

# Where is the relief for workers? Banks bailout billionaires, Wall Street investors

By Jaimeson Champion

On Aug. 9, Aug. 10 and then again on Aug. 13, the central banks of many of the world's largest economies simultaneously came to the rescue of a handful of billionaire investment bankers and hedge fund tycoons who are enmeshed in the U.S. sub prime mortgage crisis. The United States Federal Reserve, the European Central Bank, and central banks in nearly a dozen Asian countries poured hundreds of billions of dollars into the financial system, in a concerted attempt to stem the tide of the growing global credit crisis.

The bailout plans came mostly in the form of massive central bank purchases of collateralized debt obligations, commonly referred to as CDOs. CDOs are securities backed by mortgages and other types of loans. In the last decade CDOs have been packaged and sold in bulk to investors, generating trillions of dollars in profits for investment banks and hedge fund tycoons across the globe.

CDOs were the primary investment tool used to underwrite the predatory sub prime mortgage loans in the U.S. that sparked the current meltdown. Investors and financial institutions in the U.S., Europe, and Asia hold these CDOs in large quantities.

Now that a large number of the mortgages and loans that these investments are tied to are in default, many of the CDOs are, in effect, worthless. The realization that these CDOs are worthless is the underlying reason for the wild swings in global stock markets over the past few weeks.

So to try and calm the market jitters, the central banks and finance ministers are essentially handing billions of dollars to the very same greedy banks and hedge funds that orchestrated the sub prime debacle. Meanwhile, the working class families, who are entering into foreclosure and bankruptcy at levels not seen since the Great Depression, have yet to receive a dime.

In the U.S, the Federal Reserve injected nearly \$60 billion worth of bailout funds on Aug. 9 and 10 followed by at least an additional \$2 billion on Aug. 13. In Europe, the European Central

Bank injected some \$200 billion on the 10th, followed by an additional \$63.5 billion on the 13th. The central bank of Japan injected \$8 billion into the money markets on Aug. 10, with the central banks of Indonesia, Malaysia, Taiwan, the Philippines and Australia all following suit.

### The war at home and the war abroad

It is important to put these bailout numbers into perspective. The more than \$62 billion that the U.S. Federal Reserve essentially handed to ultra-rich investors in just three days would have been enough to provide health care for all the country's uninsured for more than a year.

Contrast this with the fact that the U.S. banks have yet to provide the necessary funds to rebuild New Orleans and the Gulf Coast to allow the survivors of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita to return home, two years after the storms, but was able to instantly hand billionaire investors over \$62 billion in three days.

In a country where the infrastructure has fallen into such disrepair that bridges are collapsing in Minneapolis and steam pipes are exploding under the streets of NYC, the ultra rich are given billions for behaving anxiously in the markets.

And these bailouts, remarkable in their size and scope, are still only a fraction of what the U.S. is spending on war in Iraq and Afghanistan. A trillion dollars that could have been spent on healthcare, education and jobs has instead been funneled into the coffers of the military industrial complex, bringing misery and suffering to millions of people around the world.

In the book "Socialism, Utopian and Scientific," Engels, referencing Marx's theory of capital, wrote, "Accumulation of wealth at one pole, is, therefore, at the same time accumulation of misery, agony of toil, slavery, ignorance, brutality, mental degradation, at the opposite pole." This fact has never been more evident than today.

But the military misadventures in Iraq and Afghanistan, coupled with the growing economic crisis stemming from U.S.

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Children from Arauca perform at tribunal in front of painting of slain peasant leader Alirio Martínez in Bogotá, Colombia. Read article on page 9.

WW PHOTO: DEIRDRE GRISWOLD



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## Los Angeles activists demand: 'Money for bridges-not for war'



WW PHOTO: SEKOU PARKER

## Los Angeles March on Washington

Sept 22-24 1st Tent City: Westwood Fed. Bldg.  
Sept 25 March to downtown Fed. Bldg.  
Sept 25-29 2nd Tent City

Gather at Noon  
Broadway &  
Olympic

People's encampment  
in front of the Capitol  
Sept 22-29

# SEPT. 29

# STOP THE WAR NOW!

**On the West Coast get in touch with—**  
**Troops Out Now Coalition (TONC)**  
at the International Action Center office  
5274 W Pico Blvd, Rm 203, L.A. 90019  
**323.936.7266**

**Volunteers needed!**

**212.633.6646**  
**Troops Out Now Coalition**  
55 W. 17th St. 5C, NYC, NY 10011  
**www.TroopsOutNow.org**

### Special from Los Angeles

On Aug. 9 anti-war and immigrant rights organizations held a press conference in Los Angeles to blame U.S. war spending for failing infrastructure here in the U.S. Organizers charged the Bush administration and the Democratic-led Congress with criminal neglect due to war spending, causing crises from the Hurricane Katrina devastation to the Minneapolis bridge collapse.

They called for massive protests in September and urged everyone to participate in the national encampments and marches from September 22 to 29 in both Washington, D.C., and Los Angeles.

Speakers included Carlos Montes, Latinos Against the War; Terrie Cervas, BAYAN-USA; Steven Gibson, American Friends Service Committee; Javier Rodriguez and Martha Rojas, March 25 Coalition; Mazen Al-Moukdad, an Arab American activist and member of Al-Awda; Karin Gonzales, CODEPINK; and John Parker, International Action Center. Part of the press release reads:

"Back in 2003, the same year that began the latest U.S. war on Iraq, the American Society of Civil Engineers said that 27.1 percent of the nation's bridges were deficient.

"Instead of heeding that warning, the Bush Administration with complicity from the Democratic Party has, so far, squandered half-a-trillion dollars on wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. The direct human cost of that spending adds up to hundreds of thousands of Iraqi lives, many of whom were children. In addition, nearly four thousand young lives were wasted as U.S. soldiers are being sacrificed for U.S. profits.

"The collapse of the bridge in Minneapolis is also a direct result of that policy. Less than half of the money spent on the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan would repair or replace all of the bridges presently deemed deficient in the U.S.

"We demand that the war in Iraq come to an end immediately and unconditionally and that this money be used to repair our failing infrastructure and for human needs like health care, schools and education." □

## Women connect the dots

The Women's Fightback Network, an affiliate of the International Action Center, has designated Aug. 24-27 as days to demand "Reproductive Freedom, Rights and Equality for all Women." Demands include:

- Reproductive rights for all
- Overturn the anti-poor Hyde Amendment
- Stop racist, sexist, anti-LGBT attacks
- Free health care including safe, legal abortion and contraception
- Adoption and marriage rights for lesbians and other LGBT persons
- Jobs at living wages
- Funding for housing, education and all human needs, not war.

In Detroit, the Detroit Action Network For Reproductive Rights (DANFORR) and other women, student and pro-choice groups in Michigan will be having a march and rally on Aug. 24, at 5:30 p.m. starting at Grand Circus Park. For more information, e-mail danforn@sbcglobal.net or call 313-378-2369.

In New York City, the WFN will be organizing a Women's Speak Out rally Aug. 27 at Union Square from 5 p.m. until 7 p.m. The rally will include such issues as Katrina, immigrant rights, other economic struggles and cultural performances. For more information, contact NYWomenFightback@action-mail.org or call 212-633-6646. Go to www.iacenter.org to download the WFN national and New York leaflets.

—Monica Moorehead



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Workers World Party (WWP) fights on all issues that face the working class and oppressed peoples—Black and white, Latin@, Asian, Arab and Native peoples, women and men, young and old, lesbian, gay, bi, straight, trans, disabled, working, unemployed and students.

If you would like to know more about WWP, or to join us in these struggles, contact the branch nearest you.

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# Black community to police: 'No more' killings

By L. Paulsen  
Chicago

The Chicago Black community has accused the police of unjustifiably killing two unarmed Black men the first week in August in separate incidents and abusing those who have come into the street to protest those killings.

On Aug. 4, Gefrey Johnson, 42, of Chat-ham, died after two bolts from a Taser and a dose of pepper spray. Johnson was unarmed and naked in his mother's home when killed by police. He had just been released from prison with an untreated drug problem. The police had been called to the house to deal with a "domestic dispute."

On Aug. 6, police killed 18-year-old Aaron Harrison on Chicago's West Side. Harrison had come out of a store with friends. He was "playing around, dancing" when two police cars pulled up and officers ordered the group to stop. Harrison, who was on probation, ran "to avoid trouble," according to witnesses. Police then killed him with a single shot in the back.

Police officers claim they found a loaded pistol "next to the body," but eyewitnesses say that Harrison was unarmed and that the police planted the gun after killing him. The police story has changed several times.

First, they said they saw Harrison with a gun and shot him when he fled. Then, they said they saw him "tug at his pants" and thought he had a weapon. Finally, they said Harrison drew the gun and was

aiming it at police when they shot him in the chest. The medical examiner, however, has confirmed that the bullet wound was in the back of Harrison's left shoulder.

Hundreds of outraged residents spilled into the street Aug. 7 to protest. Some marched to the police station and others pelted police with bottles and bricks. Police attacked the crowd with dogs, arrested five people for assault, and smashed two cameras belonging to Terrence James, a Chicago Tribune photographer who was covering the incident.

Seventeen-year-old Deonte Thomas, one of those arrested during the protest, said he hadn't thrown anything at police. He told the Chicago Defender that he was made to lie on the ground and was kicked and repeatedly maced by police even after being handcuffed.

Another protest march took place Aug. 8. The police arrested four young men who were involved in the protests, taking them into custody out of the district without notifying their parents. Residents marched on the police station again, demanding to know their whereabouts.

On Aug. 10, an evening rally of 400 people took place at Madison and California, in front of a restaurant owned by former alderman Wallace Davis, who himself survived a police shooting in 1976.

## Victims' relatives speak out

Speakers included Rev. Al Sharpton, whose National Action Network group opened a Chicago office; veteran anti-police brutality activist Rev. Paul Jakes;

public housing activist and writer Beauty Turner; community activist Wallace "Gator" Bradley; and Rev. Caleb Muhammad of the Nation of Islam. The rally was emceed by Coz Carson, former staffer for Congressperson Cynthia McKinney and now program director for Black-owned WVON radio.

Rev. Sharpton said: "The only way that I've experienced that we get justice in these cases is if we get ready for the long

haul. We need a protracted struggle. It may take going downtown every day. It may take a big march downtown. It may take some civil disobedience. It may take whatever it takes."

Speaking on behalf of the family of Aaron Harrison, his aunt LaShaundra Harrison told the rally: "I want you all to be prayed up and to be united and really in this fight, because my nephew couldn't

*Continued on page 4*

## Protesters tell Quinn: 'Hands off Viola Plummer'

By Monica Moorehead  
New York

Over the course of three hours on Aug. 9, some 75 activists held a picket line outside the office of New York City Councilperson and Speaker for the Council, Christine Quinn. The protest was called by the Brooklyn-based December 12th Movement. D12 is

a revolutionary Black organization that fights for the self-determination of Black people here and worldwide.

Quinn, who is white, recently fired a D12 leader, Viola Plummer, from her job as chief of staff for another NYC Councilperson, Charles Barron. Barron is an outspoken activist and former Black Panther.

Plummer and Barron have come under fire from the white council members, led by Quinn, for advocating a street naming in the Bedford-Stuyvesant community of Brooklyn for a prominent Black activist, Sonny Abubadika Carson, who is deceased. The white council members voted against the street naming, which took place anyway on June 16 at the initiative of D12.

Plummer has filed a federal lawsuit against Quinn for her illegal termination and violation of her constitutional first amendment right to freedom of speech. An amicus (friend of the court) brief has been filed by the Center for Law and Social Justice at Medgar Evers College in Brooklyn in support of an expected motion for summary judgment in favor of Plummer.

The brief, on behalf of organizations and individuals, will emphasize the following three points: that Quinn exceeded and abused her authority in first attempting to discipline and then to fire Plummer; that Plummer is employed by and serves



WW PHOTO: MONICA MOOREHEAD  
Inez Barron

Council member Barron, not Quinn; and that Plummer was fired in violation of her rights under the First Amendment. For more information about the brief, call Joan or Arturo at 718-270-6297/6291.

Speakers at the Aug. 9 picket line included renowned playwright, poet and activist Amiri Baraka, who recited a poem that he had written as a eulogy for Carson when he died in 2002.

Nellie Bailey from the Harlem Tenants Council spoke on connections between the racist attacks on Plummer and Barron and the epidemic of gentrification by big real estate developers targeting the communities of color. Amadi Ajamu, a D12 organizer, chaired the rally with chants of "Black power" and agitational speeches. Inez Barron, spouse of Charles Barron, also spoke.

A number of LGBT activists mobilized for the protest and carried signs stating, "Christine Quinn does not speak for me." Quinn, who has aspirations for running for mayor, is also a lesbian. A number of these activists represented a national effort of more than 100 LGBT activists who signed a letter supporting Plummer and defending self-determination for the Black community's right to honor Carson with the street naming. Two of the initiators of the letter spoke at the rally—well-known anti-racist white lesbian activist and writer Minnie Bruce Pratt and Imani Henry, a Black performer and International Action Center organizer. Larry Holmes, an IAC co-director, spoke, along with a representative of Workers World Party. Activist Arturo J. Pérez Saad motivated signers for the amicus brief on behalf of Plummer. *To read and sign on to the LGBT letter, go to www.workers.org.*

*E-mail: mmoorehead@workers.org*



Picket line on Aug. 6 denounces racist persecution of San Francisco 8.

## Ongoing bail hearings for San Francisco 8

Bail hearings concluded Aug. 8 for the first three members of the San Francisco 8, eight former Black Panthers who have been dragged into court and charged with the murder 35 years ago of a San Francisco policeman.

Judge Philip Moscone announced at the beginning of the hearings on Aug. 6 that he would not rule on bail until all of the hearings were concluded. The judge also refused to allow all eight defendants into the courtroom, despite strong arguments from their attorneys that the men be present for all legal proceedings.

On Aug. 6 before the first bail hearing, a large picket line formed outside the courthouse comprised of family members, political prisoners' rights activists and community supporters organized by the Committee for the Defense of Human Rights.

Herman Bell, Ray Boudreaux, Richard Brown, Henry (Hank) Jones, Jalil Muntaqim, Richard O'Neal, Harold Taylor and Francisco Torres are the community activists who are charged with being part of a conspiracy allegedly between 1968 and 1973 that involved the killing of a police officer in 1971. Both Bell and Muntaqim have been imprisoned as political prisoners in New York State for more than 30 years.

The present case is based on "evidence" gained through the beating and torture of three ex-Black Panther Party members that took place in a New Orleans jail in 1973. However, all charges, including ones for the 1971 police killing, were dismissed after judges learned about the physical coercion in New Orleans. Two of the SF 8, Taylor and Boudreaux, were part of the original case.

All of the men were involved in community activism and progressive political work prior to their arrests on the conspiracy charges. Richard Mazer, Richard Brown's attorney, argued today that Brown should be immediately released because of his strong community ties in this city and the serious medical issue of his deteriorating vision. Brown has just been diagnosed with a kind of glaucoma which could lead to blindness if not treated aggressively. Judge Moscone also heard bail arguments for Boudreaux and O'Neal.

Bail hearings for other members of the SF 8 will continue next week beginning on Aug. 20 at 9 a.m. in Department 23 at 850 Bryant Street. For more information and to get involved in the fight to free the San Francisco 8, check out [www.freetheSF8.org](http://www.freetheSF8.org).

—Report & photo by Judy Greenspan



## 'Free the MOVE 9' car caravan

More than 60 people participated in a car caravan that wound through Philadelphia neighborhoods on Aug. 11 to free the MOVE 9. Twenty-nine years ago on Aug. 8, 1978, Philadelphia cops so recklessly raked the MOVE house in the Powelton Village area in Philadelphia with gunfire that one of their own, officer James Ramp, was fatally shot in the back.

Nine MOVE members were framed for Ramp's death. They were sentenced to 30 to 100 years in jail by Judge Edwin Malmed, even though he stated that he didn't have "the faintest idea" who killed Ramp when questioned by Mumia Abu-Jamal on a radio call-in show.

Merle Africa, one of these political prisoners, died suspiciously in jail on March 13, 1978. The remaining eight are up for parole in 2008. Justice demands that the MOVE 9 be freed.

—Stephen Millies



# New CEO to Chrysler workers: Let them eat cake

By Martha Grevatt

"Welcome to the New Chrysler." This was the message written in the icing on the cake served to workers at Chrysler's Twinsburg, Ohio, stamping plant on Aug. 6, the day that private equity firm Cerberus formally took possession of 80.1 percent of the automaker.

It was déjà vu to workers with nine or more years seniority, who remembered a similar cake and coffee celebration the day Chrysler became part of DaimlerChrysler.

The PR blitz at Chrysler World Headquarters in Auburn Hills, Mich., was far more grandiose, with acrobats and fireworks for the 10,000 workers who worked at the headquarters or were bused in.

Yet many of those eating company cake are wondering where they will be working in the next year or two, as Chrysler accelerates its "Recovery and Transformation Plan"—the cutting of at least 13,000 jobs.

What made the whole charade hardest to digest was the surprise announcement of who would be the new Chrysler CEO—and why. Pushing aside Tom LaSorda, CEO of the Chrysler Group when it was part of DaimlerChrysler, Cerberus named Bob Nardelli, the disgraced former CEO

of Home Depot and past General Electric executive, as Chrysler's new CEO.

At GE Nardelli was a protégé of Jack "The Hammer" Welch, the CEO known for taking a hard line with the unions and demanding harsh concessions. When Welch retired and Nardelli did not get the top executive position, he went on to run Home Depot.

There he developed a reputation with store managers for demanding staff cuts and pay cuts for those remaining workers. Embroiled in controversy, Nardelli was forced out of Home Depot, but with a whopping \$210 million severance payment.

Nardelli will reportedly receive no salary but will be paid according to "performance."

Because there is no regulation or public disclosure of private equity finances, Nardelli's "performance" pay can be kept secret. His earnings will remain a mystery, which is ironic considering the number of times the Big Three's figures on union labor costs are quoted in the media. Based on the income he's accustomed to receiving, however, it can be assumed that Nardelli's pay will meet any thinking person's definition of excessive—assuming he can "perform."

News reports leave no doubt as to what is meant by performance. "One of Nardelli's jobs will be to reduce Chrysler's high labor costs," reported National Public Radio the day that Nardelli's appointment was announced.

"Maryann Keller, a long-time auto industry analyst, says Cerberus is now under pressure to generate more money from Chrysler to pay off debt. 'There is going to be a much greater focus on really stripping costs out of this company, much faster than we might have anticipated,' she said.

"Cerberus may also think Chrysler's current leaders aren't up to the task of dramatic change. Sean McAlinden, an economist with the Center for Automotive Research in Ann Arbor, says an outsider may be more willing to make drastic cuts because he or she has no connections to Detroit or the industry.

'He said the choice of Nardelli is a comment on current Chrysler management that they probably ... can't make the harsh decisions that Cerberus probably thinks have to be made.'

"For his part, Nardelli says he does not want to change Chrysler's current restructuring plan, which includes cutting 13,000 jobs. He says he just wants to speed it up." (National Public Radio, All Things Considered, Aug. 6, 2007)

Workers, however, have no reason to take Nardelli at his word. With the current financial crisis on Wall Street and around the world intensifying, it won't be long before the new bosses cry for additional cuts.

## Contract negotiations: No business as usual

The timing of Nardelli's appointment came just weeks after negotiations began between the Big Three automakers and the United Auto Workers union. To put someone in charge who is nothing but a high-priced hatchet man sends a powerful message to the UAW. Cerberus is not interested in cooperation—they are out for blood.

Canadian Auto Workers President Buzz Hargrove has expressed concern. "During that time, [when Nardelli ran Home Depot] there were a lot of workers who lost their jobs, and there were a lot of managers who left the company," Hargrove said. (NPR, Aug. 6)

UAW President Ron Gettelfinger, however, joined Nardelli and now number two boss LaSorda on the podium during the big celebration.

What could Gettelfinger be thinking? Does he think he'll get a better deal at the negotiating table by making nice with these corporate cutthroats? Where is the evidence to back that strategy? What is the logic in taking that approach? Concessions only whet the bosses' appetites for more concessions.

The UAW's current style of negotiating—a style so full of cordiality, with a strike vote a formality by a union leadership hell-bent on avoiding confrontation—has run its course. A three-headed wild dog named Cerberus is blocking the path and the bone of cooperation will not appease him.

To move forward autoworkers must understand not only the benefits won but also the limitations of collective bargaining.

The right to collective bargaining, won in the 1930s and 1940s through hard struggle, was a tremendous victory. It was a 44-day occupation of General Motors that forced the bosses to recognize and bargain with the UAW. Before the great sit-down strikes autoworkers were at the complete mercy of the bosses. One day they came home exhausted from the speedup and the

next day they were on the unemployment lines. They had no vacations or holidays, no health insurance, none of the things they now take for granted.

Still, collective bargaining without a class-wide struggle only mitigates the terms of exploitation of labor by capital. It does not and cannot eradicate the contradiction between the two. Workers who understand this will reject the notion that the union has some obligation to make sacrifices in order to save the company.

The appointment of slash-and-burn Nardelli is a wake-up call for the UAW rank and file. It signifies a strategy that has brought in profit-driven financial outsiders who don't have the foggiest notion of how to build cars. Ford brought in Alan Mulally, who came from Boeing Aircraft and has a reputation of cutbacks and downsizing. GM's Rick Wagoner came up the ladder through his knowledge of finance and cost cutting.

In the current negotiations they plan to inflict more pain on our UAW members and retirees by cutting jobs and benefits and closing or selling off well-built plants.

The rank and file need to resist this onslaught by organizing watchdog committees across Big Three. They need to connect with sisters and brothers abroad in the industrial sectors and solidarize with the immigrant rights and anti-war movements. They must link the war at home with the war abroad.

They need to involve their communities, particularly the oppressed nationalities, devastated by rising foreclosures and previous plant closings. The committees should be prepared to defend worker/community property rights to their jobs, their benefits guaranteed under contract, and most important of all the plants they labor in and support via taxes and city services.

It's a tall and challenging order but history shows that an independent class-wide struggle can push back even the most ruthless exploiters.

*Martha Grevatt has worked at the Chrysler Twinsburg, Ohio, Stamping Plant for 20 years and is active in her local union.*

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## Chicago Police

*Continued from page 3*

come into town for a barbecue, and couldn't go to the store to bring snacks and drinks back, so that we could all socialize together like I thought we could do in these United States, without being beat down and intimidated and humiliated and now murdered by the Chicago Police Department. ... If nobody else can walk down the street and shoot somebody in the back as a coward, the Chicago Police Department should not be able to do it."

Family member Kenny Shannon declared: "They're not going to detain us and it's the last straw. Today it's my nephew, tomorrow it's yours. Let's make this the last one. Today we stop them. We tell the mayor, tell [State's Attorney] Dick Devine, it's done, no more! You will not murder our kids any more."

Organizers urged participants to pack the next meeting of the Chicago City Council's Fire and Police Committee and to gather in front of City Hall at 9:30 a.m. on Aug. 28.

As the rally ended, police cars and wagons arrived in force, lights flashing, trying to provoke an incident. Rally participants lined the streets with signs, refusing to be provoked or intimidated, and the police ultimately departed.

*Sources for this article include the Chicago Defender.*



WWW.PHOTO:MAGGIE VASCASSENNO

## STATEWIDE RALLIES DEMAND:

# 'Health care for people, not profit!'

## SAN FRANCISCO

People throughout California rallied under the banner of "California's 365 City Campaign for Universal Health Care" this past week. Activists rallied at the offices of Blue Shield of California at noon Aug. 8 in downtown San Francisco. Locally organized by the California Healthcare Organizing Project, the crowd protested the denial of medical care by Blue Shield to Cynthia Campbell, a local nurse with cancer, and supported the elimination of the health care insurance industry and for universal health care for all.

Many health care activists, many on their lunch break from work, participated. Some of the community groups attending included California Alliance for Retired Americans, Planning for Elders, Senior Action Network, Older Women's League of San Francisco, Healthcare Action Team and the Peace & Freedom Party.

Organized labor participating included the San Francisco Labor Council, California Nurses Association, National Nurses Organizing Committee, International Brotherhood of Teamsters, United Educators of San Francisco (UESF #61) and Service Employees International Union (SEIU #1021).

Elected officials present were two California state senators and one member of the San Francisco Board of Supervisors.

The California Nurses Association brought beautiful signs reading: "Guaranteed Healthcare—Patients NOT Premiums." And there were yellow "safety" helmets distributed as well.

Between speakers the crowd chanted: "Health care—YES! Insurance Companies—NO!" And there was a "sing along" to the traditional song "We Shall Not Be Moved" with new stanzas, like "Unconditional health care, we shall not be moved," "Patients before profits, we shall not be moved," "Fighting for our children, we shall not be moved" and "The union is behind us, we shall not be moved."

Speakers pointed out that the San Francisco Healthcare Ordinance, approved by voters and currently being phased in for uninsured San Francisco workers, is leading the way for an even better statewide universal health care measure. Called the California Universal Healthcare Act, California state senate bill SB 840 was approved by the state legislature last year, only to be vetoed by "The Governor" Arnold Schwarzenegger. But the struggle to get the universal health care measure enacted continues, as today's rally clearly showed.

## LOS ANGELES

Several thousand people attended a health care rally in downtown Los Angeles Aug. 11 sponsored by OneCareNow.org, a newly formed statewide coalition of labor unions, faith and community organizations uniting to demand universal health care. At the rally, Troops Out Now Coalition—LA organizers signed up dozens of trade union activists to join the Sept. 22-29 encampment and rally in L.A. —Joan Marquardt and Maggie Vascassenno contributed to this report.



# New laws signal more attacks on immigrant workers

By Teresa Gutierrez

In yet another blow to immigrants as well as a major concession to the right-wing agenda, the Bush administration announced last week significant measures related to immigration policy.

Department of Homeland Security officials announced on Aug. 10 a new package of immigration plans that the government stated would be backed up by increased raids at workplaces. (New York Times, Aug. 8)

According to the National Immigration Law Center the plans include:

- an increase in the militarization of the U.S./Mexican border (in July, the Senate added \$3 billion to a homeland security bill, most to be allocated to the border);
- expanded detention facilities with no review of current widespread human rights violations;
- a reduction in access to court hearings to challenge erroneous deportation orders;
- “streamlining” guest worker programs whose abuses have yet to be addressed; and
- expanding the list of so-called international “gangs” to deny admission in the U.S.

The announced measures—which totaled 26—were developed by an astounding multi-agency coordination that included the Departments of State, Labor, Commerce, Homeland Security, Education and Treasury as well as the Social Security Administration.

The principal spokespeople for the proposals, however, were Homeland Security Secretary Michael Chertoff and Commerce Secretary Carlos Gutierrez.

Homeland Security’s predominance in the issue demonstrates the government’s punitive and repressive attitude towards today’s immigrant population.

While most of the recent proposals continue or expand current policies, they signal a ruthless attack not only against immigrant workers but also in reality all U.S. workers.

## Driving workers further underground

Two key components of the announced

measures that are most touted in the press are related to Social Security policy and employer sanctions, which means increasing fines against bosses who knowingly hire undocumented workers.

These measures indicate that what is behind the recent announcements is the desire among the ruling class to not only drive immigrants further underground and to instill fear among the population but also put a freeze on organizing efforts.

Fearing a massive fight back among the population, the measures are meant to deal with the growing economic crisis.

The employer sanctions would require bosses to fire workers who may use false Social Security numbers. This enforcement is expected to begin in 30 days.

For decades, employers have ignored notices from the Social Security Administration stating that workers’ names and social security numbers did not match government records. This is called “no match.”

Employers will have a “fixed period,” possibly up to 90 days, to resolve discrepancies. If the workers’ documents cannot be verified, bosses will be required to fire the workers or risk up to \$10,000 in fines.

The new measures codify collaboration between the Department of Homeland Security and the Social Security Administration, ominously converting the SSA into a tool for immigration enforcement. The SSA is expected shortly to send out at least 140,000 “no match” letters, covering more than 8 million workers.

Immigrant advocates and some labor unions are opposing these measures.

The Rights Working Group of the National Immigration Law Center reports that the no-match policy “poses a great danger to workers. ... The rule will encourage employers to fire the worker and is likely to cause massive layoffs of authorized as well as unauthorized workers.”

In fact, U.S.-born workers may suffer as there are often simple clerical errors that result in a no-match.

The AFL-CIO stated that the new policies will result in “discrimination against Hispanic workers.” True enough. But if the labor movement wants to win the confidence of the growing numbers of Latin@ and immigrant workers, they must pro-

vide the resources to resist government repression.

## Growing economic crisis = increased repression

The Los Angeles Times and the Sun Sentinel as well as other papers report that businesses will suffer as a result of these measures. Of concern are the garment and agricultural industries of California and Florida. California’s garment industry is a \$33 billion industry annually.

But will big business really be punished for hiring the undocumented? Don’t count on it.

Since 1986, the U.S. government has had on the books penalties for hiring undocumented workers. But by 1999, only 24 companies had received penalties. Most notices have been ignored. The policy has resulted in a mere slap of the wrist, especially of major corporations. A \$10,000 fine is hardly a scare tactic to a \$33 billion industry.

Small scale businesses or cockroach capitalists, many run by immigrants themselves, will be more intimidated because they are more dispensable to the overall class goals of the ruling class.

But agribusiness, the meat packing industry and others have nothing to fear from their government.

What the announced current measures are aimed to do is to frighten workers. They are meant to not only terrorize immigrant workers, but they are aimed against U.S.-born workers as well.

According to the Immigration News Briefs, U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agents unabashedly arrested in July a union official with United Food and Commercial Workers at a Swift meat processing plant in Marshalltown, Iowa.

Braulio Pereyra-Gabino was charged with “harboring illegal aliens.”

The assistant director of the human resources department was also arrested on a harboring charge.



ICE agents raid New Bedford factory.

Sadly, a July 10 press release on the UFCW web site states: “The United Food and Commercial Workers Union announced, today, ICE agents made a return visit to four Swift and Company plants where workers are represented by the UFCW and arrested approximately four individuals apparently on charges of identity theft. It does not appear that ICE engaged in the same level of intimidation and overkill as they did in its raids last December at six Swift plants. To the extent this is the case, the UFCW supports law enforcement efforts that abide by the law and respect the rights of workers.”

In light of the increased repression towards immigrants and workers as a whole, this is a tragic response to workplace raids. This presumes that undocumented workers have broken some kind of law.

Under no conditions should unions support ICE raids. The time-honored slogans that no worker is illegal and that there are no borders in the workers’ struggle should be a booming clarion call for workers today.

The only solution to ICE raids against immigrants, to job insecurity, home foreclosures, the lack of affordable and quality health care, growing police brutality and repression, and the war in Iraq is a massive and militant fight back of all workers and oppressed.

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

# Candidates exposed on war & immigrant rights

Special to Workers World Chicago

The immigrant rights and anti-war movements sent strong messages to the Democratic presidential candidates in Chicago this week: they aren’t willing to wait for the elections to get what they want.

On Aug. 2, a 40-person delegation from Pueblo Sin Fronteras and La Familia Latina Unida visited the campaign offices of Democratic presidential frontrunners Hillary Clinton and Barack Obama with signs, chants and a statement demanding immediate action to stop raids, deportations, and the separation of families. U.S.-born children whose parents have been deported delivered the statement to the Adams Street campaign office of Sen. Obama (D-IL) and then to the LaSalle Street office of Sen. Clinton (D-NY). As the group marched on the sidewalk, the children chanted “Born in the USA—Don’t take my mommy and my daddy away!” The statement was signed by Elvira Arellano, president of La Familia Unida, who faces deportation; Rev. Walter Coleman, pastor of the Adalberto United Methodist Church which is providing Ms. Arellano with sanctuary; and

Emma Lozano, president of Pueblo Sin Fronteras.

The statement read in part: “While the debate in the Senate [over immigration reform] may have stalled, the actions of the government have not. The escalation surge of raids, deportations and separations of families, the imposition of sanctions and prosecutions, is in effect. ... [T]hese policies are driving 20 million people into an underground of fear and exploitation. “We note that Sen. Clinton and Sen. Obama ... have said they would, as President, work to pass comprehensive immigration reform. ... We have heard such promises before every election. ... What we need is safe harbor for our children and our families, not safe harbor for our candidates. What we need is action this September.”

On Aug. 7, anti-war activists set up a banner at Soldier Field, where thousands of union members were attending the debate among Democratic candidates. Their thirty-foot banner read, “Stop funding war and occupation! Troops out now!”

The action was initiated by the Chicago Coalition against War and Racism and Chicagoland Code Pink, with the message: “Not one more day—not one more death—not one more dollar—not one more excuse.” □

# No bailout for workers

Continued from page 1

finance capital, have highlighted the extreme volatility and vulnerability of the imperialist world order. It is now clear that the U.S., which has brutally sought to extend its influence across the globe as the world’s dominant superpower, is now stumbling.

The wars in Iraq and Afghanistan have shown that the greatest military power on earth can be hobbled by determined local anti-imperialist resistance movements.

The growing economic crisis has shown that the U.S. is weakening as an economic power. And it has shown how the processes of “globalization” have increased the risk of contagious financial crises by interweaving systems of finance capital across borders and continents in unprecedented ways.

The world’s biggest capitalist markets and systems of finance capital are now interwoven to such an extent that the ability of U.S. homeowners to pay their mortgages now has a direct affect on the availability of all types of credit in Europe and Asia. This interconnection means

a crisis in one imperialist country can quickly spread to other countries, weakening them all.

And both the war and the economic crisis have given more proof of why the elimination of capitalism and the installation of socialism—a system under which human needs like housing, health care and education would no longer be subject to the predatory profit-hungry instincts of the military industrial complex, investment banks, hedge funds and private equity corporations—are so vitally necessary for the emancipation of the working class and oppressed across the globe.

While socialism remains a long term but inevitable vision, there is a clear urgency now, however, for those activists already in motion, including workers of all nationalities, to unite to demand a national moratorium on foreclosures and debt payments.

These are just a few of many issues that will be raised at the Sept. 22-29 People’s Encampment and March on Washington initiated by the Troops Out Now Coalition. □



# Cuba: 'bringing revolution's humanity to all aspects of life'

By Leslie Feinberg

"I want to bring the revolution's humanity to those aspects of life that it hasn't reached because of old prejudices," Mariela Castro Espín, who has worked hard to eradicate pre-revolutionary prejudices about same-sex love, transsexuality and gender variance in Cuba, said in summer 2006. (Reuters, June 29, 2006)

Castro Espín is director of Cuba's National Center for Sex Education (CENESEX), which has accomplished a great deal in a relatively short time to replace prejudices about same-sex love and transsexuality with positive attitudes.

CENESEX created its own Internet Web site—[www.cenesex.sld.cu](http://www.cenesex.sld.cu)—shortly after the 16th World Congress of Sexology met in Havana in March 2003.

CENESEX's site incorporates a section on sexual diversity, which, in Spanish and English, offers basic information and opportunities to consult with experts and to voice personal opinions.

The site gets right to the point about its objective, which it states is to "overcome the taboos and prejudices that persist about same-sex love: Being homosexual or bisexual is not a disease, it is not synonymous with perversity, nor does it constitute a crime."

Homosexuality, the Web site makes clear, "is a sexual orientation that is not caused by seduction at any age, it is not contagious, and is not acquired by educational defects or negative examples in the family environment."

This Internet site receives the most visits—150,000 "hits" a day—of any Cuban World Wide Web portal. (IPS/GIN, July 3, 2004)

Castro Espín said in the summer of 2004 that these developments are "the result of an effort of more than 30 years, and now we are seeing its fruits more clearly."

## Work accomplished, work to do

When asked by a BBC reporter in September 2006 whether perceptions about homosexuality had changed in Cuban society, Mariela Castro Espín answered, "I think so; it has changed very much."

She told interviewer Eduardo García Jiménez: "I do believe that since the 1990s there is greater acceptance of the presence of homosexuals by some portion of the population and public institutions. That does not mean that the contradiction has been resolved for all individuals at all levels of society. ("Alma Mater," journal of the University of Havana, reprinted in *Green Left Weekly*, March 3, 2004)

Castro Espín added, "I think we are at a good moment to implement policies that are more explicit about the defense of the human rights of homosexuals, so that we are better prepared to confront any manifestation of discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation. I see this very humanistic attempt to achieve greater respect for the rights of homosexuals as the waging of a battle of ideas in our society. I believe this notion has to be part of the cultural and political battle because that would mean a cultural, social and political strengthening for the Cuban Revolution."

Castro Espín said she is advocating for an amendment to the Cuban Constitution to add homosexuality to the groups against which discrimination is outlawed. "It is a proposal I am making from my



FIST and Workers World Party delegation with staff of CENESEX in their Havana office, July 24.

position of responsibility as the director of the CENESEX. I assure you it has been heard by receptive listeners. My proposal is in no way removed or distant from the spirit of the Revolution, or from the entire process that has brought about this call to a battle of ideas.

"It would be wonderful to be able to spark meaningful, inter-group discussion on this subject," Castro Espín emphasized, "so that Cuban society could develop a healthier culture of sexuality, one that is fairer, that helps to erode old, erroneous beliefs and prejudices that emphasize sexual orientation.

"Something like this would put the revolution even more in line with its humanistic ethic; the Cuban Revolution has been possible because of the participation of all men and women, of all Cubans who have identified with the conquests and dreams of that social project. Among all those who have participated there are also people of diverse sexual orientations."

## Don't measure with imperial ruler

As earlier articles in this series documented, the CIA, Hollywood and corporate media tried to deflect resistance to U.S. imperialism's covert war against Cuba, and the domestic discrimination, police brutality and bashing of same-sex-loving and gender-variant people that are commonplace in the U.S., by focusing on the onerous tasks Cuba's revolution faced in uprooting centuries of prejudice about same-sex love. Of course, each poisonous seed had been planted and cultivated by U.S. capitalism and, earlier, Spanish colonialism.

Today, the Cuban Revolution has made enormous strides in raising popular consciousness about sexual liberation, including same-sex love. Building ties of unity between the lesbian, gay, bi and trans (LGBT) movement in the U.S. and the Cuban Revolution require conscious leadership of the most resolutely anti-imperialist activists in the liberation movement for LGBT and other sexually, sex- and gender-oppressed peoples.

Yet some activists in the U.S. still argue that Cuba won't have "passed the test" until lesbians and gays are "out" in Cuba with their own autonomous organizational formations.

Lesbians and gay men in the U.S. and other capitalist countries are "out" in order to unite against shared and/or overlapping mechanisms of oppression.

Castro Espín stated categorically to journalist Mary Lamey via a translator,

"There is no official repression of lesbians and gays in Cuba. What remains are social and cultural reactions that must be transformed, the same as in many other countries." (Canada.com, *The Gazette*, July 29, 2006)

She pointed to the bashings of transsexuals and homosexuals in England and other imperialist countries. "This doesn't exist in Cuba. The Cuban population is much more respectful of differences than in other places," she emphasized. "When I'm afraid I will find a very strong resistance, I find a high degree of sensibility in the Cuban population."

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## Cubans defining their 'liberation'

In a capitalist country, being "out" is not only an assertion of individual identity and personhood. The movement to end the oppression has to be "out" and independent, as well.

That is because of the LGBT movement's relationship to its own ruling class in capitalist countries. In the class struggle, it is imperative for the movement to break free of its own capitalist bosses and their ideology. In that case, the movement is only as powerful as it is independent.

But what about a socialist country in which the laboring class rules and is trying to build socialism in the liberated turf of a workers' state? What would Cuban men who have sex with men, women who have sex with women, and bisexuals, transsexual and transgender Cubans gain by identifying "away" from their own class?

Castro Espín addressed the question of organizing for change in Cuba in her 2003 interview with Eduardo Jiménez García. "I think the greatest difficulty is that there is no unifying and convincing project, because male and female homosexuals are as heterogeneous as heterosexuals," she said. "Yet, I don't see this as an obstacle; I see it as a complicated reality."

"I believe that male and female homosexuals should participate more in different loci of social and political discussion, despite the prejudices, so they can make their truth, their real need for equality, their beliefs known, in order to gain support from the scientific community, and in that way bring to bear arguments that can effect the changes that are necessary in society—and see that they are just."

However, an international network of both LGBT social democrats and those far to the right of them is developing in the imperialist countries, particularly the U.S. and Britain. It makes an appeal

to Cubans, and others in countries menaced by imperial powers, to identify first and foremost based on what is presumed to be an identical and shared sexuality. In turn, this network asserts its readiness to defend gay and lesbian Cubans and others—but only against their own people, culture and national liberation struggle.

When aligned with overall and sometimes specific imperialist interests, such a position can offer a "left cover" for regime change—through covert and/or military intervention.

## Defend Cuba!

Cubans are defining their own liberation.

The Cuban Revolution merits the support of progressives and communists around the world, without demands that it measure up as "perfect" using an imperial ruler. A socialist revolution is a process, not a single act. Solving the economic and social problems that the capitalists cannot and will not tackle is the dynamic forward motion of revolution.

Regarding the revolution's efforts to eliminate old prejudice against homosexuality, Fidel Castro concluded during a 1988 interview with a Galician television station: "Given that we can make mistakes, we obsessively follow the idea [of] what is just, right and best for the people, and what is most humane for our people and our society. However, the task is not easy—I think that each time we get closer to the right criteria for making the world we want. Nonetheless, I think that we still have many faults, and that future generations will have to continue to perfect this new world."

The whole population of Cuba—of all races, sexes, genders, sexualities, ages and abilities—does not need to be defended against its own culture or its own revolution. It needs and deserves defense against the U.S. blockade of its island and every other illegal act of imperialist war, overt and covert, which impedes revolutionary progress.

International support for Cuba's right to sovereignty and self-determination will allow the island's population to spend more time, energy and resources on socialist construction, rather than on defense.

It is the LGBT movements in the imperialist citadels that have to break with their own ruling classes in order to build bonds of genuine international solidarity. It's a hard position to take. It requires ideological valor; the refusal to remain silent about the emperors' "new" clothing.

The Cuban Revolution has had to take up the tasks that history presented it, including the eventual eradication of the legacies of racism, sexism and anti-gay bigotry.

In order to move forward toward their own liberation, the LGBT and other progressive movements in the U.S. and other capitalist countries have to combat anti-communism—which is, in the long run, a defense of capitalism—and develop a powerful anti-imperialist current that can extend its solidarity to Cuba and all countries fighting for their sovereignty and self-determination against finance capital.

Revolutionary Cuba—the "hope of the hemisphere"—has done a better job dealing with its tasks.

*Next: Rainbow Solidarity for the Cuban Five.*

*To find out more about Cuba, read parts 86-106 of Lavender & Red at [workers.org](http://workers.org).*

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# FIST, in Cuba, shows solidarity with revolution

By Abraham Mwaura and Dante Strobino

Members of FIST and Workers World Party traveled to Cuba from July 18 to 28 to defy the travel ban and to witness the gains of the socialist revolution. The following is Part 3 of reports from their experience. Visit [workers.org](http://workers.org) to see the previous reports.

## Cuba defends all expressions of sexuality

FIST was invited to the National Center for Sexual Education (CENESEX) on July 24 for a presentation and discussion about the methods undertaken in Cuba to defend the rights of and provide resources to lesbian, gay, bi, and transgender Cubans. CENESEX has been greatly aided in this process by the Cuban Women's Federation, which has been reaching out to people's sensitivity as human beings.

CENESEX presented information about their successful efforts to educate Cubans in all walks of life to be sensitive and open to all expressions of sexuality. Unlike the vast majority of political structures in the U.S., this education also targets the police and institutions as well as the population as a whole. Anti-gay and anti-trans violence on the island is now virtually non-existent.

In universalizing their free medical treatment, Cuba provides free transitional surgery and hormones for transgender Cubans. Their efforts towards health care services have been so successful that the rate of HIV infection on the island is nearly 60 times less than in other Caribbean nations!

The FIST delegation presented CENESEX with a framed "Rainbow Solidarity to Free the Cuban 5" poster describing the recent efforts to build the international campaign of solidarity for Cuba inside the LGBTQ movement. Leslie Feinberg, co-chair of the LGBT caucus of the National Writers Union/UAW, author of groundbreaking books "Stone Butch Blues and Transgender Warriors," and participant in the delegation, presented one of her books to transgender staff members at CENESEX. The gifts were received with warm thanks.

More about CENESEX can be read at [www.workers.org/2007/world/lavender-red-107/](http://www.workers.org/2007/world/lavender-red-107/).

## Defending the revolution

On the afternoon of July 25, FIST was invited to visit the Anti-Imperialist Tribunal. Outside the tribunal flew 138 black flags, each with a single white star, honoring the many Cuban lives lost to terrorist acts committed mainly by groups in Miami.

The director of the tribunal gave the delegation a detailed history of the site, which for decades has been designed to politically defend the Cuban revolution against U.S. imperialism. When the U.S. cancelled diplomatic relations with Cuba shortly after its socialist revolution, both the U.S. and Cuba had to go through a third country to house their embassies.

The U.S. and Cuban Interest Sections are housed in the Swedish offices in Havana, adjacent to the Malecón—a famous walkway along the Havana coastline which many Cubans frequent. The U.S. site has been used as a battleground for anti-revolutionary propaganda. The U.S. uses the windows of the fifth floor of this embassy to broadcast a large, bright



marquee with slogans meant to undermine the revolution.

With their infinite creativity, the Cubans built the anti-imperialist tribunal right next door, expropriated the embassy parking lot and installed the 138 huge flags to honor their fallen Cubans. When rumors surfaced that Cuba would bomb the embassy they quickly replaced the military personnel surrounding the building with Cuban children, an occupation that could not be viewed as provocative or threatening. The Anti-Imperialist Tribunal now features a memorial commemorating all internationalist freedom fighters, including peoples from the U.S. such as Clara Barton, Henry Reeve, Harriet Tubman, Nat Turner and Malcolm X.

## Comités en Defensa de la Revolución

The FIST delegation also had an opportunity to spend some time with a local Committee in Defense of the Revolution (CDR) on the eve of July 26, the anniversary of the revolutionaries' attack on the Moncada barracks in the city of Santiago de Cuba in 1953. The CDRs—neighborhood-based organizations tasked with the defense and further development of the Cuban revolution—were organized in September 1960 following the overthrow of the Batista regime. Their slogan is, "In every neighborhood, Revolution!" They are assigned the task of guarding the neighborhoods and providing medical assistance, if needed. CDRs are fundamental building blocks of the organization of the Cuban revolution.

The delegation had the opportunity to talk to local community members and members of the local CDR during the neighborhood's July 26 celebrations. This included a very special encounter with a community member who had been part of the July 26th movement, who was assigned to make patches for the revolutionaries and who marched into Havana on Jan. 6, 1959—one day before Fidel Castro. Her perspective on what the revolution had done for the country was positive. After the revolution she decided to work rather than go to school, and now at 70 years of age she was passing on her experiences with the revolution, not only to us, but to her grandchildren who were present.

## Reverse travel challenge and struggle against blockade

When the FIST delegation returned to the U.S., they did so publicly and without

a permit, to openly defy the travel ban and bring attention to the inhumane economic blockade on Cuba.

On the warm, sunny afternoon of July 28, FIST members met with U.S. activists from the Venceremos Brigade and the U.S./Cuba Labor Exchange to march across the mile-long Peace Bridge from Fort Erie, Ontario, Canada, into Buffalo, N.Y. As the 80 marchers entered the U.S. from Canada, they were joined by more than 100 activists from Pastors for Peace simultaneously returning from their trip to Cuba, entering back into the U.S. from Mexico via Hidalgo, Texas. During their trip, Pastors for Peace delivered more than 90 tons of material aid to Cuba.

Initially enacted by the U.S. Congress after Cuba's socialist revolution, an economic blockade directly and on a daily basis weighs heavily on the Cuban food supply, transportation, housing and even on the fact that Cubans cannot rely on the necessary raw materials and equipment to work with.

In 1992, the Torricelli Act further tightened the blockade by prohibiting any U.S.



Flags honoring Cuban martyrs at the Anti-Imperialist Tribunal near the Malecón in Havana.

WW PHOTO: LEILANI DOWELL

corporate subsidiary from trading with Cuba—70 percent of which trade was in foods and medicine—calling on Western allies to enforce the blockade, sanctioning Latin American countries that trade with Cuba, prohibiting any ship that trades at a Cuban port from entering a U.S. port in the next six months and allowing funding of opposition groups on and off the island.

This year's protest was particularly important given that the Bush administration recently established a task force designed specifically to enforce the blockade.

The effects of the blockade could be seen all over the island, forcing unnecessary shortages on the Cuban people—sidewalks were torn up, toilets were leaking, cars were outdated and inefficient, certain foods were unavailable, and more. Yet, despite these hardships, the Cuban people have persevered. They defend their homeland and their government to their death—thus the slogan, "Patria o Muerte."

The FIST youth delegation returns to the U.S. with concrete experiences of the gains of a socialist revolution and will continue with their work to openly challenge the blockade and to organize for the freedom of the Cuban 5. Ultimately, the delegation knows that the greatest way to show solidarity with the Cuban people and all workers and oppressed of the world is to get the U.S. off their backs by creating a socialist revolution inside the U.S. □

## FIST leader speaks in Rhode Island



PHOTO: BILL BATEMAN

Larry Hales, third from left in front, and activists from Providence and Boston, Aug. 4.

Members from the Black community in Providence, R.I., met in the Garden Oasis Aug. 4 for a meeting of freedom fighters and revolutionaries, to listen to FIST member Larry Hales speak about the recent FIST trip to Cuba.

Using the Cuban revolution as an example, those gathered talked about the struggles in the U.S. and the necessity of a socialist revolution, the prospects and how solidarity with the most oppressed is key, whether the

masses are ready to raise socialism or not. The garden upkeep is provided by a 71-year-old elder of the Black community, affectionately known as Mr. Carter, who expressed his desire to go to Cuba.

On Aug. 2, Hales, along with other FIST organizers Lila Goldstein and Namibia Donadio, spoke at a Workers World Party forum in New York City on their Cuba experience. To hear podcasts of their talks, go to [www.workers.org](http://www.workers.org). □



## PUERTO RICO

# Anti-privatization struggle won't go away

By Arturo J. Pérez Saad  
San Juan, Puerto Rico

Very early on July 29, five activists from the organization Amigos del MAR, led by Tito Kayak, climbed upon and occupied four giant cranes at the construction site of the "Fortín San Jerónimo" in San Juan, Puerto Rico.

They were protesting the government, developer and politicians for privatizing public lands and denying the people access to the beach, which is a constitutional right. Under the Puerto Rican Constitution, the beaches are public domain, thus they are to be used and enjoyed by all. Therefore, there cannot be any obstruction of or obstruction of the access to the beaches.

In reality, this constitutional right has been violated by previous government administrations which have sold off rights to the beaches illegally to corrupt politicians and to appease the rich.

During ex-governor Pedro Rosselló's term he further implemented Washington's neo-liberal policies and privatized all government-run entities, including water, telephone, health care, insurance, etc., all while pushing for statehood.

The following administration run by the pro-colonial party under Sila Calderón deepened the crisis on the island by allowing the resale of public land entities to private developers at low costs. The current pro-colonial party under Acevedo Vilá is being forced to act on these policies.

In all actuality and in the time span of the last decade the Fortín San Jerónimo's access became private and the beaches

surrounding the small fort became off-limits as well, without the public's knowledge or consent.

Amigos del MAR demand that the access be opened and that an official investigation begin into the legality of the construction. Allies of Amigos del MAR have called for the demolition of the buildings. The activists in Puerto Rico are looking at what other activists are doing around the world on this issue and cited a number of demolitions brought about by the struggle in Spain.

On Aug. 9, an EFE (Spanish news agency) report with the headline, "Hotel constructed on the beach is expropriated" stated that "like the central government as well as that of the region of Andalucía, the one that belongs to Almería, the plans of demolition of the hotel complex and the return of these lands to the natural park will go on as scheduled" in the southwest part of Spain on the Mediterranean side.

### A historic people's tribunal

The Vilá administration and the police did not allow water or food to be brought to the five activists occupying the cranes. On Aug. 2 the lawyers association had a press conference in defense of the right of the five activists to receive nourishment and a picket was called for 5 p.m. the same day.

This writer participated in the action to take five backpacks to the activists on four cranes of which only one occupier became the recipient of the humanitarian aid. Five other activists in the attempt were detained by the police, but were later

released without charges.

On Aug. 5, the first people's tribunal ever held in Puerto Rico attracted more than 1,000 supporters. It exposed the illegality of the construction by the developer Arturo Madero, the violation of sovereignty by foreign capital—in this case Hilton International—and the violation of national law by the Department of Environmental and Natural Resources (DRNA), the Zoning Commission (La Junta de Planificación) and the government itself.

The eight judges denounced the continuation of the construction and called for an official investigation and the demolition of such structures.

On Aug. 6, the participants of the people's tribunal demanded of the government that they be part of the official investigation of the "Paseo Caribe," where the Fortín San Jerónimo is located.

As the tribunal was winding down and the last activist descended from the giant crane, the people amassed by the gated entrance waiting to greet him and the others. When he appeared the people demanded to be let into the site.

After the conclusion of the press conference with all the activists that occupied the cranes, there was a spontaneous march to the Fortín San Jerónimo led by Amigos del MAR. The people poured in and took over the Paseo chanting "¡El pueblo unido jamás será vencido!" and "¡Lucha, Sí! ¡Privatización, No!"

Since then revelations in the press of corruption, of violations of state statutes, of the denial on the part of the developer

and others of any illegality, etc., are being viewed by many as tactics to pacify the movement.

Yet, resistance to privatization of the beaches is building and it is not restricted to Paseo Caribe. On the morning of Aug. 5, hundreds of people in support of the Pro-defense Coalition of the Beach of Puerto Nuevo of Vega Baja took over the township and the streets demanding that the mayor stop the privatization project of the public beach.

On a phone interview with Ismael Guadalupe from Comité Pro Rescate y Desarrollo de Vieques (Committee for the Rescue and Development of Vieques), he told WW that "This struggle is not only about protecting our national heritage, our beaches, but in reality it is a struggle of the poor and the working people against capital, the transnational corporations and the rich."

Yet the struggle for the end to detonations of Navy bombs by the U.S. agents, the decontamination and the return of the occupied lands (more than 52 percent of the island) by the U.S. government, so that the people of Vieques can control and have a say in the development of Vieques, continues.

The struggle has taught people that united they can kick out the colonizing force as they did in Vieques. It is just a matter of time before a united struggle will also kick out foreign capital.

For more information on this development, go to Amigos del MAR's Web site, which is [www.tuplayaenreja.com](http://www.tuplayaenreja.com).

# Cuban Five's link to a historic defeat of apartheid

By Cheryl LaBash

Twenty years ago, in July 1987, the Angolan army (FAPLA) pushed back the U.S./South African-backed army of Jonas Savimbi in the southeastern part of that country newly liberated from Portuguese colonialism.

When the racist South African Defense Forces (SADF) apartheid army moved in, threatening to destroy the strongest Angolan forces at Cuito Cuanavale, Cuba joined with the Angolans to decisively defeat the SADF and to smash the ideology of white supremacy. This joint military effort forced the apartheid army to withdraw on Aug. 30, 1988.

The course of history was changed on the battlefield and at the negotiating table, freeing the South African colony of Southwest Africa, now Namibia, dealing a death blow to the apartheid system.

Two years later, Nelson Mandela was released after 28 years of imprisonment to become president of South Africa. Mandela said Cuito Cuanavale "was the turning point for the liberation of our continent—and of my people—from the scourge of apartheid."

Three of the Cuban soldiers who fought shoulder to shoulder with Angolan fighters to defeat South Africa and its racist system are Fernando González, Gerardo Hernández and René González.

They are currently unjustly imprisoned by the U.S. government along with Antonio Guerrero and Ramón Labañino—known internationally as the Cuban Five. These five heroes infiltrated the CIA-backed paramilitaries organizing attacks on Cuba from training bases in Florida.

Luis Posada Carriles, who planned the first mid-air bombing killing 73 people on



Cuban fighters against apartheid in Africa. Fernando González, above. Gerardo Hernández, center, René González, sitting third from left, right.

Cubana Airlines Flight 455 in 1976, walks freely in Miami, to continue planning attacks on sovereign socialist Cuba.

Oral arguments on appeals for the Cuban Five will be heard by a panel of judges from the 11th Circuit Court in Atlanta on Aug. 20, but their freedom depends on making their story known in every community.

A July 7 article by Piero Gleijeses, "Cuito Cuanavale Revisited," published in the South African The Mail and Guardian newspaper and "Cuba, Africa and the Cuban Five," a chapter by the same author from "Superpower Principles, U.S. Terrorism Against Cuba," provided information for this article.

## New milestone in Cuban Five case

By Yurién Portelles

Reprinted from Daily Granma, Aug. 9

Cuban law professor Julio Fernández Bulté says that the upcoming hearing at the 11th Circuit Court of Appeals of Atlanta on Aug. 20 marks a new milestone for the defense in the Cuban Five case.

Fernández Bulté told Prensa Latina that the hearing represents another opportunity to present arguments showing the five men were in the United States to thwart plots organized by Miami based groups to commit terrorist acts against Cuba.

The attorney said he does not expect the hearing before the Appeals Court to finally resolve the case of Gerardo Hernández, Antonio Guerrero, Ramón Labañino, Fernando González and René González, imprisoned in the U.S. for nearly nine years.

Nonetheless, Bulté said that it represents a ray of hope for groups around the world working for the freedom of the Cuban Five. Among the charges the defense will focus on are those of conspiracy to commit murder and espionage for which Hernández was sentenced to two life sentences plus 15 years in prison.

Fernández said that the solidarity movement with the Cuban Five has been successful in their campaign to expose the truth and that the hearing in Atlanta is evidence that the United States feels the international community is watching how they handle this case. However, he emphasized that the moment has come to increase solidarity actions.

The Cuban law professor noted that the case is highly politicized with powerful interests involved, especially those of the White House, and that a major effort is needed to continue to expose the truth. □



## Assassinations and terror

# Colombia tribunal examines role of oil companies

By Deirdre Griswold  
Bogotá, Colombia

What is most remarkable about the political situation in Colombia is not just the high level of state-sponsored violence against the popular organizations and their leaders, but the high level of courage and resistance from a people who refuse to be crushed or intimidated, even by masked assassins who come in the night.

This courage and resistance was on display here for two days, Aug. 3 and 4, when a special session of the Permanent Peoples Tribunal heard testimony on the role of U.S. and European oil companies in the terror campaigns against social activists in Colombia.

Some 800 people from both the capital, Bogotá, and many rural areas of Colombia crowded into an auditorium provided by the Teachers' Union, where they heard heart-rending testimony from the relatives and friends of activists, young and old, who were murdered for speaking out about the conditions in their communities.

Some of the witnesses fought back tears as they told of armed men breaking in at night in search of their husbands, sons and brothers, whose lifeless bodies were later found, often showing gruesome signs of torture.

Again and again, witnesses described how the Colombian military and local police give free rein to the "paras," some of whom work as private security guards for the big oil companies—Occidental, British Petroleum and Repsol. And they pointed the finger directly at the government of President Álvaro Uribe Vélez, who is currently trying to deflect popular anger by reshuffling his top military command, many of whom have been directly implicated in the crimes, along with the paramilitaries and druglords.

Three busloads of villagers from Arauca attended the tribunal. Arauca is a region in the oil-rich northeast, next to Venezuela, where the violence has been particularly vicious.

The face of Alirio Martínez—a campesino leader from the Arauca region who was murdered exactly three years ago—smiled down on the audience from a huge banner on the stage. Behind him, other peasants were depicted carrying a placard, "Arauca Lives," and the slogan, "We are building the paths to freedom."

At one point in the program, a group of girls and boys from Arauca who had been patiently waiting all day got their chance to dance with exuberance, grace and precision in front of the banner.

The energy of these young people showed that the terror campaign against the local population has failed to break their spirit. Even witnesses who cried as they spoke ended their testimonies with slogans of struggle and optimism.

### Assassination of Alirio Martínez

The execution of Alirio Martínez by government soldiers early on the morning of Aug. 5, 2004, was but one of many horrific crimes brought before the tribunal, but it sheds light on what is the real basis for the bloody conflict in Colombia, which has been going on for decades.



According to evidence presented to the tribunal, Martínez, president of the Association of Service-Using Campesinos of Arauca (ADUC), had spent the night at the home of a friend on Caño Seco Road in the town of Saravena after a meeting of leaders of local civic groups, held to evaluate the regional situation with regard to social and human rights.

Also present at the meeting were Jorge Prieto Chamucero, president of the National Association of Hospital and Clinic Workers of Colombia (ANTHOC), Leonel Goyeneche Goyeneche and María Raquel Castro, both members of the Teachers Association of Arauca and the Central United Workers (CUT), and Samuel Morales Flórez, president of the Arauca branch of the CUT.

At around 5:00 in the morning, troops belonging to the mechanized group Revéis Pizarro, assigned to the 18th Brigade of the National Army, broke into the house where the meeting had been held and totally surrounded it.

About a half hour later, several soldiers went to the nearby house of Jorge Prieto, where Alirio Martínez had been sleeping. They grabbed him and Goyeneche, ordered them to kneel at the side of the house and then shot them to death. They then dragged the bodies away from the house, put small arms near them and fired a few more shots to give the impression of a gun battle.

Later they dragged the bodies through the streets for everyone to see, and then put them on a helicopter and took them to battalion headquarters. They also arrested Samuel Morales, Raquel Castro and María Constanza Jaimes, taking them along in the helicopter.

This atrocity became known as the Massacre of Caño Seco.

The government presented it as a

Manuel Chacón, a union activist, and Alirio Martínez, a peasant leader from Arauca, were both assassinated by the Colombian Army.



WW PHOTOS: DEIRDRE GRISWOLD

Raquel Castro, a teacher from Arauca, testified at tribunal just days after being released from jail.

successful operation against armed insurgents of the National Liberation Army (ELN) and the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC).

Samuel Morales, Raquel Castro and several other civic leaders in the region were sentenced to six years in prison for the crime of "rebellion," which also was the excuse given for the massacre.

Raquel Castro got early release from prison and came directly to the tribunal, where she testified that she had heard her friends being shot and had heard the soldiers demanding, "Where are the arms?"

"There weren't any," said Castro. She added that when the helicopter got to the battalion headquarters, she saw U.S. soldiers—"gringos"—with the Colombians.

"All this is meant to suppress the struggle of the civic organizations, the peasants, the workers, for their human rights," added this brave teacher.

On the side wall of the auditorium, a banner read, "Truth and justice will honor the memory of our victims."

Griswold served as a co-judge at the tribunal.

Next: What's Big Oil got to do with it?  
E-mail: dgriswold@workers.org

## Imprisoned Turkish revolutionaries request solidarity

In September 2006 the pro-imperialist Turkish government arrested 23 revolutionaries, holding them for months before finally bringing heavy charges against them. The 23 are to go to trial on Oct. 26. Below are excerpts from two letters from the Marxist-Leninist Communist Party (MLCP) about the events and asking for international solidarity.

### No to the conviction of the communists!

The date of the trial at which 23 communists and revolutionaries, who have been imprisoned since September 2006 and who have not seen any court or judge so far, are going to be sentenced has finally been set. The first hearing is going to be held on Oct. 26 at the 10th Heavy Penalty Court in Besiktas, Istanbul.

With the new anti-terror law launched in June last year, the fascist dictatorship thought that it could create a deep silence in Turkey and Northern Kurdistan. This law seems to be insufficient, so that a new

law giving the police much more rights was introduced quickly. The dictatorship's aim is the oppression of the Kurdish national struggle by using its denial and annihilation policy and the liquidation of the revolutionary and communist movement. In order to reach this aim, it continuously created new "concepts" but never got any success.

While on the one hand the fascist dictatorship continues with its attacks on our party and revolutionary organisations, socialist newspapers and writers, on the other hand it tries to take the communists, revolutionary and socialist journalists and writers, imprisoned since Sept. 10, 2006, to court using fake "indictments" in order to sentence them.

The verdicts until now were not what it had expected. In Diyarbakir and some other towns, the arrested were released. On April 13, a group of the imprisoned in Istanbul was released while for the rest of the group, the trial was postponed to Aug. 7. Now it's time for the trial of the 23 revolutionaries and communists who have

been imprisoned after the attacks on Sept. 8-12. They have been behind bars without knowing with what they're being charged. Their files are closed for their lawyers, but open for the police, so that the police are free to create "evidence."

In the indictment, the fascist dictatorship demands several times lifelong sentences for 13 people and different sentences between 10.5 and 45 years prison for 10 people.

These are the names of the prisoners charged with several times lifelong sentences according to the indictment:

- **Ibrahim Cicek**, chief editor of the newspaper Atilim
- **Sedat Senoglu**, news coordinator of the newspaper Atilim
- **Ziya Ulusoy** and **Bayram Namaz**, journalists of the newspaper Atilim
- **Fusun Erdogan**, chief coordinator of the radio channel Ozgür Radyo
- and the prisoners **Naci Guner**, **Arif Celebi**, **Sultan Ulusoy**, **Adem Serkan Gundogdu**, **Ali Hidir Polat**, **Seyfi Polat**, **Mehmet Ali**

### Polat and Erkan Özdemir.

The names of those charged with sentences of 10.5 and 45 years prison: **Erkan Salduz**, **Turac Solak**, **Elif Almakca**, **Hatice Bolat**, **Fatma Siner**, **Hasan Ozan**, **Arzu Torun**, **Soner Cicek**, **Fethiye Ok** & **Bilgi Tagac**.

The fascist dictatorship tries to blame these prisoners for altogether 296 actions that happened between 1994 and 2006.

These kinds of indictments and courts have not been rare in the history of the international revolutionary and communist movements. In order to maintain and sustain its system, the bourgeoisie tortured, killed or imprisoned revolutionaries and communists, who do not demand anything apart from freedom, democracy and socialism and who therefore struggle for that. But every time, it was the bourgeoisie itself that was sentenced because of its actions.

It was the bourgeoisie that was demanded to be sentenced. At the Leipzig Trial, it was Dimitrov who sentenced German

Continued on page 10





## Wage slavery, Wal-Mart style

The depravity of capitalist exploitation knows no bounds. Yet another example of this was given in Newsweek on July 31, when they exposed the use of more than 4,000 14- to 16-year-olds to bag groceries in hundreds of Wal-Mart stores in Mexico. While the full-time employment of 14-year-olds is specifically prohibited by the International Labor Organization, that's only the tip of the iceberg: Wal-Mart's not paying a dime to any of these workers.

Everyone knows that Wal-Mart isn't hurting for money. The article reports that Wal-Mart de Mexico reported \$290 million in profits for the second quarter of 2007. Mexico's National Front Against Wal-Mart (<http://www.geocities.com/frentenacionalac/>) reports that in 2004 the managing director of Wal-Mart in the United States received an annual salary of \$17.5 million dollars.

It always bears repeating, however, that the way that corporations like Wal-Mart make these extortionate amounts of money is on the backs of the workers—paying them little, or in this case, nothing; ignoring occupational health standards; and generally trampling over any

rights workers may have. WalmartWatch.com reports that in Mexico “the company has come under fire for a variety of issues including use of maquilas (sweatshops in free trade zones), interfering with the presidential elections of 2006, and desecrating indigenous territory with construction of Supercenters.”

Just like the U.S. military, which ignores the economic draft and calls its troops “voluntary,” Wal-Mart claims that the teenagers who work only for tips at their Mexico stores are “volunteer” workers. It is this same draft—the staggering poverty that many face in Mexico and throughout Latin America, fostered by neoliberal policies that allow U.S. corporations like Wal-Mart to exploit workers around the world—that forces workers to risk life and limb to cross the borders into the U.S. Once here, those immigrants—who labor at some of the lowest paying, harshest jobs—are criminalized by repressive agencies of the state.

As this issue's article on immigration states, liberation of workers—in the Americas and beyond—will come from “a massive and militant fight back of all workers and oppressed.” □

## Virginia anti-war activists visit Iran

By Caleb T. Maupin

The Virginia Anti-War Network (VAWN), decided, in light of the current threats against Iran by the forces of Washington and Wall Street, to take a 12-day trip to this sovereign country in the Middle East led by an anti-imperialist government.

According to their Web site, [defenders-fje.tripod.com/id13.html](http://defenders-fje.tripod.com/id13.html), they organized this “People's Peace Delegation to Iran” in order “to take a stand.”

“We want to meet with the Iranian people on their own soil, in their own cities and towns and rural areas. We want to

express to them our desire for peace and friendship, and come back better prepared to explain what we have seen and heard.”

Members of VAWN saw things from a perspective often unheard in the Western world. They heard things from the perspective of the Iranian people.

The delegates remarked that the streets of Iran's capital, Tehran, reminded them of New York, as they saw people dressed in a wide variety of different clothes.

They attended religious services at mosques and heard the sermons of the Imams. They also met with Iranians who believe in Zoroastrianism, a pre-Islamic religion. Zoroastrians told the U.S. delegation that they are free to practice their beliefs, with no harm from the Iranian government.

In one of the reports on the VAWN website they spoke of the how the Iranian children “have been universally not just friendly, but fascinated, joyful, delightful and warm. I can't believe that anyone, government leader, teacher or parent, is teaching these kids to hate people from the U.S. It just ain't happening.”

They met with veterans of the Iraq-Iran war, during which the U.S. supplied weapons to both sides, hoping to weaken both the then Baathist Party leadership in Iraq and the newly formed anti-imperialist government led by the Ayatollah Khomeini.

For a short period of time, a group of North Americans, including a few military veterans, saw things from a perspective other than that of the corporate media and the government.

They were able to hear a voice which many are unable to hear, especially in the U.S.: the voice of the Iranian people, who want peace, but refuse to surrender to the U.S. government and empire that continues to threaten them with military aggression. □

## Hank Aaron praises Barry Bonds for home run record

By Mike Gimbel

On Aug. 7, Barry Bonds broke the greatest record in sports in the United States. Bonds hit his 756th career home run at his home ballpark in San Francisco, breaking the record previously held by Henry “Hank” Aaron. Aaron had broken Babe Ruth's record of 714 home runs in 1974.

The Aug. 7 game was halted temporarily for ceremonies honoring Bonds. To the surprise of most in the crowd, a video message, played on the huge video screen behind centerfield, showed Aaron warmly congratulating Barry Bonds on his spectacular feat.

Why was Aaron's message a surprise to so many? It was a surprise due to the big business media sports talk shows repeatedly trying to play Aaron off against Bonds in order to sully the new record and the new record holder. During the months long lead-up to the breaking of the record, instead of repeating Aaron's comments praising Bonds, the media focused on Aaron's statements that he would not be present when Bonds broke the record. They never quoted the second half of Aaron's statement saying that he felt that the historic event was Bond's to savor and if he were present, it would shift attention away from Bonds. This is something he didn't want to happen.

In Major League Baseball, records are more important than in any other sport. The game is so statistically oriented that many children memorize batting averages. Every batter who comes to the plate has his batting average, home runs, RBIs, etc., scrutinized by the radio and television announcers virtually every time.

Numbers, whether they are understood or misunderstood, are at the very heart of the game and the biggest single number is the home run individual season and career totals. As such, every time that a new “Home Run King” appears, a big controversy almost immediately takes place as the hearts are broken of the fans whose “sports hero” is pushed aside in the record books. The big business media invariably fan the flames of this controversy so as to sell their newspapers or gain TV and radio ratings. The big business media love controversy, and if a little racism can be added to the controversy so as to make it an even bigger “story,” so be it, regardless of the truth of the matter!

When George Herman “Babe” Ruth came on the scene he smacked homer after homer for the New York Yankees. The big business media claimed that it was all the result of the introduction of the “lively ball.” The so-called “dead-ball era” vs. the “lively-ball era” is mostly myth as a result.

What occurred was a change in hitting style, introduced into baseball by “The Babe,” combined with the introduction of the new, more homer-friendly stadiums. In 1961, when another New York Yankee outfielder, Roger Maris, threatened to break “Babe Ruth's hallowed record” of sixty home runs in a single season—a record set by Ruth in 1927—Maris was attacked unmercifully in the media and by the New York Yankee fans who resented any attempt to break the record of Ruth, also known as “The Great Bambino.”

During that 1961 season the pressure on Maris was so great that all his hair fell out! After he broke the record, the media demanded that the baseball commissioner place an asterisk next to Maris' record because he played in more games than

“The Babe.” The baseball commissioner willingly complied and Maris' record sat there with the asterisk attached as if to say, “The real record still belongs to ‘The Babe.’”

### Breaking down racist barriers

Even though Roger Maris was white, and there was absolutely no racism directed at him, there was still a small tinge of racism involved. How so? Weren't the Yankees still an almost completely lily-white organization as well as one of the last holdouts against baseball integration? It would have been inconceivable, at that time, to even imagine Roger Maris and any of the other white Yankee players speaking out against racism. Yes, that is so, but nothing happens in isolation.

This was the beginning of the 1960s. Almost all of professional sports were integrating and there was an almost desperate attitude by reactionary whites at that time always yearning for the “Great White Hope.” Boxing was becoming dominated by people of color. Basketball and football were integrating with the greatest stars, like Bill Russell and Jim Brown, coming to the fore. It was a period of transition and many racist whites viewed Babe Ruth's records as the last bastion of white supremacy in sports.

Roger Maris was playing at a time when Willie Mays, Hank Aaron and Roberto Clemente were already established baseball stars. It was only three years later during the historic 1964 World Series, when the Yankees were dominated by a great Black pitcher, Bob Gibson, from the St. Louis Cardinals.

That World Series defeat forced the New York Yankees to integrate, in order to be able to compete under the new conditions. Roger Maris, in my opinion, became in a small way an unwitting victim of the pervasive white reactionary fear of the new social conditions created by the civil rights movement.

As a youth, I hated the Yankees, but I really sympathized with Roger Maris as he endured the endless attacks. It was a shameful moment in sports history and the asterisk placed by the baseball commissioner was just the final shameful act of a shameful year in baseball history.

When Henry Aaron was approaching Babe Ruth's career record of 714 home runs, he did so as a member of the Atlanta Braves baseball team. It was only a few years earlier that professional sports teams had first come to the apartheid South. The symbolism of a proud Black man breaking Babe Ruth's record in the uniform of a team based in Atlanta was inescapable. Henry Aaron had to endure repeated death threats aimed at him and his family, as a result. Aaron's accomplishment became another defeat for racism both in sports and in the apartheid South.

As for Barry Bonds' great accomplishment, unfortunately, once again, the baseball commissioner has played a negative role. Instead of cheering on Barry Bonds, Baseball Commissioner Bud Selig had to be prompted to even attend the game where Bonds tied Aaron's record. When the home run actually occurred, Selig had to be prompted to even stand up. He stood there with a bemused look on his face and his hands stuffed in his pockets! Shame on him!

Hooray for Barry Bonds! You have stood up to the pressure as they tried to bring you down, and yet you persevered. Isn't that what a real hero is all about? □

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Commentary

## Imprisoned Turkish revolutionaries

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fascism. In South Africa, the release of Mandela, who was imprisoned for 27 years by the apartheid system, does not have any other meaning than the sentencing of this racist system.

Comrades, we experienced yet during the former trials what great impact international solidarity has and that it becomes a means to put oppression on the court. These were good examples which made us feel proud. We have informed you about these developments. Now it is time to judge the fascist dictatorship with this trial once again and to destroy its plans. We want to let you know that we believe that we will also win this struggle with strong international solidarity. We also call on you to participate in the trial on Oct. 26 and to be with us in this struggle.

MLCP

Turkey/Northern Kurdistan  
International Bureau



## Soul Serenade:

# The Role of International Affairs in 1967

On July 23, 1967, a confrontation between Detroit vice squad officers and a section of the Black community exploded into a major rebellion, the largest in U.S. history up to that time. President Lyndon B. Johnson sent in National Guard and U.S. Army paratroopers to repress the population. The result was 43 dead, 467 injured and over 7,200 arrests. More than 2,000 buildings burned down. The following is Part 3 of excerpts based on a talk given by Abayomi Azikiwe, editor of the Pan-African News Wire, to a Workers World forum in Detroit this July 21.

There were other developments in the international community that had a tremendous impact on organizations based inside the U.S. that had played a leadership role within the civil rights and Black power movements. The escalation of the war in Vietnam propelled Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. to take a public position against the U.S. involvement in Southeast Asia.

King had been reticent to take such a stand prior to the spring of 1967. Although his wife Coretta had participated in the national march against the war organized by the Students for a Democratic Society in April of 1965, King personally did not participate. He had made statements against the war and its role in deflecting attention away from the struggle for civil rights and the so-called "war on poverty," but it was not until April 4, 1967, in his speech at Riverside Church in New York City that he clearly articulated his views on the war and its relationship to the struggle against racism and poverty in the U.S.

Of course the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) had come out against the war with a statement issued on Jan. 4, 1966. This statement read in part:

"The Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee has a right and a responsibility to dissent with United States foreign policy on an issue when it sees fit. The Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee now states its opposition to United States involvement in Vietnam on these grounds:

"We believe the United States government has been deceptive in its claims of concern for freedom of the Vietnamese people, just as the government has been deceptive in claiming concern for the freedom of colored people in such other countries as the Dominican Republic, the Congo, South Africa, Rhodesia and in the United States itself ...

"We therefore encourage those Americans who prefer to use their energy in building democratic forms within this country. We believe that work in the civil rights movement and with other human relations organizations is a valid alternative to the draft. We urge all Americans to seek this alternative, knowing full well that it may cost them lives—as painfully as in Vietnam." (Taken from "The Making of Black Revolutionaries: A Personal Account," by James Forman, Macmillan Company, 1972, pp. 445-446).

Another major issue that arose during June of 1967 was the outbreak of the so-called "Six Day War" between the states of Israel and Egypt along with other Arab countries. Various civil rights organizations were pressured to come out in support of Israel. However, SNCC generated a tremendous amount of controversy when it took a position in opposition to the Zionist state in support of Egypt and the Palestinians.

James Forman, who had been executive secretary of SNCC between 1961 and 1966,

had taken the position of international affairs director of the organization. In his book cited above, he points out that during the war the Guinean ambassador to the United Nations, Maroof Askar, had summoned him and the leadership of the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE) to their mission in New York. Ambassador Maroof had told both organizations that the radical African nations as well as others were coming out in support of Egypt and the Arab states in the conflict.

Forman states that the CORE leaders conveyed to the Guinean ambassador that CORE had not taken a position on the conflict because it felt the organization could not sustain the reaction to such a position by the pro-Israeli forces in the U.S. However, during this period SNCC published its newsletter containing an article by Ethel Minor which seemed to take a position in support of Egypt and the Palestinians.

According to Forman: "[T]he newsletter was not in my opinion anti-Semitic. ... But none of this really mattered to some. SNCC had come out in support of the Arabs, as far as the Zionists were concerned, and that was enough." (Forman, p. 496).

In addition to the sharpening ideological and political struggles surrounding the U.S. foreign policy in Vietnam and the Middle East, the role of revolutionary movements in Latin America had been a serious focus of concern for many years. The Cuban Revolution had presented a model of social transformation and development which posed a direct challenge to the racist capitalist system in the U.S.

Under the chairmanship of Stokely Carmichael, SNCC sought to form alliances with the Puerto Rican independence movement as well as Latino communities inside the territorial boundaries of the U.S. In early 1967, Carmichael traveled to Puerto Rico and made statements in support of the national liberation struggle there as well as SNCC's opposition to the war in Vietnam.

Later that year in July, after Carmichael had stepped down as chair and turned over control to H. Rap Brown, he traveled to Cuba to participate in the First Conference of the Organization of Latin American Solidarity. During his speech at this gathering, which was attended by President Fidel Castro, Carmichael made statements pledging unconditional support and solidarity with revolutionary forces in Latin American and around the world.

In his speech, which was reprinted in "Stokely Speaks: From Black Power to Pan-Africanism," he states in part that: "The struggle we are engaged in is international. We know very well that what happens in Vietnam affects our struggle here and what we do affects the struggle of the Vietnamese people. This is even more apparent when we look at ourselves not as African-Americans of the United States, but as African-Americans of the Americas.

"At the present moment, the power structure has sown the seeds of hate and discord between African-Americans and Spanish-speaking people in large cities where they live. In the state of California,



WW PHOTO:  
CHERYL LABASH  
Abayomi  
Azikiwe

## PART 3 The global struggle's link to Detroit's 1967 rebellion

African-Americans and Spanish-speaking people together comprise almost

50 per cent of the population, yet the two view each other with suspicion and, sometimes, outright hostility. We recognize this as the old trick of 'divide and conquer' and we are working to see that it does not succeed this time.

"Last week Puerto Ricans and Blacks took the streets together in New York City to fight against the police—which demonstrates success in this area. Our destiny cannot be separated from the destiny of the Spanish-speaking people in the United States and of the Americas. Our victory will not be achieved unless they celebrate their liberation side by side with us, for it is not their struggle, but our struggle together. We have already pledged ourselves to do what we are asked to do to aid the struggle for the independence of Puerto Rico, to free it from domination by U.S. business and military interests; and we look upon Cuba as a shining example of hope in our hemisphere.

"We do not view our struggle as being contained within the boundaries of the United States as they are defined by present-day maps—instead, we look to the day when a true United States of America will extend from Tierra del Fuego to Alaska, when those formerly oppressed will stand together, a liberated people." (Carmichael, Lawrence-Hill Books, 1971, 2007, pp. 104-105)

Around this same time period, James Forman and Howard Moore attended the International Seminar on Apartheid, Racism and Colonialism in Southern Africa held in Kitwe, Zambia. The conference was sponsored by the U.N. and provided an excellent opportunity for Africans in the region as well as those from the U.S. to articulate a clear position against colonialism and imperialism. In his address,

which was delivered during the same period as the rebellion in Detroit was taking place, Forman spoke to the solidarity among African Americans with liberation struggles on the African continent:

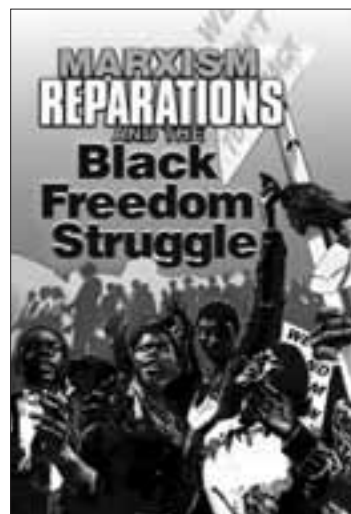
"Afro-Americans have watched with sympathy and concern the struggle against apartheid and white-settler domination in eastern and southern Africa over the past twenty years. We rejoiced with all freedom-loving people when the victory was won in Kenya. Today, we express our solidarity with the Freedom Fighters who languish in prisons and detention camps of southern Africa awaiting the day when the heroic efforts of those who are still free to fight will wipe out these inhumanities of man to man once and for all, and place the destiny and welfare of the people in their own hands.

"The cells of Robin Island and the Birmingham jail look the same on the inside. As the vanguard of the struggle against racism in America, SNCC is not unfamiliar with the problems of southern Africa.

"SNCC has never visualized the struggle for human rights in America in isolation from the worldwide struggle for human rights. ... SNCC has made it clear by recorded vote at its May 1967 conference that: 'It encourages and supports the liberation struggles against colonialism, racism and economic exploitation wherever these conditions exist, and that those nations that assume a position of positive non-alignment express a point of view most consistent with its own views. Therefore, although our name indicates the original form of our struggle, we do not foreclose other forms of struggle.'" (Forman, pp. 486-487).

With these developments in the summer of 1967, the struggle of Africans inside the U.S. was clearly connected to the overall world struggle against colonialism, neo-colonialism and imperialism. The leadership of the most advanced organizations at the time saw these links as being primary in waging a successful struggle against national oppression and economic exploitation.

The rebellions were not riots because they reflected the people's resistance to injustice and repression. This legacy of resistance could be traced back to the period of slavery, where flight and rebellion were a constant occurrence. How would this struggle be carried forward in the midst of the rebellion? Would Africans seek reforms from the system or demand a complete revolution to transform the character of the state and the economy within the U.S.? Or would there be a combination of waging struggles for reforms that could potentially strengthen the people in preparation for a fundamental change in society? These were some of the questions that needed addressing during the summer of 1967 and its immediate aftermath. □



## Marxism, Reparations & the Black Freedom Struggle

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## Prisionera bajo libertad condicional demanda a la prisión

Por Judy Greenspan  
San Francisco, Ca.

El Departamento de Corrección y Rehabilitación de California, (CDCR, siglas en inglés), se encuentra bajo fuego en estos días; su manejo del cuidado de salud está bajo observación federal y un panel de jueces prometió comenzar a revisar las opciones de libertad de l@s prisoner@s debido a las graves condiciones de hacinamiento. Aunque su juicio terminó hoy con un jurado en desacuerdo, una valiente demanda judicial por Alexis Giraldo, una prisionera transgénero puertorriqueña, aumentó el fuego contra el CDCR cuando ella expuso las violaciones sexuales, los abusos y el trato inhumano diario contra l@s prisoner@s transgénero, de variantes de género e intersexuales en este estado.

No sólo Giraldo se enfrentó valientemente contra el sistema de prisión racista y homofóbico, sino que su caso también le ha dado nuevas energías e inspirado a cientos de activistas de la causa por los derechos humanos en todo el estado. Ayer, aproximadamente 100 personas tuvieron

una vigilia en apoyo de Giraldo frente a la corte federal.

L@s manifestantes sellaron sus bocas con cinta adhesiva en una protesta simbólica para exponer el rechazo del sistema de prisiones a darle fin a la violencia en contra de est@s prisoner@s. La protesta fue organizada por el comité Trans/Gender Varian in Prison. (TIP siglas en inglés).

Giraldo fue enviada a la prisión Folsom en enero del 2006 por el robo de una tienda y violación de su libertad condicional. Fue encarcelada por tres meses en la población general en una prisión para hombres. Allí estuvo cautiva en una celda, violada y atacada sexualmente por los prisioneros. Ella trató varias veces de alertar a los guardias de la prisión y al equipo de médicos, pero su petición de ayuda no fue tomada en serio. Finalmente, después de ser violentamente atacada con una cuchilla por uno de los prisioneros, fue trasladada a una celda de aislamiento y eventualmente movida hacia una prisión designada para prisoner@s transgénero.

La demanda de Giraldo en contra del CDCR y los guardias que estaban directa-

mente envueltos en el incidente esta dirigida a cambiar el maltrato general contra l@s prisoner@s transgénero. Según la organización Transgender, Gender Variant and Intersex Justice Project, l@s prisoner@s transgéneros sufren a diario violaciones a sus derechos humanos. Además de asaltos sexuales y violaciones, ést@s prisoner@s también sufren asaltos físicos, negligencia médica, discriminación y abuso verbal.

Giraldo, quien pocos días antes había salido de la prisión bajo libertad condicional, estuvo presente todos los días del juicio que comenzó el 17 de julio. A pesar de que el estado trató varias veces de humillarla e ignorar sus quejas, Giraldo tomó la banquilla y testificó valientemente ante la corte. Su presencia diaria en la corte fue una fuente de inspiración según dijeron varios activistas del TIP.

Testigos expertos también expusieron al trato inhumano de est@s prisoner@s. Valerie Jenness, una criminóloga de la Universidad de California Irvine quién recientemente estudió los casos de asalto sexuales en las prisiones (para el sistema de prisiones), testificó en el juicio que

un 59% de l@s prisoner@s transgéneros en el estado han reportado asaltos sexuales, comparado con el 4% de la población general. La CDCR aparentemente ni siquiera lee sus propios reportes e investigaciones.

Según Ms. Major, una activista transgénero y ex prisionera, dice que este caso expuso la verdad sobre el trato de l@s prisoner@s transgénero. “Existe un mito que dice que nosotr@s pasamos un buen rato en la prisión y eso no es así. Somos abusad@s, violad@s y humillad@s,” declaró Major, organizadora comunitaria del TIP.

Giraldo y su abogado Grez Walston no han decidido si apelarán el desacuerdo del jurado y pedirán un nuevo juicio. Cualquiera que sea el resultado legal, l@s activistas del TIP y del TGI Justice Project se han fortalecido por el gran apoyo de la comunidad hacia Giraldo y continuarán sus esfuerzos de apoyo para l@s prisoner@s.

Según, Ms. Major, este juicio es de gran significado porque sacó a la luz las atrocidades y expuso la verdad. “Por lo menos ahora nadie puede decir que no sabían,” concluyó Ms. Major. □

## ‘Un movimiento imparable’ para dar fin a la pena de muerte

Por Minnie Bruce Pratt  
Montgomery, Ala.

Lisa Thomas subió las escalinatas del Capitolio de Alabama el 25 de julio, completando así su jornada a pie, a lo largo de la ruta histórica de la marcha por los derechos civiles del 1965 desde Selma. Thomas, una activista quien tiene un comedor para los pobres en Brewton en el estado de Alabama, protestaba la inminente ejecución de Darryl Grayson.

Grayson estuvo en una celda del corredor de la muerte en Alabama durante 27 años, más que casi todos de los 195 hombres que están allí, excepto cinco. Condenado a muerte, con acusaciones de violación sexual, él ha estado pidiendo una prueba de DNA desde el año 2002, diciendo que por el hecho de haber estado bajo la influencia del alcohol, no recuerda haber cometido el crimen. El Innocence Project, una organización sin fines de lucro

que representa a los prisioneros condenados a muerte, también ha tomado el caso de Grayson.

Thomas fue recibida por unas 60 personas solidarias, incluyendo a Esther Brown, directora ejecutiva del Proyecto Hope to Abolish the Death Penalty in Alabama.

Brown, quien cuando joven en el Berlín dominado por Hitler fue activista contra los Nazis, dijo que Grayson “ha recibido la justicia para el pobre y la gente de raza negra de Alabama” por parte de un jurado totalmente blanco.

Ella enfatizó que Grayson, un hombre africano-americano, fue intimidado por los agentes policiales blancos que lo interrogaron para que confesara. (Opelika-Auburn News)

L@s orador@s instaron al Gobernador Bob Riley a que detuviera la ejecución y autorice la prueba del DNA. También condenaron la extrema desigualdad en el sistema judicial y de prisión en Alabama,

los cuales la Reverenda Elizabeth O’Neill, pastora de la Iglesia Presbiteriana Immanuel, describió como “la vía entre la pobreza y la prisión.”

Alabama es el único estado que no provee abogad@s para l@s prisoner@s condenad@s a muerte luego de su condena. Es el último entre todos los estados en proveer ayuda legal para las personas de bajos ingresos o indigentes en asuntos no criminales. L@s prisoner@s han demandado al estado por una variedad de condiciones y acciones horribles incluyendo tortura física, sobrepoblación, falta de tratamiento para enfermedades mentales, segregación y maltrato de l@s prisoner@s con VIH.

Además el estado tiene una larga historia, muy conocida por el caso de los Hermanos Scottsboro en la década de los años treinta, de utilizar acusaciones de violaciones sexuales para condenar a los hombres de raza negra a la pena de muerte.

L@s manifestantes que se reunieron para demandar justicia para Darryl Grayson incluían a miembros de la familia Grayson; el activista en pro de los derechos civiles y senador por el estado de Alabama Hank Sanders de Selma; Faya Toure, fundadora de la organización 21st. Century Youth; el presidente de la célula de la NAACP en Alabama, Edward Vaughan y el ex prisionero Reverendo Kenneth Glasgow, presidente del Alabama NAACP Prison Project.

Much@s de l@s asistentes eran parte

del Alabama Arise, una coalición de más de 150 organizaciones religiosas, comunitarias y cívicas que luchan contra el racismo, la pobreza y la pena de muerte. Fueron leídos mensajes de solidaridad de la Iglesia Metodista Unida y de l@s sobrevivientes de los huracanes Katrina y Rita que ahora viven en Mobile.

El 26 de julio, Grayson fue ejecutado con inyección letal. L@s orador@s durante la protesta llamaron esta ejecución “un asesinato por el estado”, y hablaron sobre cómo durante su tiempo en la prisión, Grayson se había convertido en poeta, periodista y mentor para otros en la celda de los condenados a muerte. Los prisioneros en la prisión de alta seguridad, Colman Prison en Atmore, donde la celda de los condenados a muerte está localizada, mostraron su respeto y solidaridad con Grayson el 25 y 26 de julio, vistiéndose de blanco y no participando en ningún deporte durante las horas de ejercicios. (helenl.wordpress.com)

Durante la protesta, Diane McNaron, una cantante, y miembro de Birmingham Peace Project, afirmó el significado de la vida de Grayson. Ella habló de cómo él representó a “otros hermanos y hermanas africanos-americanos que han sobrepasado la esclavitud, los linchamientos y la segregación” para lanzar el movimiento por los derechos civiles de la década de los años sesenta. Ella dijo que Grayson tomó su lugar en esa historia como parte de un “movimiento imparable que dará fin a la pena de muerte.” □

Solidaridad arco iris  
para los cinco Cubanos

Demandamos un nuevo juicio y  
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Gerardo Hernández  
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