde maestr@s y administradores negr@s puedan determinar el currículo. Esto debe ser su derecho.

Pero este fallo no hará nada para promover tal resultado. Por lo contrario, es una decisión judicial por una corte derechista que va a disminuir las oportunidades educativas disponibles a muchos alumn@s negr@s y aumenta aún más las

diferencias que ya existen.

### Una victoria para precios monopólicos

El mismo día que este fallo, la Corte Suprema de Justicia también descartó una parte de la Ley Antimonopolio Sherman, en vigor por casi un siglo, que prohibía que fabricantes y distribuidores se unieran para establecer conjuntamente un precio mínimo al por menor. Estos capitalistas ahora están libres para conspirar juntos y mantener altos los precios al por menor.

Siguiendo su movida derechista, la corte dictaminó que las autoridades en Alaska no violaron los derechos de libre expresión de un alumno cuando le suspendieron por haber alzado una pancarta que leía “Bong Hits 4 Jesus” en un evento deportivo. A pesar de que nadie realmente sabe lo que significaba precisamente el letrero irreverente, la corte lo interpretó como una promoción de drogas ilícitas.

Miles de casos llegan a la Corte Suprema de Justicia cada año. Esta sólo escoge unos pocos para considerarlos y hacer dictámenes. El hecho de que esta corte escogió ese caso aparentemente de poca importancia en el cual intervenir contra la libre expresión académica revela una vez más que el lema de los conservadores sobre la defensa de las autoridades locales contra la imposición del terrible y todopoderoso gobierno federal, en adición a su fingida oposición a la interferencia en las vidas de l@s ciudadan@s, no es nada más que una falsa postura.

*Este es la Primera Parte del artículo, la Segunda Parte se publicará en el próximo número.*

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