

MUNDO OBRERO

Empresas petroleras en Colombia, 2do parte 12

ROVE & GONZALES

Don't cheer yet 3

KATRINA TRIBUNAL

Survivors demand action 4

WATER WAR

Report from El Salvador 8

IRAQ AGONY

Exposés tell the story 9

MICHAEL VICK

Criminal or victim?
Editorial-10

Stop the war at home & abroad!

Newark march reflects rising resistance in Black communities

By Monica Moorehead
Newark, N.J.

Even as Pentagon analysts are starting to panic over the sharp drop in military recruiting in Black and Latin@ communities, more than 2,000 protesters braved 100-degree heat and humidity here on Aug. 25 to rally and march against the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, coupling them to the U.S. government's war at home against the poor, oppressed peoples and workers in general.

The Peace and Justice Coalition, initiated by the Newark-based People's Organization for Progress (POP), called the demonstration. More than 150 organizations and activists endorsed the event.

This protest was historic in this sense: ever since the Iraq war began more than four years ago, the African-American community nationally has been consistently opposed to the war in large numbers but this significant anti-war sentiment has been grossly underrepresented in national and local anti-war demonstrations.

The Aug. 25 anti-war demonstration, on the other hand, brought out large numbers of African Americans, not only from Newark but also from other cities in New Jersey such as the Oranges, Passaic and Paterson, in addition to some from New York and other parts of the region.

The main goal of the PJC has been to consciously reach out to Black and other communities of color around the demands of bringing the U.S. troops home and fighting for economic and political justice at home—illustrating that these are two sides of the same fight against the same imperialist system.

Newark is the largest city in New Jersey and also has a majority indigent Black population. Unemployment, underemployment, police terror, lack of decent housing and health care and

ANTI-WAR 'SURGE' BEGINS

- Women speak out
- Activists ready Mall encampment
- Kennebunkport—they can't hide
- Milwaukee 21 victory

Centerfold

other inhumane conditions are rampant. Many of these issues and more were raised from the Aug. 25 podium.

Life-and-death issues take center stage

Larry Hamm, chairperson of POP and a leader of the PJC, chaired the rally. Community activists read to the crowd a PJC statement that said in part:

"The U.S. war on Iraq must be brought to an end and the U.S. government must begin to concentrate on solving the dire economic and social problems in the United States.

"In the U.S., another type of war is going on, a war on our communities. The Bush administration, while increasing war spending, has decreased domestic spending for education, health care, housing, employment, veterans' care and other social programs. Racism, racial inequality and police brutality are on the rise.

"The march is being held on Aug. 25 to coincide with the 44th anniversary of the historic 1963 March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom and with the second anniversary of the Hurricane Katrina catastrophe, which killed many and left hundreds of thousands displaced and devastated due to the failure of the federal government to adequately respond to their needs. Marching in Newark enables us to connect this event to the 40th anniversary

Continued on page 6



March in Newark hits war and racism.

WW PHOTO: G. DUNKEL

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Deutsche Bank fire: a toxic capitalist mess

By G. Dunkel
New York

Putting out a fire in the Deutsche Bank building here on Aug. 18 cost the lives of two firefighters. Another 51 were injured, nine seriously. Five days later, two more were seriously injured at the building in a workplace accident involving a pallet jack—just two hours after Gov. Eliot Spitzer had promised to quickly deconstruct the building in complete safety.

Since 9/11, the Deutsche Bank building at 130 Liberty St. has been a toxic menace to the workers and residents of lower Manhattan. When the World Trade Center collapsed, some of the debris sliced into the bank building, setting off the sprinklers on every one of its 41 floors. Mold spread everywhere and the World Trade Center debris added asbestos, dioxin and heavy metals to the mix.

The Lower Manhattan Development Corp. (LMDC), a joint city/state agency, took ownership of the building in 2004, after the bank and its insurance companies resolved a lawsuit. The LMDC got assurances that the costs of demolishing the building would be covered and its extensive plans, which were supposed to keep the building's toxic contents from escaping, were approved by a raft of agencies.

LMDC appointed Bovis Lend Lease as the general contractor and hired the John Galt Corp. in 2006 to do the demolition, even though a number of other companies bid on the job. According to an Aug. 23 New York Times article, John Galt had no experience at all. It was a shell corporation, created to allow others to do the job. Among those others were former executives from Safeway Environmental Corp., one of whom had been twice imprisoned and was identified by federal investigators as a Gambino crime family associate.

"John Galt" also happens to be the name of a character in the Ayn Rand novel "Atlas Shrugged," who became an icon of the libertarian right wing.

The company drew its workers and supervisors from a Bronx scaffolding corporation. The workers were mainly from immigrant communities that have done most of the dangerous asbestos abatement work for the construction industry. It's not known how many were also vulnerable to their employer because of being undocumented. Galt was not a union shop and got a number of tickets and stop-work orders as it started to take the floors down one at a time.

The Manhattan district attorney is investigating the fire. Gov. Eliot Spitzer and billionaire Mayor Michael Bloomberg are vowing to get to its real causes. The media are floating rumors that these immigrant workers were smoking and drinking on the job.

Are the workers being set up to take the fall?

The LMDC took three years to gain ownership of 130 Liberty St., and two years to draw up environmentally adequate plans for its demolition and to hire a corporation to implement these plans.

Some 300,000 people live and work in Lower Manhattan and a few hundred thousand more pass through it every day. The longer the Deutsche Bank building stands, the longer all of them face serious risk. And of course as long as the toxic building is still standing, the more trouble the Port Authority is going to have renting the so-called Freedom Tower nearby, which is to replace the WTC Twin Towers.

The New York Fire Department took 343 casualties on 9/11 and two more on Aug. 18, yet it had no role in guaranteeing that the demolition work at 130 Liberty conformed to the regulations in force. By law the fire department is supposed to inspect a building being demolished every 15 days. There was no reported fire inspection of 130 Liberty after Galt started work.

The fire department has two functions: to put out fires and to inspect buildings to minimize the risks of fire breaking out. Both tasks are very important in a city with so many tall buildings containing so many workers.

Glenn Corbet, an associate professor of fire science at the City University of New York's John Jay College, told the Aug. 26 New York Times that he was "startled that the Deutsche Bank system had not been inspected more carefully." Corbett stated, "You can almost expect that there's going to be fires in this building, because there are torches being used.

"Ideally," he said, there should have been an inspector on the site "whose job is to patrol the standpipe system as each section is taken out." Standpipes allow fire crews to pump water at high pressure to the floors of tall buildings.

What lessons can be drawn from this deadly mess?

The purpose of insurance companies is supposedly to spread risk. However, under capitalism, the premiums they collect become their private property. If the loss is big, they are extremely reluctant to pay up. That's why it took two years and government mediation to get Deutsche Bank's insurers to settle on a payment.

Once the LMDC took ownership of the building, it started acting like a corporation instead of a government agency. It maneuvered with Deutsche Bank and the insurers to limit its exposure to risk and then with the real estate interests in Lower Manhattan to prevent their exposure to the toxics entombed in 130 Liberty. It took another two years to resolve the conflicting economic interests.

The LMDC's reasons for hiring the untested John Galt Corp. for the demolition remain murky. Galt turned out to be incompetent as well as untested. It managed to keep the fire department out. Fire inspections would have seriously slowed down the project and a Dec. 31 deadline was fast approaching.

Legal struggles, payoffs and backroom deals are all used to settle conflicts between competing capitalist entities. Competition and the free market are supposed to work the best of any system. But this claim is just hot air for 130 Liberty, still a toxic threat to hundreds of thousands of people after six years, two deaths and nearly 60 injuries. □



★ In the U.S.

'Stop the war at home and abroad!' 1
 Deutsche Bank fire: a toxic capitalist mess 2
 Rove and Gonzales out 3
 Don't cry for Brooke Astor 3
 Tribunal to seek justice for Katrina survivors 4
 Kenneth Foster 4
 Prison system exposed from many angles 4
 July 1967 and its aftermath 5
 Activists prepare for anti-war surge 6
 Two-month surge of resistance 6
 Milwaukee 21 6
 Women's Fightback Day 7
 Protesters in Kennebunkport 7
 WW Supporter Program reaches milestone 10

★ Around the world

Alert: Filipino leader arrested 3
 Salvadorans fight water privatization 8
 Civil rights worker kidnapped in Haiti 8
 Anti-war forces protest in Puerto Rico 8
 U.S. occupation creates humanitarian disaster in Iraq 9
 Floods devastate Africa's Sahel 10
 Australia's role in East Timor 11
 Romanian villagers resist mine owners' plans 11

★ Editorials

Michael Vick: criminal or victim? 10

★ Noticias En Español

Empresas petroleras en Colombia, 2do parte. 12

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Rove & Gonzales out—but don't cheer yet

By Deirdre Griswold

It is tempting to think that the resignations of Karl Rove and Alberto Gonzales from high-ranking positions in the Bush administration reflect a victory for the people's movements against war and repression.

Both cohorts of George W. Bush since his days as a Texas politician have come to represent the most onerous features of this imperialist government. Everyone with any sense of humanity can't help but feel gratified that they are gone.

Rove is known for his unremittingly right-wing, partisan guiding hand in steering both the domestic and foreign policy of the White House.

Gonzales thought he had secured his position by giving his stamp of approval, as attorney general of the United States, to anything Bush wanted to do to crush dissent and intimidate those who might fight back, whether they were Arabs caged in Abu Ghraib and Guantánamo or civil libertarians here alarmed at the repressive methods ushered in over recent years.

If the removal of these figures had been accompanied by an administration change of course, away from the war, away from domestic repression, then there might be something to cheer about. But there's no indication of that at all.

Banging the drums for war

On the contrary. At the same time that Bush was shedding those who had become lightning rods for criticism of the administration, he was also vigorously looking for opportunities to justify not only the "surge" in Iraq—which has cost so many lives and further torn up the social fabric of that tattered country—but also an even more openly threatening stance toward neighboring Iran.

So now, according to the White House, it is Iran that is behind the resistance in Iraq—not the anguish and burning hatred that almost all Iraqis have toward the U.S. invaders who have destroyed their nation, their culture, their schools, water supply, electrical grid and health system, their cities and towns, their very dignity—while driving millions into exile and killing hundreds of thousands more.

Bush spoke before the American Legion—that collection of crusty cold warriors who never seem to die or even fade away—and compared the war and occupation in Iraq to the Vietnam War, implying that it could have been won if only the U.S. had shown enough resolve at the time. Maybe he's too young, or was too busy then with his extra-curricular activities to notice, but the Pentagon was facing mutiny and the disintegration of its chain of command when it finally left Vietnam.

Some in the U.S. ruling class remember that lesson of the Vietnam War era. But obviously others, including Bush's closest backers, prefer to forget.

Bush has been so hawkish toward Iran in his recent public statements that he has excited the new right-wing French president, Nicolas Sarkozy, to join the fray and throw out his own bellicose words. Representing another capitalist, imperialist power that has a colonial history in the Middle East, Sarkozy in his first major foreign policy speech threatened the bombing of Iran unless it gives up its nuclear program.

Perhaps he sees a role for France as Washington's favored ally now that Bush's "puppy," Tony Blair, has gone down to defeat in Britain for having dragged that country into the Iraq and Afghanistan wars.

Remember Rumsfeld

So what do the Rove and Gonzales resignations mean, if the Bush administration shows no signs of changing course?

Some political analysts are recalling what happened when former Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld made his exit from the Pentagon, after much criticism of his style by the military brass. For a while there was a sigh of relief. The "architect" of the war was gone.

But Rumsfeld was not just a hawk; he was a hawk with an attitude. He had learned something from Vietnam, and he feared going into another war that might require masses of enlisted troops. So he promised that Iraq could be conquered through the application of high-tech weaponry that might cost a lot of money but didn't require that many warm bodies. He called it "shock and awe."

It didn't work. The Saddam Hussein government was overthrown, but the development of the resistance movement in Iraq showed that many boots on the ground were necessary to control and subdue the country.

Once Rumsfeld was forced out, the administration and the Pentagon were free to plan for the current "surge" of troops, sending every soldier they could scrape together, many for their third tour of duty, in a vain attempt to shore up a halfway plausible puppet regime in Iraq. They are now trying to justify and defend this deepening of the debacle.

Ray McGovern, a former CIA analyst who has become a critic of U.S. foreign policy, writes that "it seems a good bet that Rove, who is no one's dummy and would

not want to have to 'spin' an unnecessary war on Iran, lost the battle with Cheney over the merits of a military strike on Iran, and only then decided to spend more time with his family.

"Whatever else Rove has been, he has served as a counterweight to Dick Cheney's clear desire to expand the Middle East quagmire into Iran." (altnet.org)

It is impossible to say now whether this very grim view is correct. Subsequent events may shed light on it. But that this view exists at all is another reason to take a cautionary stand on why Rove is out—and to organize like hell to strengthen the independent, mass movement of the people, which is the only sure way to end the bloody carnage in the Middle East.

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WW PHOTOS: JOHN CATALINOTTO

Emergency protest demanding the release of Sison New York, Aug. 29.

Alert: Filipino leader arrested

Prof. Jose Maria Sison, the chief political consultant for the National Democratic Front of the Philippines, was arrested Aug. 27 in the Netherlands by Dutch police. He was charged with "multiple murders" that allegedly took place in the Philippines, even though Sison has been in exile in the Netherlands for 20 years. The Dutch authorities claim he ordered the murders in 2003. Sison will be tried in the Netherlands, not the Philippines.

Supporters of the struggle for the liberation of the Philippines immediately condemned the Dutch action as political repression. Bayan USA, for example, organized a protest at the Netherlands' consulate in New York and other locations in the U.S. calling for Sison's immediate



Prof. Jose Maria Sison

release, saying that "behind the actions of the Dutch police is the Arroyo government."

Philippines President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo, who was one of the first national leaders to join Washington in the so-called "war on terror," has waged a persecution campaign against Sison.

Activists from anti-imperialist, anti-war and revolutionary socialist organizations joined the Aug. 29 protest in New York in solidarity with the Philippines revolutionary leader.

—Workers World New York bureau

Don't cry for Brooke Astor

By Stephen Millies

Millionaire philanthropist Brooke Astor was declared virtually a saint by the capitalist media when she died at the age of 105. The obituaries barely mentioned that the Astors were the greatest slumlords in the hemisphere.

John Jacob Astor founded the American Fur Co. in 1808. This first big U.S. monopoly became the greatest exploiter of Native peoples.

A beaver skin bought for a dollar's worth of overpriced goods could be sold in London for \$6.25. Astor's army of fur traders also ripped off Native people by charging up to 400 percent interest on English steel knives and other imported goods.

Everywhere west of Detroit was ravaged by American Fur and its subsidiaries. Astor gave a \$35,000 bribe to Michigan territorial governor Lewis Cass in 1817. Cass later became the Democratic presidential nominee in 1848.

Astor also became a drug pusher. In 1816 he smuggled 10 tons of opium to China on the packet ship "Macedonian" in violation of Chinese laws.

Astor plowed his millions into New York

City real estate. Starting on Manhattan's Lower East Side, Astor bought up property in Yorkville, Harlem and a big part of the Bronx. The Astoria neighborhood in Queens is named after this robber baron.

Native lands were robbed by Astor so that rent could be gouged from African-American, Chinese, Irish, Italian, Jewish, Latin@ and other people. The miser ruthlessly evicted those who couldn't pay. As he lay dying in 1848, John Jacob Astor demanded that a woman tenant be forced to pay back rent.

Astor's \$20 million fortune was the greatest of that time. It was equal to half the size of the U.S. budget.

John Jacob's descendants constantly bought up more property. One hundred thousand people had to pay rent to the Astors or their middlemen. In 1907, 750,000 people were crowded into Manhattan below 14th Street. Twenty thousand people lived in cellars.

Rent continues to be a major source of surplus value—commonly called profit—to ruling-class families including the Rockefellers. According to Deutsche Bank, 30 percent of families in New York City pay at least half of their income in tribute

to landlords. Much of this loot ends up in the banks that often own the landlord's mortgage.

William B. Astor, son of John Jacob, became a partner of the Vanderbilts in controlling the New York Central Railroad. The families' Astor Trust Co. changed its name to Bankers Trust, which has now been gobbled up by Deutsche Bank.

Neither robbing Native peoples nor becoming the biggest slumlords prevented the Astors from becoming the first family of the New York financial aristocracy. As the Roman emperor Vespasian said after he inaugurated pay toilets in the forum, "Money does not smell."

Welcoming racist Reagan

Brooke Astor married into the Astor fortune. Her father, John H. Russell Jr., became the commandant of the Marine Corps. In 1917-1918 Russell was in charge of Marines who occupied Haiti. Haitian resistance leader Charlemagne Peralte was assassinated by a Marine officer in 1919.

It was Brooke Astor who welcomed Ronald Reagan to her New York apartment for dinner after he won the 1980 election.

The former matinee idol and FBI stoolpigeon started his presidential campaign that year in Philadelphia, Miss. Civil rights workers James Chaney, Andrew Goodman and Michael Schwerner had been murdered there by the Ku Klux Klan. Reagan didn't mention these martyrs in his speech. He used the racist slogan of "states' rights" instead.

Brooke Astor may have been an amiable person who might even have had some liberal instincts. She gave away almost \$195 million. But every cent of her charity was surplus value that was stolen from the working class, which includes the unemployed.

Don't cry for Brooke Astor, even if her son, ex-CIA agent Anthony Marshall, mistreated her. She was 105 when she died at Holly Hill, her 68-acre country estate.

Mourn instead for Charlemagne Peralte, who was just 33 when he was murdered, or Patrice Lumumba, who was 35 when he was assassinated by the CIA. Mourn for the miners killed in Utah and construction workers killed virtually every week in New York City. And fight like hell for the living. □

Tribunal to seek justice for Katrina survivors

By Dianne Mathiowetz

Two years have passed since Hurricane Katrina's powerful winds and torrential rains blasted into the Gulf Coast, destroying cities and towns in Louisiana, Mississippi and Alabama, causing the deaths of thousands then and since.

The damage from this monstrous storm was compounded by the breaching of the inadequate and ill-maintained levee system that was supposed to protect the city of New Orleans.

The whole world watched the horror unfold as incompetent and uncaring government agencies failed in countless ways to provide for those affected by Hurricane Katrina, letting the poor, elderly and sick die on rooftops, bridge overpasses, in hospitals and nursing homes, and prisons.

Men, women and children were confined in stadiums and convention centers for days without adequate water,

food, ventilation, sanitation facilities and health services. Eventually they were dispersed randomly to 44 states across the country.

The suffering has continued with two years of broken promises, bureaucratic red tape, corporate and political corruption and cronyism, racist stereotyping and cruel indifference emanating from all levels of government, in particular from the Bush administration.

Two years have passed and still some 10,000 survivors live in cramped, toxic FEMA trailers.

Two years of trauma and loss and upwards of 300,000 people, mostly African Americans, still have not been able to return home because there is not enough affordable housing, insurance claims go unpaid, relief funds are undistributed, the medical, transportation and education systems are in shambles, and most available jobs are low-paying.

A line-up of presidential candidates including Barack Obama, John Edwards and Hillary Clinton are bringing their campaigns and cameras to the Gulf Coast during the days preceding the second anniversary of Katrina in search of the right "photo op" to accompany their sound bite for the evening news.

George W. Bush will also venture into New Orleans to tout the "progress" made since his similar assessment during a quickie stop on the first anniversary in 2006.

They all will no doubt miss the march on Aug. 29, starting in the devastated and neglected 9th Ward and moving to Congo Square, where New Orleans' culture of community and resistance will be in full voice and visibility, demanding the right to return, restitution and human dignity.

Despite the concern professed by these politicians, none is likely to spend a minute at the International Tribunal on



WW PHOTO: MONICA MOOREHEAD

Katrina and Rita, scheduled from Aug. 29-Sept. 2 and designed to hear evidence of human rights violations presented by Hurricane Katrina and Rita survivors as well as legal experts.

But delegations from 12 countries and activists from around the U.S. will be there. They want to hear testimony and view the evidence detailing the failures and crimes of federal, state and local governments to meet their responsibilities to the people of the Gulf Coast.

President Bush, Louisiana Gov. Kathleen Blanco and Mississippi Gov. Haley Barbour have been officially notified that their actions and policies are the subject of the tribunal's inquiries.

Citing the provisions of the UN Charter, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other relevant international agreements, the tribunal organizers, spearheaded by the People's Hurricane

Continued on page 11

Family, supporters work round clock to stop execution

By Gloria Rubac
Houston

A whirlwind of activities and worldwide media coverage is rapidly organizing support for Kenneth Foster Jr., who is scheduled to be executed on Aug. 30. His family and supporters hope the efforts are enough to stop the killing of this talented writer and political organizer.

The Save Kenneth Foster Campaign—a coalition of activists and Foster's extended family—has been working since May 30 to stop the execution of a man who killed no one. Foster was convicted essentially of being the driver of a car who, as the Austin Chronicle stated, was "at the wrong place at the wrong time."

In the week before the scheduled execution, South African Bishop Desmond Tutu signed a "friend of the court" legal appeal for Foster. Activists held signs denouncing the execution in front of a balcony near Rome where the Pope was speaking.

The campaign has held several high-profile demonstrations and other events in Austin and San Antonio. Most major Texas newspapers—including the Ft. Worth Star Telegram, the Dallas Morning News, the Waco Tribune, the San Antonio Express News, the Austin American-Statesman and others—have come out against Foster's execution. These articles have brought public attention to this egregious case, giving the Board of Pardons and Parole and Gov. Rick Perry every reason to do the right thing.

With just five days left before

the scheduled execution, the Foster family traveled to Houston for an Emergency Community Forum on Aug. 25, sponsored by the March to Stop Executions Committee. Tasha Foster spoke first, explaining how difficult it was to leave her spouse after visiting, "with him blowing kisses and mouthing 'I love you' and me wondering if it will be the last time I see him."

Kenneth Foster's 80-year-old grandfather, who raised him from the age of four, stated, "While I have sympathy for the LaHood family, who lost their son, I have to say that Kenneth did not kill their son and the person who did was already executed. How will killing Kenneth make anything better?"

Foster's father described how the family is working around the clock, staying up until the wee hours and then getting back to it early in the morning.

Two other parents also spoke about the cruelty that permeates Texas and its criminal justice system.

Barbara Acuña talked about her son Robert, who was the last juvenile that Harris County sent to death row—despite the fact that officials knew that the U.S. Supreme Court was going to hear the juvenile issue weeks later. Through tears she told the Foster family that she shared her love with them. She also stressed that the people need to take power in this country.

Joyce Guidry, mother of death row prisoner Howard Guidry, also spoke. Howard Guidry was recently retried in Harris

County and returned to death row. Joyce Guidry told the rally that her son was considered a political activist by the system, and that "This mama is going to stand by him no matter what!" She told the Foster family, "We are going to continue to fight for Kenneth and continue till we end the whole system of capital punishment."

Tasha Foster ended the event by performing a song for her spouse called "Walk with Me." The music video is at www.freekenneth.com.

The next day, Foster's supporters in Austin demonstrated outside the church Gov. Perry attends. They received wide media coverage and several activists spoke on camera about why Foster should not be executed.

The following day a delegation of abolitionists and Harlem residents visited New York Rep. Charles Rangel and then held a media conference demanding a stop to Foster's execution, which would be the



Nydesha Foster with her father Kenneth Foster

400th in Texas.

The Texas Board of Pardons and Paroles is to announce its decision at 1 p.m. on Aug. 29. A demonstration has been called in Austin for 5 p.m. at the governor's mansion. A rally will take place the same day in Chicago at Federal Plaza.

If there is no stay of execution by Aug. 30, protests will take place across the state of Texas, including one outside the death house in Huntsville, where the execution is set for 6 p.m.

Foster and John Amador, whose scheduled execution is the day before Foster's, are both on a hunger strike. They have vowed not to cooperate with their executions, including no last meal and refusing to walk to the death chamber. □

Prison system exposed from many angles

By Cheryl LaBash
Detroit

The hall for an Aug. 25 forum on "The Prison-Industrial Complex and Prisoners' Rights" was packed, illustrating how deeply Detroiters feel about these issues, particularly the African-American community and other people of color. A panel of speakers and a film—"Torture: America's Brutal Prisons"—documented that what has happened in Abu Ghraib, Guantánamo Bay and Afghan detention centers is part and parcel of the U.S. government's denial of fundamental human and civil rights of oppressed peoples here and around the world.

From different perspectives, speakers exposed a system that has resulted in more than 2 million people each year finding themselves in the clutches of the U.S. prison-industrial complex. The meeting was initiated and chaired by Kevin Carey

of Workers World Party.

According to Abayomi Azikiwe, editor of Pan African Newswire and an activist with the Michigan Emergency Committee Against War and Injustice (MECAWI), the U.S. has 5 percent of the world's population but 25 percent of those imprisoned, and is one of the few countries that still inflicts the death penalty.

Doreen Bey, a youth advocate, described the war on youth that ensnares 65,000 young people in Michigan each year, leading to prison terms for 4,000. Stuck with court-appointed attorneys, young people are often questioned without their parents or lawyers present. Strong-armed into plea bargaining, they are channeled into a system that collects \$50,000 per child incarcerated. Bey stated that many youth sentenced to life imprisonment can't comprehend what that means and still ask when they are going home.

Continued on the next page

Texans protest 400th execution

A press conference and militant protest were held Aug. 22 in Houston as Texas held its 400th execution in 25 years. Johnny Conners, an African American man from Houston, was put to death as people protested this horrific milestone. "Texas has gone from illegal lynchings, where African people were hung from trees, to legal lynchings, where poor people are lynched by lethal injection," Njeri Shakur, above left, told the media.

WW PHOTO: GLORIA RUBAC



Free the Cuban 5, Mumia Abu-Jamal, L. Peltier! Free Kenneth Foster!

July 1967 and its aftermath: 'You set the scene'

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 more than 7,200 arrests. More than 2,000 buildings burned. The following is the fifth and final part 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.

During the early morning hours of July 23, the vice squad unit of the Detroit Police Department 10th Precinct staged a raid at the United Civic League for Community Action offices located on 12th Street between Clairmount and Atkinson on the city's west side. The police had been notorious for raiding social gatherings in the African-American community under the guise of shutting down illegal drinking establishments known as "blind pigs."

The area around 12th Street at the time was inhabited by tens of thousands of people, many of them youths and young adults. Twelfth Street had a reputation as a business strip where both legal and illegal activity coexisted in an equilibrium that served the immediate interests of those who lived and visited this community. For example, people could hear music in storefront bars and clubs, they could order soul food at restaurants such as Carl's or they could purchase clothing and furniture at the various small businesses on the strip.

Record stores sold the latest hits and pawn shops provided opportunities for people to get quick cash for jewelry and other items. Just north and west of the 12th Street area, enclaves of middle-class and working-class neighborhoods existed where African-American factory workers, business people and professionals lived in close proximity to the working poor, welfare recipients and those involved in the informal economy.

During this time period prior to the rebellion, the city administration under Mayor Jerome Cavanaugh, a young urbane politician who was likened to John F. Kennedy, had gained political office in 1961 with widespread support within the African-American community. In 1965 he

Continued from page 4

Two speakers who have been struggling for a jury of peers for people of color now face serious retaliation for defending this basic democratic right. Judge Deborah Thomas can no longer hear pretrial motions and is facing action to remove her from the bench because she allegedly is anti-police and pro-defendant. Rev. Edward Pinkney spoke to the meeting via phone from house arrest in Benton Harbor. Pinkney was convicted by an all-white jury after an earlier, diverse jury could not reach a decision on politically motivated fraud charges.

Additional speakers included Kay Perry of MI-CURE, which monitors state legislation related to prison reform, and Andrea Egypt of MECAWI, who spoke on the plight of women in the prison system. An urgent appeal was made to stop the pending Texas execution of Kenneth Foster and a report was presented on new developments in the case of the Cuban Five, who are being held in U.S. prisons. □

Abolish the racist death penalty!

was re-elected and his administration fostered the notion of Detroit being a "model city," where people were too busy to engage in the type of civil disorder that took place in other cities around the country.

African Americans had access to industrial jobs within union shops. They had some representation within the United Auto Workers (UAW) during this time period. Although their position within the leadership was subordinated and even marginalized, the African-American membership within organized labor was proportionately higher than in many other areas of the urbanized northern and western cities.

The fact that Detroit exploded on July 23 proved that the so-called "Great Society" and "Anti-Poverty" programs established by the Johnson administration and its political allies were an abysmal failure. With the passage of national civil rights legislation, Africans were receiving a lot less than what had been desired with the completion of these legislative processes. Therefore, the response to the continuing oppression of African people not only alarmed the status quo but set the ruling class on a course to suppress the rising militancy in the communities across the country.

Efforts aimed at neutralizing the growing consciousness of the African masses sought to contain the rebellions through intensified government repression and also economic efforts to meet the immediate need for employment and advancement within the labor market. However, the administration's preoccupation with the war in Vietnam and its unwillingness to allow genuine self-determination and political power within African communities doomed these policy initiatives to ineffectiveness and evisceration.

Need for Black leadership

From the standpoint of the evolving political consciousness of African Americans, many people who had been involved in the protracted struggles during the early and middle years of the 1960s concluded that any genuine social movement aimed at reform or more structural changes in the power relationship prevalent in the society would have to be led by African Americans. Because it was the African-American people who had initiated the decisive phase of the civil rights movement during the 1950s and early 1960s that shattered McCarthyism and anti-Communist hysteria.

In addition, the African-American people had advanced their struggle to encompass urban rebellion and the call for Black power, which not only impacted the political thinking within the United States, but created the atmosphere where pride in a people's culture and national identity flourished.

As a result of these ideological and philosophical developments, a view of democracy, coalition building and style of work altered the way in which Africans and European-Americans interacted in a political context. People began to demand that Africans who participated in multiracial projects have proportional representation and that they should be in a position to exercise veto power over whites no matter how well-meaning and purportedly committed to social change. In other words, it would be the African-American people and their organizations that acted as the vanguard of any real movement for reform and fundamental social transformation in the United States.

One example where this view of proportional representative democracy was revealed took place at the National Conference for a New Politics which was held during Labor Day weekend at Palmer House in Chicago, Ill. James Forman said of the NCNP that:

"At the huge gathering held by the National Conference for a New Politics on Labor Day weekend of 1967, the issues of self-determination, imperialism, and the role of whites erupted and became traumatic for many. The Arab-Israeli War had already created its conflicts. The increasing insistence of Black people that our struggle was against the United States government, and linked to the worldwide struggle against imperialism in general, upset many of the old arrangements between whites and Blacks. The growing awareness that Black people must assume leadership in the revolutionary struggle in the United States had also displaced the former power and social relationships." ("The Making of Black Revolutionaries: A Personal Account," James Forman, Macmillan Company, 1972, p. 496)

Judy Watts in the *Inner City Voice* wrote on the NCNP from the perspective of the simultaneously held Black People's Convention in Chicago. She conveys that:

"Many Black people were lured to the National Conference on New Politics convention at Chicago's Palmer House because an appeal to attend, signed by several leading Black militants, was released to the press by the NCNP. Upon arriving in Chicago, we discovered that not only had some of these leaders denied signing any such appeal, but Black people had been almost totally excluded from the decision-making processes and preparations for the convention.

"Seeing that Black people were only being used to make the NCNP look radical and integrated, a number of Chicago Afro-Americans made plans to provide an alternative, a Black People's Convention which would really serve the interests of our people. All Afro-Americans, both residents of Chicago and those traveling to the NCNP conference were invited and urged to attend the Black People's Convention, which was held at Christ Methodist Church.

"Solidarity between Africans and Afro-Americans was best expressed by representatives of the Pan-African Student Conference and by James Forman, who recently returned from Africa. A revolutionary African poet who was a member of the Zimbabwe African People's Union received a standing ovation for his poems dedicated to Malcolm X and the Black people of America.

"It was brought out by the African speakers that Africans are very much aware of their brothers and sisters in America, despite the lies and distortions used by the imperialist powers to keep them divided."

This notion of proportional representative democracy and the vanguard role of Africans in America were also reflected during the visit of SNCC Chairman H. Rap Brown to Detroit on Aug. 27, 1967. Brown had been under intense pressure from both the state of Maryland and the federal government. He was associated by the corporate media with the wave of urban rebellions sweeping the United States. He did arrive and spoke to thousands of people from atop the Dexter Theater located on Dexter and Burlingame on the city's west side, an area severely affected by the rebellion.

PART 5

The Global Struggle's Link to Detroit's 1967 Rebellion

John Cosby Jr. in the *Inner City Voice* quoted Brown as saying:

"You see brothers and sisters we were brought here to work. Now machines have replaced us, and whitey can operate them. ... You have been replaced, dig it? The man don't need you anymore. You've outlasted your usefulness, Chump.

"The man's solution for us has to do with 13 concentration camps," which Brown said "are now being prepared for people sitting next to you."

On that same day SNCC sent a letter to Oliver Tambo (the then acting president of the African National Congress) pledging moral support and other help as the liberation movements ask for it. According to Brown in a statement published in the Nov. 16, 1967, issue of the *Inner City Voice*:

"In our letter we stated that in the United States we are this day, Sunday 27th of August, 1967, calling on Black people not to buy new General Motors cars for the year 1968. We are fully aware that General Motors is a heavy investor in South Africa and the profits from exploited labor of our brothers in South Africa make this company even richer.

"We are making this appeal in the city of Detroit, the state of Michigan, where General Motors has its main plants. ...

"Remember that the struggle against racism, colonialism and apartheid is an indivisible struggle." (*Inner City Voice*, Nov. 16, 1967, p. 10)

Conclusion

What we must conclude from these concrete examples of the internationalization of the Pan-African struggle in 1967 is that the developments in Detroit and other cities around the country did not take place within a political vacuum. Those who seek to describe the events of July 23, 1967, and the days, weeks, months and even years afterwards as a "riot" or some other criminal aberration with no real lasting social significance are attempting to obliterate key aspects of the collective consciousness of African people and others who cherish human liberation and social justice. It is an attempt by the historical enemies of the African struggle to distort the future prospects for building revolutionary movements that transform concrete realities in which people live and struggle.

The collection and reflection upon these historical processes will assist in providing younger and future generations with the intellectual and political ammunition to wage the continuing battles for genuine liberation and social transformation. These efforts will contribute further clarity in the ongoing intersection of the struggle of Africans in the Western Hemisphere with the movements against neocolonialism and imperialism around the world.

Therefore it is up to the African people themselves to research, chronicle, evaluate, write, publish and disseminate their historical analysis of the events of 1967 and their significance. It is this challenge that the Detroit Oral History Project must assume with vigor and persistence. Oppressed people cannot afford the luxury of others, no matter how well-meaning or not well-meaning they may be, to dominate the way in which their history is presented and interpreted. □

Despite gov't roadblocks

Activists prepare for anti-war surge

By LeiLani Dowell

As momentum builds for a number of anti-war activities occurring in September and October (see box), organizers are appealing for support to overcome roadblocks put in their way by a number of government agencies.

In an action alert sent on Aug. 24, the Troops Out Now Coalition reported that the state was attempting to deny it a permit for an Encampment to Stop the War at Home and Abroad. The Encampment will begin on Sept. 22 and will culminate with a mass march on Sept. 29.

The alert stated: "Three months ago, the Troops Out Now Coalition applied to the National Parks Service for permits to erect an anti-war tent city on the Mall across from the Capitol in Washington, D.C. ... On Thursday, Aug. 23, we were informed for the first time that we would not be allowed to erect the tents because

suddenly it had been decided that all of the areas of the Mall where tents could be erected would be fenced off and would undergo 're-sodding' at the very time that we planned to use the Mall.

"We don't believe that it's a coincidence. ... Everyone knows that September is going to be a crucial month for the struggle to end this criminal war. The anti-war movement has been mobilizing all summer for the fall. ... Apparently, the government has also been preparing for the fall, preparing to silence mass resistance to the war."

TONC asks people to sign its online petition (troopsoutnow.org) to "tell Congress and Bush: Grant the anti-war encampment permit now!"

Sharon Black, who has been in the negotiations with various government agencies, told WW, "The anti-war Encampment will definitely take place. We have the right to be there, the people want to be there, and

we're going to be there. For all those planning to come, it's full steam ahead."

Larry Holmes, a spokesperson for the anti-war coalition, added, "It's not the growing grass on the Capitol Mall that the government is worried about, it's the growing mass outrage over imperialist war crimes, from New Orleans to Baghdad. One way or the other, the anti-war movement will camp in front of the Capitol during the last week of September."

Recently, the government in Washington, D.C., also slapped the ANSWER Coalition with \$10,000 fines for putting up posters for an anti-war march to be held Sept. 15. TONC has called for unity in fighting the state against these attempts to dampen the movement.

Can't stop the momentum

Despite this government interference, excitement about an ongoing "surge" of protests is growing throughout the country—at a time when anti-war sentiment is at an all-time high; when students are returning to campuses for the fall semester, where they will face military recruiters, impossible student loans and the possible reintroduction of a draft; when the 2008 elections loom with no real anti-war candidate; and when Congress will again be voting to spend billions on war and occupation.

This surge began on Aug. 25 in Newark, N.J., in an action organized by the grassroots Peoples Organization for Progress. Other events include a tribunal on hurri-

cans Katrina and Rita, to be held in New Orleans; a women's speakout in several states; a "Day of Outrage" against police brutality in New York; a day of mass action for immigrant rights; and a number of protests against the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.

In addition, activists are preparing to spend a week in front of the halls of Congress as well as the Federal Building in Los Angeles.

TONC describes the D.C. action thusly: "The Encampment is a square of land directly in front of the Capitol, where we will maintain a determined, visible 24-hour anti-war presence as a direct challenge to the politicians—both Republican and Democrat—who voted for the war and vote to continue to fund the war. Activists, military families, veterans, trade unionists and community organizers from across the U.S. are planning to erect a tent city in Washington, D.C., which will be a center of organizing, resistance and action for the week."

The month will culminate with a massive national demonstration on Sept. 29 to stop all wars at home and abroad, which will march from the Capitol to the White House.

TONC reports that more than 70 organizing centers in 32 states will be sending buses to Washington, D.C., for the Sept. 29 demonstration. More than 1,600 individuals and organizations have endorsed.

For more information on all these activities, visit troopsoutnow.org. □

Two-month surge of resistance

What activists are calling a national "two-month surge" of protests and resistance to war at home and abroad began on Aug. 25 and will continue through October. Here is a list of some upcoming activities:

Aug. 29 - Sep. 2: International Tribunal on Hurricanes Katrina & Rita, New Orleans; internationaltribunal.org

Sept. 11: 'Day of Outrage' against police terror New York; December 12th Movement: 718-398-1766, D12M@aol.com

Sept. 12: Mass actions for immigrant rights maydaymovement.blogspot.com

Sept. 15: March Against the War Washington, D.C.; answercoalition.org

Sept. 22-29: Encampment to Stop the War Washington, D.C., & Los Angeles troopsoutnow.org

Sept. 29: March against war at home & abroad Washington, D.C., & Los Angeles troopsoutnow.org

Oct. 27 - 28: Regional anti-war protests around the country unitedforpeace.org

Newark: 'Stop war'

Continued from page 1

sary commemoration of the 1967 Newark Rebellion, a major event in the struggle for racial justice."

Congressperson John Conyers from Detroit spoke about the current congressional bill calling for universal health care. Remarks from Marilyn Clements, national director of Healthcare Now, and an audio-taped message from Michael Moore, the acclaimed director and producer of "Sicko," also demanded health care, not warfare.

Earl Williams—whose son, Earl Faison, was fatally shot by East Orange police in 1999—was joined on the stage by other family members, who also spoke on the pain and anguish of losing their loved ones to police brutality.

Alice Craft-Kerney, a Katrina survivor now living in Newark, spoke on the difficult road many survivors still face in trying to readjust to a new life in other cities following the storm and broken levees in 2005.

James Kelly, whose son was killed in Iraq, blamed Congress for letting the war go on. Mareta Short, president of the New Jersey chapter of the National Organization for Women, spoke on defending reproductive rights and LGBT rights.

Sara Flounders from the International Action Center spoke on the important Sept. 22-29 mobilization in Washington, D.C., initiated by the Troops Out Now Coalition. Other speakers included poet and activist Amiri Baraka, New Jersey Congressperson Donald Payne, a representative from Veterans for Peace and other labor, church, cultural and community organizers.

The march proceeded down Broad Street, the main shopping area, evoking honks and thumbs up of support from many motorists. March contingents included POP, Millions More Movement, Million Worker March, UFCW union members and TONC.

E-mail: mmoorehead@workers.org



Food and Commercial Workers march for justice and peace.

WW PHOTO: MONICA MOOREHEAD

Milwaukee 21

Resistance and solidarity

By Bryan G. Pfeifer
Milwaukee

After months of struggle the Milwaukee 21 have won an important victory. In late July the city attorney's office moved to dismiss the last of the municipal disorderly conduct charges against them, citing a lack of sufficient evidence against those ticketed, Milwaukee-based civil rights attorney Robin Shellow told Workers World.

The case arose out of a March 19 demonstration at an Army recruiting station two blocks from the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee. Youths from Metro Milwaukee took part in the protest, called on the eve of the fourth anniversary of the U.S. invasion, occupation and criminal war on Iraq. During the course of the demonstration a window was broken. As a result, the cops issued municipal citations for "disorderly conduct" to 21 youth.

During the booking process the cops videotaped and audiotaped the youth and confiscated their shoes, cell phones, cameras and one youth's pants. Democratic Milwaukee Mayor Tom Barrett and the media backed up the cops and attempted to rally the public against the youth. Violence-baiting and other attacks against the youth ensued for days in the corporate media.

The Milwaukee Journal Sentinel printed the names of all 21. Bending to the conservative pressure, a suburban library in West Bend refused meeting space access to some of the Milwaukee 21, who for months had held meetings there.

Some in the peace movement also criticized the youth. But other activists in Milwaukee, throughout Wisconsin and nationally saw this attack by the state as an attempt to create a chilling effect by criminalizing the anti-war movement and by extension other progressive individuals,



Earl Williams and family members show photos of loved ones killed by police.

WW PHOTO: MONICA MOOREHEAD

Women's Fightback Day

'Our war for equality is right here!'

Special to Workers World

"African-American women have to be like Fannie Lou Hamer who fought to end segregation. We have to be like Harriet Tubman who led our people out of slavery. We must raise our youth so they will not fight in imperialist wars," said Amina Baraka, freedom fighter and poet, during a rush-hour speakout in New York on Aug. 27.

The speakout was called by the National Women's Fightback Network to demand full equality for all women. "Aug. 26, 'Women's Equality Day,' marks the day, 87 years ago, that women legally got the right to vote in the U.S.," stated the New York NWFN press release. "There was no equality for all women back then, and today there is still no 'equality' to celebrate."

Groups from Detroit to Buffalo, New York to Boston responded to the NWFN call for activities from Aug. 24-27. The NWFN turned the day on its head by protesting the lack of equality due to sexism, racism, homophobia, transphobia and by fighting for economic, social and reproductive justice. The theme of most activities—"Stop the war against women at home and abroad"—was linked to the Troops Out Now Coalition's mobilization in Washington, D.C., to take place Sept. 22-29.

Leading off on Aug. 24, Detroit Action Network for Reproductive Rights (DANFORR) held a spirited picket line and rally. Not only did many young women join the line, but it received a positive response from many passing cars.

Kris Hamel, a DANFORR organizer who chaired the rally, proposed renaming Aug. 26 "Women's Fightback Day so our daughters and granddaughters will really be able to have equality." Chris Cardenas, president of Wayne State University Students for Choice, and Katey Aquilina and Dessá Cosma, organizers with Planned Parenthood, addressed the need for reproductive rights and justice so all women can control their lives. Andrea Egypt with MECAWI (Michigan Emergency Committee Against War and Injustice) drew parallels between the war in Iraq and the one at home.

"We knew when we organized DANFORR that Detroit had to have its own organization fighting in the interests of African-American women," Debbie Johnson, a founder of DANFORR, told

Workers World. "We needed to have that voice for choice in our community. That's why DANFORR has made a tremendous impact in Detroit. Other organizations look to us for activism. We have to make a difference in the lives of African-American women."

Also on Aug. 24, members of the International Action Center held a rush-hour demonstration in downtown Buffalo calling for a fightback to end the Iraq war as well as the war on women right here. They also handed out leaflets linking the two struggles and supporting the TONC national march on Sept. 29.

In Boston on Aug. 25, the NWFN contingent marched two miles with TONC to protest the war at the Bush family compound in Kennebunkport, Me. Along the route the women handed out leaflets to fellow marchers and bystanders linking the issues and carried signs that read "No to sexism and war" and "Money for health care, housing and AIDS."

"We got a really good response from young women when we talked about poverty, racism, lack of access to reproductive services, and made links to Katrina survivors," Maureen Skehan told WW. The Boston WFN has called a speakout on Aug. 29 to mark the second anniversary of that disaster.

"From the Lower 9th Ward to Roxbury, we're coming out in solidarity with the survivors of Rita and Katrina and to speak out against the Katrinalization of our communities," said NWFN organizer Mia Campbell. "This war is costing us billions of dollars. These funds need to be returned to our communities, not five or 10 years from now, but immediately."

Wide-ranging New York speakout

Picking up where Baraka left off at the New York speakout, Viola Plummer of the December 12th Movement declared, "If we women get the absolute determination of a Harriet Tubman, we can do what we want. Each one of us needs to take that point."

Society at UW-Milwaukee and the Youth Action Coalition at UW-Milwaukee, took place at the same Army recruiting station where the 21 had demonstrated. The protest forced the recruiting station to close for the day. These two activist groups also sponsored a forum at UW-Milwaukee on First Amendment and other constitutional rights.

With the assistance of the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW), Workers World newspaper used an "open records request" to obtain the arrest documents, police reports and other information about the 21.

Supporters also sent a letter to the Milwaukee 21 assuring them that many individuals had offered to assist legally and in other ways. The letter stated in part: "With or without the help of an attorney we must fight back. We need to send the

Continued on page 9



WW PHOTO: DEIRDRE GRISWOLD

Brenda Stokely of Troops Out Now Coalition speaks to New York women's rally.

Plummer is at the center of a struggle in New York involving the Black community's right of self-determination. Plummer added, "The issue may be in City Hall today, but it's the same wherever the U.S. tries to oppress people around the world."

Acting the part of a "bag lady," performer and long-time activist for social and economic justice, Vinie Burrows, took the mike: "Poor people are disposable. We have to fight back. After 9/11, people began looking for terrorists in all the wrong places. We need to look in the White House, in the Pentagon, in the corporations. I'm a single mother of three. If I can't feed my children, that's terrorism. We have to stop the war on women and on the poor. The real 'weapon of mass destruction' is poverty. Our war is here. We have to fight back."

Black attorney Evelyn Warren said she used to leave public speaking to her husband, civil rights attorney Michael Tarif Warren, but not after they were both recently brutalized by racist cops. "That happens in this city everyday. We must speak truth to power. We have to demand a change."

Many other issues, both domestic and international, were addressed during the speakout, which was chaired by LeiLani Dowell, a youth organizer with FIST (Fight Imperialism, Stand Together) and an LGBT activist, and Sue Davis, a long-time fighter for reproductive justice.

Among the 20 speakers were Nieves Ayres and Alba of the May 1st Immigrant

Rights Coalition, who called for amnesty for all immigrant workers in this country. Brenda Stokely of TONC and Katrina survivor Christine Gavin-Latham denounced the despicable conditions Katrina and Rita survivors have been forced to endure over the last two years and called for reparations.

Valerie Francisco from FIRE (Filipinas for Rights and Empowerment) talked about the terrible working conditions in the U.S.-dominated Philippines that force many young women to seek work in this country. Cultural worker Nana Soul emphasized that Black women endure both national and gender oppression.

Joyce Chediak, an Arab-American, exposed how the U.S. war and occupation of Iraq has drastically worsened life for women who once enjoyed the highest standard of living in the Middle East, while Ellie Ommani warned of the Bush administration spreading the war to Iran. Rachel Duell, a professor of nursing and researcher on HIV prevention in women, spoke about women with AIDS and the need for universal health care, as did Sharon Eolis representing TONC's Healthcare Not Warfare Campaign.

Members of the NWFN in Chicago had to abruptly cancel their plans for Aug. 23 when a tornado ripped through town.

This article includes reports from Kris Hamel and Debbie Johnson in Detroit, Ellie Dorritie in Buffalo, Maureen Skehan in Boston, Sue Davis in New York and Jill Hill in Chicago.

y win victory

organizations and movements. Supporters of the 21 refused to allow the state to equate a broken window with the genocidal actions of U.S. imperialism in Iraq and worldwide, including domestically.

'The real victory was the struggle'

Beginning within hours after the 21 were issued citations, a group of supporters moved into action for defense work.

The Milwaukee branch of the International Action Center (IAC) put out a call for letters of support. Solidarity statements and letters came in from across the country. The Milwaukee Journal Sentinel refused to print any of these, instead publishing scores of articles, letters and editorials denouncing the 21. However, the IAC published all the correspondence it received at the Milwaukee Indymedia website.

On April 4, an almost five-hour-long protest, sponsored by Students for a Democratic

Horrors! Protesters in Kennebunkport!

By Gerry Scoppettuolo

Some 3,000 antiwar protesters flooded the small ruling class hamlet of Kennebunkport, Maine, on Aug. 25. Their loud message, "End the War Now," rocked the polite, secluded hideaway of the super-rich and could be heard past the Secret Service compound at the entrance to the elder George Bush's multi-million-dollar estate, targeted by the march organizers.

Led by Cindy Sheehan, Iraq Veterans Against the War, Military Families Speak Out and Melida and Carlos Arredondo, whose son was killed in Iraq, protesters came from throughout New England

and the region. The Troops Out Now Coalition and the International Socialist Organization helped organize and promote the rally. Other groups on the march, which stretched for a mile, included Seacoast Peace Response; the Portland, Me., Central Labor Council, Code Pink, many Vets for Peace groups from throughout New England and International ANSWER.

Liam Madden from IVAW called for "active resistance by active-duty GIs currently serving" during the opening rally. Bojah and the Insurrection provided stirring R&B hip-hop musical performance condemning U.S. wars "from Iraq to Palestine." □

EL SALVADOR

Frontline of global struggle over water privatization

By Heather Cottin
San Salvador, El Salvador

It is the simplest thing. In the industrialized world, a billion people do it 10 times a day. They turn on the water. They drink it, wash with it, brush their teeth and cook with it. It is reliable, hot or cold, potable and cheap.

Still, in these countries, people buy bottled water. They don't need to, but they buy it all the same. Bottled water sales in the U.S. alone came to \$8.3 billion in 2003. It isn't special water. Recent reports show that bottled water sold by Coca-Cola, Pepsi and Nestlé, its leading producers, get their product from municipal water systems. Their profit margins are astronomical.

Last year human beings spent \$100 billion on bottled water, three times more than the amount needed to meet the United Nation's goals of giving everyone access to water by 2015. (Michael Blanding, "The Bottled Water Lie," AlterNet, Oct. 26, 2006)

If these companies have their way, they will be taking control over municipal water systems, rivers, lakes and streams all over the world.

They have already started.

Billions of people lack access to safe drinking water. It does not run in their taps. Balancing heavy jugs on their heads, women and children walk long distances in Latin America, the Caribbean, Asia, the Middle East and Africa to bring water to their homes. According to Cornell University researchers, diseases resulting from water contamination cause 40 percent of all deaths worldwide.

In the Third World, as in the industrialized capitalist countries, corporations deplete aquifers and lakes, rivers and streams and sell the water at a huge profit.

Civil rights worker kidnapped in Haiti

By G. Dunkel

Former President Jean-Bertrand Aristide, forced out of Haiti by U.S. agents, is still in exile. Supporters of Fanmi Lavalas (FL), his party, are still in prison because of their political allegiance. Former members of the Haitian Army, which was abolished by Aristide when he was president, hold armed demonstrations demanding its re-establishment. U.N. forces, called MINUSTAH, still occupy the country under the direction of a Security Council dominated by the U.S.

And now Lovinsky Pierre Antoine has been kidnapped. An FL activist and organizer of the September 30th Foundation, he has been a public supporter of community groups in the impoverished but militant neighborhood of Cité Soleil that oppose MINUSTAH. He was slated to run as an FL candidate for a Senate seat in upcoming elections.

On Sunday, Aug. 12, Antoine drove some visiting members of a North American civil rights group back to their rooms. He was supposed to take them to Arcahaie the next day to meet René Civil, who has been in detention for a number of months. Civil is a prominent youth leader,

in countries like Bolivia, the Philippines, the U.S. and El Salvador people are organizing to fight water privatization.

In El Salvador in early July, campesinos and workers from the Faribundo Martí National Liberation Front protested in Suchitoto on the day the country's president, Antonio Saca, came to the city to promote a law that would privatize water. The military who accompanied Saca used El Salvador's anti-terrorist act, modeled on the U.S. Patriot Act, to repress the protest.

Fourteen people face sentences of up to 60 years for marching against water privatization.

Nearby Lake Suchitlán has no water treatment plant; most of the residents pay two dollars for a jug of potable water that might last a family two days. Although El Salvador has many lakes and rivers, industrial waste and sewage pollute the water and no laws exist to protect the environment.

In El Salvador 60 percent of the population is unemployed and the average daily wage is about \$5.00. Privatization has tripled prices for electricity and telephones. Water privatization would be a disaster.

Since the Suchitoto arrests, El Salvador has been tense with repressed anger. On July 25 students protesting at the National University in San Salvador in support of the Suchitoto 14 were brutally put down. The students responded with revolutionary murals and graffiti: "No to the Anti-Terrorist Law." Saca's right-wing ARENA party is increasing military and police presence throughout the country.

Protests against water privatization have spread around the globe, from Bolivia, where militant actions presaged Evo Morales's rise to power, to Stockton, Calif., where water activists defeated a privatization plan. Recently protesters

closely connected to Aristide, and a frequent target of right-wing propaganda.

When Antoine didn't show up Monday morning, the North American group called the police, who then found the rented car he was driving near the airport with nothing but a T-shirt and a few CDs in it.

Kidnapping is so common that the police have a whole procedure they follow for prominent individuals. But they didn't for Lovinsky Pierre Antoine. There were no searches of the known haunts of kidnapping gangs, no public outcry. After a few days, when some North American activists in the Haiti solidarity movement were suspecting a political kidnapping, a demand for a \$300,000 ransom surfaced. (Haïti-Progrès, Aug. 15 to Aug. 23)

Whether this kidnapping was done for profit or out of political motives, or for both reasons, its political impact is the same. It will strengthen the hold of reactionary forces in Haiti, already strong, and make foreign solidarity groups much more cautious when they visit. It is going to be riskier for Haitians to oppose the occupation of their country and the re-establishment of the army and to support the popular protests in poor communities. □

tore up their water bills in Quezon City in the Philippines.

Water privatization is the most cynical and cruelest act. People must have water, so the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund and all the "Free Trade" agreements dictate that the poor must pay for it. But one year's profits from the bottled water industry would provide enough money to build the infrastructure for safe water for everyone on earth.

During a recent struggle against water privatization in the Philippines, one activist said, "Water, like freedom, is essential for humans to live with dignity. Unfortunately nowadays, this life-giving liquid is being traded by profit-driven private corporations, with the collusion of this debt-saddled government, as a consumer product, which means that people's right to water now depends on the contents of their pockets." (GMA-TV News)



Lake Suchitlán

WW PHOTO: HEATHER COTTIN

This fight for water is at the frontline of the struggle against neoliberal capitalist restructuring. And while the water privatizers tout the effectiveness of market forces to take over the world's water supply, the arrests in Suchitoto show that when they can't get what they want through the "free market," they have the brutal capitalist state to fall back on.

Revolutions come when people realize that they have to organize to defend their basic human rights. And what is more basic than water? □

Anti-war forces protest Nat'l Guard convention



Puerto Rico's Socialist Front says no to imperialist war.

WW PHOTO: TOM SOTO

By Tom Soto
San Juan, Puerto Rico

Four days of marches and demonstrations were held here in late August against the U.S. war in Iraq and against militarism in general. Their focus was the Conference of the National Guard Association of the United States, held at the Puerto Rico Convention Center in San Juan.

The conference had the endorsement, protection and financial support of the government of Puerto Rico. Military contractors and providers were invited to display their wares to leading National Guard personnel from all over the U.S.

On Aug. 24, the Socialist Front and the Hostos National Independence Movement held a march from the Capitol building to La Plaza de Colón, where the governor was to hold a dinner for "special guests" attending the conference. Though the anti-war march was modest in size, it nonetheless forced the governor to relocate the publicly announced function.

On Aug. 25, the Puerto Rican Independence Party (PIP) held a spirited picket of several hundred near La Princesa in Old San Juan. Gov. Anibal Acevedo Vilá had planned a dinner reception. Again, it had to be moved to a secret locality due to the protesters.

On Aug. 26, the Alliance Against the

National Guard Convention led by pacifist organizations held a rally in front of the Convention Center under the banner of "On the Move For Peace." Several hundred attended.

And lastly, on Aug. 27, Mothers Against the War held a noontime picket line near the governor's mansion in Old San Juan.

Julio Muriende of the Hostos National Independence Movement, speaking Aug. 24 at the Plaza de Colón, told the crowd: "We are not against Americans who want to visit our island nation in the name of peace, but to organize a convention for the sale of arms is an insult we cannot remain quiet about. ... We want an end to the war against Iraq that has also cost the lives of many Puerto Ricans."

Javier Córdoba of the Socialist Front followed, saying: "The National Guard is part of the capitalist state. ... The National Guard is part of the imperialist army that carries out wars of aggression for the benefit of the corporations ... the same corporations that have come to this convention here in Puerto Rico."

For a whole week the Puerto Rico Convention Center was militarily cordoned off. More than 700 police set up a "secure zone," literally surrounding the convention facility.

Who pays the bill for all these police? The working people of Puerto Rico. □

U.S. occupation creates humanitarian disaster in Iraq

By Sara Flounders

If the full dimensions of the horror the U.S. occupation has created in Iraq were exposed and confronted, world outrage would reach such a pitch that the occupation could not continue.

A huge number of reports that are largely ignored or given only passing mention in the corporate media confirm an unprecedented level of destruction of essential infrastructure, loss of life and massive displacement of people.

There are more than 4 million Iraqi refugees and more than 1 million dead. Seventy percent of Iraqi children are not in school. Yet these reports and statistics do not begin to tell the story of destruction and violence caused by the U.S. occupation.

Iraq, which was a modern, industrializing country before the first U.S. war in 1991, is now under U.S. occupation, facing national catastrophe and disintegration. Its once internationally acclaimed and free health care system is now in shambles. Thousands of years worth of its cultural heritage have been looted and smashed.

From August 1990 to March 2003, during the 12 years of U.S.-imposed starvation sanctions, Iraq still had full literacy and struggled to maintain potable water, electricity and a basic food ration for the population of 25 million.

Now 8 million people, or almost one-third of the population, are in need of emergency aid, according to Oxfam and a network of 80 aid agencies.

The anti-war movement here must focus attention on the reports that expose the all-pervasive violence of the U.S. occupation. Otherwise the corporate media are able to put their "spin" on who is responsible for the violence in Iraq today. Consistently they blame the Iraqi people for the unfolding horror and not the U.S. occupation army.

The corporate media are currently giving extensive daily coverage to the drumbeat coming from U.S. politicians, Republican and Democrats alike, who wring their hands and describe the chaos and violence that would follow a U.S. troop withdrawal. This constantly repeated theme is woven together with coverage of seemingly senseless and sectarian attacks on civilians by "terrorist forces."

U.S. troops are described in every news article as trying to end the "sectarian violence" and desperately seeking to bring security and order.

Resistance to violent occupation

The media's constant focus on seemingly random violence and mayhem, allegedly committed by contending Iraqi militias, is meant to mask the total violence of occupation. It also distorts who the resistance is and what are the primary acts that resistance fighters are engaged in. According to the Brookings Institution Report—Iraq Index, Aug. 23—over the past year resistance attacks of all kinds, including roadside bombings, rocket attacks, suicide attacks and car bombs, have amounted to 4,000 to 5,000 each month, or more than 150 attacks a day.

The report contains a chart showing that the vast majority of the resistance attacks are on U.S. forces and Iraqi security forces, not on civilians. According to this chart, 80 to 85 percent of the attacks target the occupation and its collaborators.

However, to the imperialist army of occupation, the entire Iraqi population has become the enemy and is treated with totally brutal repression and massive destruction.

The latest "surge" has increased the number of U.S. troops in Iraq to 170,000. There are also more than 200,000 "private contractors" or mercenaries. According to Jeremy Scahill, author of "The Mercenary Revolution," these mercenaries answer to no authority or law. The U.S. occupying authority has granted these mercenaries complete immunity from prosecution under either Iraqi law or even U.S. military law. Contractors can interrogate and torture prisoners, gather intelligence, operate rendition flights and kill at random.

The British medical journal *The Lancet* has published two peer-reviewed studies on deaths due to the invasion of Iraq and continuing occupation. The studies in 2004 and 2006 estimated the number of excess deaths caused by the occupation, both directly and indirectly. The *Lancet's* 2006 report reported that the study's best estimate was that 655,000 more Iraqis had died than would have been expected in a non-war situation, as of June 2006.

Another 14 months of even greater chaos and violence have passed since that time, which may well have brought the number

of excess deaths close to 1 million.

U.N. agencies, such as the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees, report that 70 percent of the Iraqi population lacks access to safe drinking water and 80 percent lacks effective sanitation. The World Health Organization has noted increased cases of diarrheal diseases and now cholera due to polluted drinking water.

The Oxfam report states that "health services are generally in a catastrophic situation in the capital, in the main towns, and across the governorates." Forty-three percent of Iraqis are now in "absolute poverty." The unemployment rate is 50 percent. Since the U.S. imposed sanctions on Iraq, many people there have depended on a food ration distributed by the government, and since the occupation the number has grown. But many of the more than 2 million internally displaced people in Iraq cannot get subsidized rations because they are not registered in their new homes.

Many schools are closed and the buildings have been taken over to house the homeless. More than 40 percent of Iraq's teachers, water engineers, medical staff and other essential professionals have left the country since 2003.

Refugee crisis and prostitution

At least an additional 2.5 million Iraqis have fled to nearby countries. Hundreds of thousands have depleted all their savings. About 500,000 of the refugees are school-age children who have limited or no access to education.

Reports say that for many thousands of women, who are now single heads of household, prostitution is becoming one of the only means of feeding their families. The London Independent, The New York Times, MSNBC and other media, along with Amnesty International, confirm reports of growing child prostitution and trafficking of Iraqi children.

Hana Ibrahim, founder of the Iraqi women's group Women's Will in Syria, puts the figure at 50,000 women forced into the sex trade because their husbands and fathers have been killed and they are banned from working legally. There are few options for a family to survive.

Amnesty International's Middle East and North Africa Program described the spiraling refugee population as "a humanitarian crisis that could engulf the region."

Refugee International reports that an additional 40,000 to 50,000 Iraqis flee their homes each month, making this the world's fastest-growing refugee crisis.

Collaborators unable to govern

There is no government in Iraq today capable of organizing or providing any social services at all—not security, health care, schools, electricity or potable water. There are only a handful of corrupt U.S. collaborators, appointed heads of ministries who live in the U.S. Green Zone under U.S. protection. They dare not venture outside. U.S. contractors have found they have no one on the ground in local administration to accept the leaking, faulty projects for which the contractors overbilled the government.

The longer the U.S. forces of occupation stay in Iraq, the greater the destruction and violence. The occupation's only solution is to try to drown the resistance in blood and fragment the society with divide-and-conquer tactics. From the first days of "shock and awe" bombings, this has been Washington's approach.

The benchmarks that the occupation has demanded of the puppet government of Nouri al-Maliki and the Iraqi parliament include signing away all future control of Iraq's oil resources. Such outright colonial demands only increase the determination of the average Iraqi to resist occupation by all possible means.

Iraq more than ever needs an aroused world movement that will stand up to the endless U.S. excuses for continued occupation. A movement that demands an end to all the funds for this criminal war. That is for getting all U.S. troops out of Iraq and the region. That demands reparations to the sovereign Iraqi government that is sure to eventually replace the collaborationist regime so Iraq can recover from the disaster U.S. imperialism has imposed on its people.

Sources used for this article include: The Lancet, Survey 2, Oct. 11, 2006, "The Human Cost of the War in Iraq: A Mortality Study, 2002-2006," by Gilbert Burnham, Shannon Doocy, Elizabeth Dzung, Riyadh Lafta and Les Roberts. Oxfam, "Rising to the Humanitarian Challenge in Iraq," July 2007. Brookings Institution Report, www3.brookings.edu/fp/saban/iraq/index.pdf. UNHCR Refugees figures through March 2007.

Milwaukee 21

Continued from page 7

message loud and clear that the cops can't just round us up. Whether we win in the courts or not, we will win in the streets, as your actions have already shown."

Some of the 21, under parental and other pressures, pled no contest or guilty to the municipal disorderly conduct charges. But the majority decided to be represented by attorney Shellow, who is known internationally for her vigorous defense tactics.

Local and national resistance against the attempted railroading of the 21 was a key component in this struggle, Jenny Peshut told Workers World. Peshut is a member of the Industrial Workers of the World and AFSCME Local 82.

"Even with all of the attacks, the youth fought back, we fought back. As Milwaukee radicals, we believe that this struggle was not just about what 21 youth did on March 19, 2007, but about all of us who fight for freedom and the right to protest. Yes, we won in part because the cops didn't have a case, but the real victory was the struggle. We must always fight back." □

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Michael Vick: criminal or victim?

Michael Vick, the brilliant 27-year-old quarterback for the Atlanta Falcons, pled guilty on Aug. 27 to conspiracy dog-fighting charges in a Richmond, Va., federal court. He publicly apologized to his fans, family, the National Football League Commissioner, Falcons' coaches, teammates and others for his actions.

He is scheduled to be sentenced to a prison term on Dec. 10. He has been suspended indefinitely from playing football. In fact, some media even predict that his football career may be permanently over.

Vick, who is African American, gained national media attention last spring when his associates accused him of promoting dog fighting on his property in Surrey, Va. Ever since the accusations were made, the mainstream media has seized the opportunity to demonize Vick to the extreme, even calling him a "fascist."

After the media reported that Vick had "executed" some dogs that did not perform well while fighting, protesters carried signs that Vick should be "neutered." Others referred to the athlete in even more sub-human terms. Not surprising, sportscasters have stated that in various polls, more Black people view Vick as another victim of racism while more whites see him as a criminal.

It should be mentioned that months before the dog-fighting scandal, the media jumped on Vick as possessing a "suspicious" substance during an airport security checkpoint. It turned out to be nothing illegal.

What is behind this media frenzy surrounding Vick? Does it really have to do with dog fighting or is there more than meets the eye?

First of all, dog fighting did not begin and certainly will not end with Michael Vick. It is but one of many forms of animal abuse—which are seldom reported, whether in a home, pet store or animal shelter. It is also another form of gambling, an addiction that seduces millions of people, including Vick. In a more humane society, addictions would be treated with diverse methods ranging from medical to re-education, not incarceration.

But under this appropriately labeled "dog-eat-dog" capitalist system, those

who suffer from addiction are ostracized, demonized and even imprisoned, especially if they are people of color.

Vick, who grew up poor and then suddenly became a millionaire, will now become super-poor in prison. "All inmates get paid whether they are at the penitentiary or at the camp," said Mike Truman, a public information specialist for the Federal Bureau of Prisons, commenting on Vick's situation. "Their starting salary is 12 cents an hour and it goes to 40 cents an hour." (Atlanta Constitution)

Without a doubt, a racist double standard exists on the part of the media, especially where Black male athletes are concerned. Athletes like Vick, who get to the top because of their enormous talent, are at first put on a pedestal by the media and public and are then expected to stay out of trouble due to their wealth. When white athletes or coaches admit to abusing their spouses, "it is a here today, gone tomorrow" blip on the printed page. But when high-profile Black athletes like Vick or Adam "Pac Man" Jones get entangled in the criminal justice system—whether over guns, domestic violence or animal abuse—their stories dominate the press indefinitely. The media love to treat these athletes as the prime individual examples of all the ills in society.

Did those who are demanding Vick's imprisonment for dog fighting call for a full investigation of the New Orleans police officers who wantonly slaughtered dogs and cats separated from their owners in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina? Not to do so is sheer hypocrisy. New Orleans police officers also shot Katrina survivors for so-called looting.

Violence runs rampant in the U.S. The official institutions of the state commit crimes against humanity every minute of every day, whether in Iraq or at home, where those executed are mostly people of color like young Kenneth Foster, now in the Texas death house. And where has the media called for the arrest and imprisonment of Bush and Cheney for causing the deaths of countless Iraqis, Afghans and U.S. soldiers?

Michael Vick is not a criminal. He is but another victim, like countless others, of a violence-riddled, monstrous capitalist system. □

Imperialist media close their eyes as

Floods devastate Africa's Sahel

By G. Dunkel

July and August saw flooding across Africa in countries just south of the Sahara desert, as well as in Kenya, Uganda and Mozambique. South Africa, which is experiencing the Southern Hemisphere's winter, has seen flooding, too—along with freak snowfalls heavy enough to close the border between South Africa and Lesotho for a time.

While African Web sites and newspapers, as well as the United Nations Information Network, are filled with stories about the floods, the major English-language media in the West have ignored this tragedy. Instead, MSNBC ran a humorous piece Aug. 2 on snow in South Africa. The Washington Post ran a 560-word article Aug. 15.

Half a million Africans are affected. Some have lost their food stocks or seeds for the next crop cycle. Others have seen their houses, made from dried-mud bricks, dissolve in the heavy rain.

Normally, in the rainy season, the bricks melt a bit but people can repair them when the sun comes out. Not this year in many places in the Sahel, a normally semi-desert area just south of the Sahara that stretches from Senegal to Sudan.

Once people lose their homes, they lose access to sanitation and drinkable water. For example, Tintane is a small city in southeastern Mauritania where a flash flood wiped out the water supply, sanitation and houses of two-thirds of its people. They are living in tents and makeshift shelters, none of which have latrines.

The floods destroyed the dam, the health center and nearly 2 miles of water pipes.

The Mauritanian government appealed for international aid to rebuild the town. Libya, Tunisia and Morocco have already promised emergency items, including tents, food, blankets and medicine.

So far, the European and U.S. imperialist countries that have sucked out Africa's valuable resources ever since colonialism and the slave trade are

being conspicuously tightfisted about giving aid.

Even when aid arrives, the Mauritanian government will still have major problems supplying the people of Tintane with water, education and health care. As one of the poorest countries in the world, ranking 154 out of 177 countries in the United Nations Human Development Report and with a per capita income of only \$2,000 per year, Mauritania's infrastructure even before the floods was sorely lacking.

Besides Mauritania, the countries of Senegal, Mali, Burkina Faso and Chad also had major problems with flooding. The water didn't relieve their droughts since it came in torrents that couldn't be absorbed by the soil. Lake Lere in Chad, which is on the Cameroon border, overflowed its banks Aug. 9. As of Aug. 15 people who lived in the area were still finding bodies and wading through the water looking for dry land. Chad ranks 171 out of 177 countries on the UNHDR.

Sudan is an African country often in the news lately because of the conflict in its province of Darfur and because it has become a significant producer of oil and sells a lot of it to China. It has used oil income to make major investments in infrastructure and agriculture. The floods that began there in early July and are predicted to last until mid-September have scarcely been mentioned in the Western media.

This year the rains came earlier than expected and 500,000 Sudanese lost access to clean water. Some 3,086 pounds of chlorine powder and 878,000 chlorine tablets have been handed out to reduce the risk of cholera and other waterborne diseases. The U.N. is warning that as many as 1 million Sudanese could lose their houses and possessions and require food aid as well as water.

The northern part of Nigeria, Africa's largest country, is also in the Sahel and suffered from drought before this year's flooding. Dr. Hassan Adewusi, head of the Department of Forestry and Wild Life, explained some of the causes of the flooding in an interview with the Daily

Continued on page 11

WW Supporter Program reaches milestone

By Brenda Ryan

For 30 years, a small army of people has made sure Workers World newspaper gets into the hands of the workers and oppressed by providing an indispensable weapon: money.

These financiers of the paper are members of the Workers World Supporter Program. Launched in June 1977, the program was intended to give friends who respected the paper a way to help it thrive. And they have done so. With their assistance, the newspaper staff has been able to invest in new technology and reach a vast audience on the Internet. And its reporters have been able to travel to Cuba, Venezuela, Palestine, North Korea, Iraq and other countries around the world to provide a unique perspective on the global struggle against imperialism.

Sue Davis, who has single-handedly run the program since its inception, says members have contributed about \$12,000 per year for the past 15 years, or

close to a quarter of a million dollars over the last three decades. The contributions vary, as people contribute what they can. The basic rate is \$75 per year, the sponsor rate \$100 per year and the sustainer level is \$300 per year. Davis said some give much more while others give the minimum of \$6 per month. Some have also given a special contribution to honor the death of someone they love.

"We value each contribution because it's voluntary," Davis said. "Supporters are a phenomenal resource for the paper."

The program has also enriched the supporters themselves. Davis said it has inspired some to become activists. One supporter in Tucson, Ariz., is now involved in the immigrant rights struggle. And some have become members of Workers World Party. When the program celebrated its 25th anniversary, supporters proclaimed the importance of the newspaper.

"My wholehearted support for the Workers World Supporter Program is due to Workers World's international solidar-

ity for such countries as Palestine, Cuba and the Democratic Republic of Korea," said Yoon Bokdong of Honolulu, Hawaii. "The just struggle against racism, sexism, homophobia and imperialist wars is what makes Workers World a powerful tool in the hands of the working class and the oppressed peoples throughout the world."

Vikki Chenette of Buffalo, Wyo., said that as an educator, she contributes to the Supporter Program to help get vital information to so many people who might not have equal access to alternative media sources.

And Joan Marquardt, a long-time member of the party, based in San Francisco, said that being a member of the Supporter Program for the past 30 years has given

her the opportunity to remain linked to the paper. "During long periods of time when I am unable, for health reasons, to participate in a lot of activities, I can at least keep the paper's heartbeat pumping," she said.

Davis, who has done a mailing to the supporters every month for the past 30 years, says that once people join the program they tend to become lifelong members unless their financial situation becomes difficult. She sends supporters educational material and tokens of appreciation through the year, such as brochures, buttons, bumper stickers and position papers.

"I've gotten to know a lot of great people through the program," she says. □

To join the Supporter Program choose one of the options below:

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EAST TIMOR

Australian troops exposed as occupation force

By John Catalinotto

Recent events in East Timor have exposed the role 1,500 Australian troops are playing there as an army of occupation.

In a political maneuver, pro-Australian officials in East Timor have violated the constitution in order to keep Fretilin, the main party that fought for liberation, out of the government. Fretilin leaders called the maneuver a "constitutional coup" and have opened a popular struggle in an attempt to reverse it.

East Timor, which is about the size of Massachusetts, now has a population of almost 1 million. It occupies the eastern half of an island on the southeastern end of the Indonesian archipelago in the Indian Ocean, about 200 miles from Australia's northern coast.

U.S. progressives know of East Timor mainly for its people's 23-year-long struggle against a brutal occupation by the Indonesian military regime that started in 1975 and was backed by Washington.

Under the leadership of Fretilin, the people of East Timor had won independence from Portugal earlier in 1975 in the aftermath of a progressive revolution in Portugal itself. Following the U.S.-backed Indonesian invasion later that year, Fretilin organized resistance to the Indonesian occupiers.

The Indonesian military carried out a genocidal policy against the Timorese, killing some 200,000 people.

The military regime was ousted in Indonesia itself in 1998. In August 1999 East Timor voted for independence in a referendum. The Indonesian occupiers had to pull out, but their agents in East Timor—organized in armed militias—fought a last-ditch battle against the poorly armed Timorese people.

At the time, many progressives and even Timorese independence fighters welcomed a United Nations intervention force, led by Australia, hoping it would end the fighting and save lives. But capitalist Australia is a junior partner to U.S. imperialism in the South Pacific/

Indian Ocean region, as was shown by Australia's intervention in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Australia defends and protects the interests of imperialist corporations that exploit the raw materials of nearby South Pacific islands, including the Bougainville autonomous region of Papua New Guinea. In East Timor, this means preventing a really sovereign government from ruling in Dili, the East Timorese capital. It also means facilitating the exploitation of oil fields in the seas between East Timor and Australia by imperialist corporations.

The constitutional coup

Using its military and economic power as leverage, the Australian regime has actively undermined Fretilin's position. Australian conniving has succeeded in pulling some former Timorese independence leaders into the imperialist orbit. This includes the current president, Jose Ramos-Horta—who has gone so far as to publicly support the U.S. occupation of Iraq—and the person currently named prime minister, Xanana Gusmao. Their break with the independence movement and collaboration with Australia has undermined the sovereignty of the Timorese people.

Fretilin, which led the independence struggle against both the Portuguese and the Indonesians, retains tremendous popular support. Though Fretilin lost the 55-percent parliamentary majority it had won in 2001, it still was the leading party in the parliamentary election this June 30, winning 29 percent of the vote. According to the constitution, Fretilin should have been invited to name the new prime minister and form the government.

Though Fretilin offered to form a broad government representing all parties, Ramos-Horta violated the constitution and asked Gusmao to form the government with an anti-Fretilin coalition.

In an Aug. 6 statement, Fretilin's Political Commission said Ramos-Horta's invitation to Gusmao was contrary to the constitution and deprived the Timorese people of their choice. Fretilin said it would take all legal actions necessary to reverse this maneuver. There followed mass demonstrations in and around Dili protesting the new regime, with Fretilin slogans calling Gusmao a traitor. Australian troops intervened against the demonstrations.

In a statement on Aug. 21, Fretilin Secretary General Mari Alkatiri denounced the Australian troops occupying his country, saying, "They had better go home because they are not neutral." Alkatiri, a former prime minister, is considered the political leader most committed to defending Timorese sovereignty. He has fought for a better deal for East Timor regarding the offshore oil and is always demonized by the Australian government and the right-wing media owned by Rupert Murdoch.

Australian troops particularly angered the Timorese when they ripped down Fretilin flags and used them to wipe their backsides. Since the flag is not simply a party banner but that of East Timor's liberation struggle, Timorese objected angrily to this insult. Australian authorities publicly apologized, blaming "rogue soldiers." But Fretilin leaders refused to accept Australia's explanation, showing that the Australian intervention has long outlived its welcome in East Timor.

E-mail: jcat@workers.org

Katrina Tribunal

Continued from page 4

Relief Fund, charge the U.S. government with crimes against humanity and genocide.

The multi-day program allows for testimony and evidence to be presented on dozens of issues of concern to the survivors, such as the treatment of prisoners, the abuse of immigrant labor, the conduct of police, soldiers and mercenary forces, and environmental racism.

The tribunal is proof of the determination of the survivors of Katrina and Rita to have a powerful voice in the reconstruction plan for the Gulf Coast.

Under the most difficult of situations during the last two years, many organizations, community associations and individuals have carried out demonstrations, protests and takeovers; initiated lawsuits; engaged directly in rescue and rebuilding efforts; and upheld the interests of working and poor people.

The tribunal will record their heroic efforts to bring a measure of justice to all those whose lives were torn apart by wind and water and then discarded by a

capitalist system that puts profit above people's needs.

Solidarity demonstrations are being held around the world on Aug. 29. The findings of the tribunal will also be the subject of a special program during the People's Encampment to Stop the War at Home and Abroad, Sept. 22-29, in front of Congress.

For more information, go to www.katrinatribunal.org. □

African Floods

Continued from page 10

Trust in Abuja, the capital of Nigeria.

Adewusi said, "Drought has to do with the climate, while desertification is aggravated by people's activities, and if these two are combined, where you remove the vegetation cover of a place and expose the soil to a lot of environmental conditions, farming will become unsustainable and if farming is unsustainable, you can think of the consequence."

Since fuel is very expensive in northern Nigeria, as well as in most other areas of the Sahel, farmers use wood to cook their food and heat their homes on cold nights. This removes the vegetation covering the soil.

A report at the U.N.'s annual World Day to Combat Desertification on June 17 asserted, "By 2025, Africa could lose as much as two-thirds of its arable land compared with 1990 ... due to climate changes produced by global warming." □

Romanian villagers resist mine owners' plans

By Caleb T. Maupin

Rosia Montana is a small village in the nation of Romania. At one time it had jobs for all. Healthcare was provided to all citizens free of charge. There was full employment and many in the town worked in the local mines. Life was not perfect, but the economy was planned under the leadership of the Romanian Communist Party and was not dictated by the profit motive.

This is not the case anymore. Now the people of Rosia Montana make an average of \$3 a day and live in poverty. The main source of income for the people of Romania's countryside is now tourism in the summer and what they can fish or grow for themselves in the other seasons.

In these circumstances, the Gabriel Mining Co. has decided to destroy the town of Rosia Montana and make it the site of a mile-wide gold mine.

Gabriel Mining, which is based in Toronto, Canada, is owned by Frank Timis. According to Dundee Securities, a financial securities firm, he was twice convicted of possessing heroin with intent to sell. (earthworksaction.org) But then Timis realized that, under the new capitalist system now installed in Eastern Europe, he could make more money exploiting natural resources than selling drugs. He now owns oil wells in Europe and some diamond mines in

Africa—an industry known for its horrific conditions.

Timis has now turned his eyes toward the village of Rosia Montana. The soil there contains what is left of a gold vein that once went through the village. The project calls for destroying the houses, shops and schools so the mining company can use the deadly chemical cyanide to leach even little gold particles from the soil and turn it into jewelry for the wealthy of this world.

In the path of this proposed mine are not only 900 homes but also nine cemeteries and eight churches, motivating even the Catholic Church to raise its voice against this project.

The people of Romania witnessed an environmental and economic disaster in 2000 when cyanide used in mining spilled into the Danube River, killing all the fish in 250 miles of the river and its tributaries. Besides destroying an important food supply, the poisonous chemicals contaminated the drinking water of 2.5 million people.

The fish population of Romania has declined rapidly thanks to pollution caused by new privately owned industries. The Romanian government is considering banning fishing altogether, which would make it a crime to do what so many Romanians now have to do merely to survive.

The State Environmental Resource

Center of Wisconsin says there is no safe way to use cyanide for mining. So what does Gabriel Mining propose to do with all the cyanide-laced waste it will produce from this operation? It will build a 1,482-acre "storage pond" in the nearby valley of Corna, where 196.4 million tons of cyanide-laced waste will be stored behind a cement dam.

In the new Eastern Europe, the ideology of communism is said to have been "refuted" and profit is now in command. There are no state committees made of workers and peasants to regulate the activities of mining companies. Those who would work in the proposed mine, if ever built, would have no say in how their workplace was run, or what actions the company would take.

Interviews with people in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union are beginning to show that, while the socialized economy that once existed there may have been greatly flawed, the return of these nations to the rule of private ownership over society's wealth has made life much worse for the majority of the people.

Now a coalition of groups seeks to make sure that Gabriel Mining's plans for Rosia Montana are not put into practice.

"It's been six years they've been terrorizing us into moving," a resident of Rosia Montana told Businesswire. "But we didn't go, and we won't go." □

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OCCIDENTAL PETROLEUM, BP Y REPSOL

Empresas petroleras detrás de la violencia en Colombia

Por Deirdre Griswold
Bogotá, Colombia

En abril del año pasado, el Tribunal Permanente de los Pueblos comenzó una serie de investigaciones sobre el papel de las corporaciones transnacionales en las violaciones de los derechos humanos en Colombia.

Las tres primeras audiencias, que se llevaron a cabo en tres ciudades de Colombia, se enfocaron en 1) cómo los negocios agrícolas foráneos han afectado a l@s campesin@s y al pueblo indígena; 2) el papel jugado por las empresas mineras, y 3) el impacto del desarrollo controlado por las transnacionales sobre la biodiversidad y el medioambiente.

El 3 y 4 de agosto de este año, el tribunal se reunió una vez más, esta vez en Bogotá, la capital, y escuchó testimonios sobre el régimen de terror en esas zonas de Colombia donde las empresas petroleras gigantes han hecho grandes inversiones y están chupando ganancias aún más grandes del “oro negro” que yace debajo del suelo.

Como describimos en nuestro primer artículo, decenas de personas enfrentaron el gran riesgo de describir en detalle a una audiencia en el sindicato de maestros, cómo sus seres queridos y sus camaradas fueron arrastrados en la noche y ejecutados por ningún crimen sino el de haber servido como líderes y activistas de organizaciones civiles: de sindicatos, de campesinos, de cooperativos rurales y de asociaciones del pueblo indígena.

Una acusación punzante

Cuando terminó, los jueces y co-jueces publicaron una punzante acusación del gobierno y la institución castrense, de las empresas petroleras a cuyos intereses sirven, y del gobierno de los Estados Unidos por permitir que sigan estos crímenes con impunidad.

El Tribunal Permanente de los Pueblos

está basado en Roma y ha existido desde 1979. Los jueces presidiendo en esta sesión fueron el profesor de derecho Dalmo de Abreu Dallari de Brasil, un miembro de la Comisión Internacional de Juristas; Marcelo Ferreira, profesor de derechos humanos en la Universidad de Buenos Aires; y Antonio Pigrau Solé, profesor de ley pública internacional de la Universidad de Tarragona en Cataluña, en el estado español.

Les ayudaron cinco co-jueces: Natividad Almárcegui, maestro en el sindicato de la Confederación General de Trabajadores (CGT) de España; Domingo Ankwash, presidente de la Confederación de Nacionalidades de la Amazonía de Indígenas Ecuatorianas (CONFENAE); Deirdre Griswold, una miembro del primer Tribunal Internacional sobre Crímenes de Guerra en 1967, que representó al Centro de Acción Internacional de los Estados Unidos; Ralf Haussler-Ebert, teólogo luterano de Alemania; e Ivonne Yáñez, ecologista ecuatoriana, y coordinadora en América del Sur del grupo Oilwatch.

Esta serie de audiencias se enfocó en el papel jugado por la gigantesca Occidental Petroleum de los EE.UU., British Petroleum, y Repsol, una empresa petrolera española. Después de escuchar a docenas de testigos presenciales de crímenes patrocinados por el estado y de expertos en derechos humanos, y haber recibido por escrito un acaudalado informe de investigaciones sobre la conducta de esas empresas, l@s miembros del tribunal, al final dieron una opinión detallada pero preliminar. La opinión final basada en las cuatro sesiones del tribunal estará disponible a finales de este año.

Los jueces estuvieron de acuerdo con que las tres compañías están siguiendo una política similar en Colombia, la cual es el “saqueo de los recursos naturales y la violencia sistemática contra la población. Esto ha involucrado la destrucción del tejido social, asesinatos y persecuciones con-

tra líderes populares, así como violaciones de los derechos humanos de la mayoría y la destrucción de grupos indígenas”.

El documento resumió los testimonios que habían sido presentados:

“Según las acusaciones, los abusos de estas empresas, que tienen por intención ejercer control sobre la población y evitar cualquier resistencia a sus actividades, han utilizado una combinación de estrategias, entre ellas, presiones al estado para que lleve a cabo políticas que les beneficie, como por ejemplo el minimizar la regulación por parte del estado, flexibilidad en los contratos, privatización de compañías de energía, el otorgar ventajas financieras, y la entrega de más reservas petroleras y de gas; además está la militarización de la vida social, profundizada por la aplicación del Plan Colombia y el apoyo directo dado por las empresas petroleras a las fuerzas armadas, legales e ilegales, y la promoción de la corrupción”.

Plan Colombia es el acuerdo entre Washington y Bogotá que ha volcado mil millones de dólares a las FFAA de Colombia, todo en el nombre de la “guerra contra las drogas”. Vastas zonas rurales han sido “fumigadas” es decir, rociadas con químicos tóxicos, un método que no distingue entre plantas de coca y maizales de una familia.

El tribunal vio un documental conmovedor sobre los efectos de esas “fumigaciones”, que deja a la gente con ronchas y lesiones en comunidades donde hay pocos recursos médicos para curarles o bregar con los posibles efectos nocivos a largo plazo.

Desde que comenzaron los asesinatos y las fumigaciones, muchas familias de campesin@s colombian@s empobrecidos, que se han vuelto refugiad@s por las políticas de su propio gobierno, han huido al país vecino, Venezuela. Gran parte de sus terrenos han sido ya convertidos para cultivos destinados a la venta.

El tribunal determinó que el gobierno de Colombia había “criminalizado” la

protesta social por medio de detenciones arbitrarias y masivas bajo la acusación de “rebelión”. A la vez ha fallado en procesar a las autoridades responsables por crímenes atroces como el secuestro, la tortura y el asesinato.

Uno de los que rindió testimonio, Gustavo Petro, es un senador de la oposición en el Congreso de Colombia. Él describió a la gente detrás de los asesinatos como “aquellos que se visten de senador por la mañana, comercian cocaína por la tarde y dan órdenes a los paramilitares por la noche”.

El tribunal concluyó que los paramilitares “han podido contar con el apoyo sin límites de los poderes económicos y políticos”.

Papel especial de los EEUU

Al determinar la responsabilidad por las violaciones generalizadas de los derechos humanos en Colombia, el tribunal determinó que, además del estado colombiano y las empresas petroleras, el gobierno de los EEUU también ha jugado un papel muy especial, “defendiendo su presunto derecho a intervenir en cualquier país para preservar sus intereses de seguridad, incluyendo el acceso a las fuentes de petróleo, y habiendo contribuido decisivamente por medio de planes concretos, recursos humanos, entrenamiento y financiamiento a la militarización extrema que rodea la explotación del petróleo en Colombia, como ha hecho en otras partes del planeta, con consecuencias nefastas para la población civil”.

No pareció que hubo reportaje noticiero alguno del tribunal en los medios masivos de comunicación en Colombia, a pesar de que asistieron reporteros europeos y asiáticos (al igual que esta reportera de los EEUU). Sin embargo, esto no significa que el gobierno colombiano no estuviera prestando atención a este evento.

En un momento dado, mientras que un hijo y una hija del líder de los trabajadores petroleros Marco Chacón de Barranquilla estaban testificando sobre cómo su padre había sido asesinado, policías vestidos de civiles irrumpieron forzosamente en el auditorio y se pararon en el escenario, enfrentando a la audiencia, portando ametralladoras AK-47. Luego de las protestas de los organizadores, finalmente se fueron, diciendo que habían venido “porque el senador iba a hablar”, algo que el senador no había pedido.

Ahora que el tribunal y l@s much@s valientes testigos hicieron su trabajo, queda que los movimientos progresistas, especialmente de l@s trabajador@s que cada vez más son explotad@s por las transnacionales dondequiera que estén, traigan la solidaridad internacional en contra de estas corporaciones monstruosas y sus sirvientes en el estado.

Deirdre Griswold fue una de los co-jueces en el tribunal.

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