

MUNDO OBRERO

Represión en Nueva Orleans y Haiti 12

EDITORIAL

Disaster has a name: capitalism

None of it can be hidden any more, not after Katrina. Not the blatant racism, not the failure of the richest county in the world to have a plan to save people in a major disaster, not the feeding frenzy of big corporations when they smell blood in the water.

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No Justice, No Peace!

Katrina survivors deserve reparations

By Monica Moorehead

The Oct. 15 rally of the Millions More Movement, with its focus on the Gulf Coast crisis, could not have come at a more opportune time in the U.S. This mass gathering will, no doubt, help to shine a humongous spotlight on the central issues of racism, national oppression and poverty, especially in light of Hurricane Katrina.

The winds and flooding caused by Hurricane Katrina did more than physically destroy countless lives and homes throughout the Delta region, including in Biloxi, Miss., Mobile, Ala., and especially New Orleans. Millions of people here and worldwide were deeply horrified to see the insensitive manner in which the Bush administration as well as local and state officials left tens of thousands of poor people, the vast majority of them Black, to suffer and die needlessly during and after Katrina hit, especially in New Orleans.

No other single event in recent U.S. history has more forcefully unmasked the heinous reality that national oppression, a devastating combination of white supremacy and poverty that impacts people of color disproportionately, does exist inside the wealthiest, most powerful, imperialist country in the world. This is what really lies beneath the collective negligence of those in power.

The Katrina crisis helped to expose for so many just who are the haves and have-nots in society. Katrina showed that the have-nots are not just individuals in the ones or twos, or even in the hundreds or thousands, but in the millions. Not only are the have-nots the poor—officially 37 million people who live in poverty and extreme poverty—but many are African American, Latin@, Arab, Asian and Indigenous, out of proportion to their numbers in the overall population.

And sitting on top of the have-nots are those who own and control everything in society, those consumed with capitalist greed—the ruling class. They are the Fortune 500 CEOs—an exclusive club of multi-millionaires and billionaires, mostly white, straight males who worship making profits, not serving human needs. And those who occupy the White House, the U.S. military hierarchy and other seats of power are willing servants to the ruling class.

For African-Americans, Latin@s and other people of color, enduring racist oppression in its overt and covert forms has become a fact of life for many generations. The videotaped brutal beating of Robert Davis, a 64-year-old African American retired teacher, by racist New Orleans cops is an all too familiar reminder that racism is, as the old saying goes, "as American as apple pie."

The White House and the profit-hungry corporations they represent have made it clear through their actions that Black people, immigrants and the poor, including whites, will not be welcome back to New Orleans. Thanks to their hostility towards the poor and Black people, they want to use the Katrina tragedy to transform New Orleans into a playground for mainly affluent whites. That can *not* be allowed to happen. In fact, many Black activists from around the country, especially in the South, have quickly come together to say no to this racist gentrification plan.

Grassroots redevelopment plan needed

These Black activists, including leaders of Black Workers for Justice, Million Worker March Movement, Community

Continued on page 6

Police run wild in New Orleans

By Larry Hales

The state repression in New Orleans, especially against African-American people, continues to intensify in the aftermath of the Katrina catastrophe. For instance, reminiscent of the videotaping of the 1992 brutal beating of Rodney King at the hands of four white Los Angeles cops, a similar incident has now occurred in New Orleans.

On Oct. 9, an Associated Press television producer captured on videotape two white cops beating 64-year-old Black retired school teacher, Robert Davis. A third cop shoved the producer and tried to seize the tape from him. The tape has been made available for the whole world to see. Davis was arrested for public intoxication, assault and resisting arrest. Davis stated that all the charges against him were false and that he will be seeking compensation.

The racist cops who attacked him have been put on leave without pay. The police have announced an "investigation" into the incident, which will most likely amount to a slap on the wrist for the cops.

Even though the big business media could not ignore what the tape showed, they are clearly trying to whip up sympathy for these cops in general to offset the terror that the police have unleashed on the Black and poor population. The media are excusing police brutality by dwelling on the alleged post-traumatic stress they are suffering. But what about the real post-traumatic stress that the survivors of Katrina have had to endure,

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A National Day of Absence December 1 The 50th Anniversary of ROSA PARKS' Arrest Against Poverty, Racism & WAR

No School - No Work - No Shopping
Marches & rallies in cities across the country

- Bring the troops home now
- Justice for Katrina evacuees
- Jobs at a living wage
- Military recruiters out of our schools
- Cut the war budget - not healthcare, education & housing

To find out what's being planned in your area or to help plan a December 1 activity contact: Troopsoutnow.org or call 212 633-6646. You can endorse online, or email your endorsement to actioncenter@action-mail.org

The Rosa Parks Nationwide Day of Absence is sponsored by more than 1000 national & local organizations & activists, including the Troops Out Now Coalition, the Million Worker March Movement, NYC Council Member Charles Barron, the National Black Teamster Caucus, Black Workers For Justice, Artists & Activists United For Peace, Harlem Tenants Union, New York Labor Against The War, BAYAN, So. Jersey Coalition for Peace & Justice, Fanmi Lavalas, Black Waxx, Arab American Civic Organization, Queers for Peace & Justice, FIST and many more.

Counter-recruiters fight back at Holyoke

By Bryan G. Pfeifer

More than 100 students at Holyoke Community College and their allies in Western Massachusetts marched and rallied on campus on Oct. 6 to protest the "banning" of student Charles Peterson, as well as the U.S. war on Iraq and military recruiting on campus.

Calling the protest after its members were brutalized and Maced by campus and state cops Sept. 29, the HCC Anti-War Coalition hand delivered its five key demands to college president William Messner.

The demands are: the immediate lifting of the ban on Peterson; an immediate, unconditional public apology from the college; a pledge of non-retaliation against activists; a thorough and impartial investigation; and a ban keeping military recruiters off campus. The Anti-War Coalition also held a press conference Oct. 3 at Holyoke City Hall expressing these demands.

A police riot

Over 30 multinational lesbian, gay, bi and trans students and allies had protested Army National Guard recruiting at the HCC student cafeteria Sept. 29. Another focus was the Pentagon's bigoted "don't ask, don't tell" policy that essentially bars LGBT persons from enlisting—in violation of the college's and the state's non-discrimination laws.

After menacing the students by ripping a placard from one and brutalizing other students, campus and state cops dispersed the counter-recruitment demonstrators. At least 20 local and state police in riot gear and gas masks arrived with boxes labeled "gas masks." One student claimed a group of state police pointed guns at him.

The day after he was Maced and assaulted by police at the counter-recruiting action, two state police officers visited Peterson at his home and told him he was banned from campus and would be arrested for trespassing if he entered public HCC property. Peterson is vice president for academic affairs on the Student Senate and is employed at HCC.

Many progressive individuals and organizations from all over the world issued statements of support for the brutalized students.

Cindy Sheehan, the Gold Star mother who confronted George W. Bush in Crawford, Texas, wrote, "I am appalled that students exercising their (fully sanctioned) rights to free speech and to peaceably assemble were abused by law enforcement officials. The right to patriotically dissent from our government is a sacred right and these students should be given commendations.... They were claiming their places in our democracy. The people who mistreated them should be the ones who are being investigated for their brutality and heavy-handed over-reaction, not the students." (www.campusantiwar.net).

At the Oct. 6 protest, Messner said Peterson has been "invited" to campus to "talk" to campus officials, but to date he hasn't been reinstated. And the college is waffling on banning campus military recruitment, claiming it would lose significant federal funding.

The Anti-War Coalition says this appeal to funding is just a ruse to deflect criticism from the administration's support of the U.S. war in Iraq and its ties to the Pentagon through research contracts. It's also a stalling tactic by an administration that hopes support for the anti-war students will quickly wane, say the students.

The Western Mass International Action Center/Troops Out Now Coalition issued a statement in support of the students which was e-mailed to hundreds on its e-mail list serve. This coalition also distributed dozens of four-page TONC broadsheets at the Oct. 6 protest. They were well received by most low-income and students of color at HCC.

HCC has over 6,200 students, including 25 percent students of color. Many are from Holyoke, the poorest city in Massachusetts with a 50 percent Latin@ population.

Twenty-nine soldiers from Massachusetts and 100 from the Northeastern states have died in Iraq. Many in the National Guard come from what used to be heavily unionized marine and manufacturing areas such as Holyoke. Most were between the ages of 18 and 32 and joined the military to support themselves and/or their families economically or for college funds or opportunities. (www.boston.com)

The Anti-War Coalition is asking supporters to call HCC President William Messner at (413) 552-2222 and/or send letters by faxing (413) 534-8975 or e-mailing wmessner@hcc.edu to express support for their demands. □



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LOS ANGELES

Fri., Oct. 28
 Eyewitness Report from Haiti. John Parker will report from the delegation, led by Ramsey Clark, that went to Haiti in early Oct. Video footage from Haiti. 7:30 p.m. At IAC, 5274 W Pico Blvd #203. For info (323) 936-7266.

Sat., Oct. 29
 Workers World Party Marxism class. 3 p.m.-5 p.m. For info (323) 936-1416

NEW YORK

Thu., Oct. 13
 Workers World Party Meeting: The Iraqi resistance & its worldwide support. Speaker: John Catalinotto, a WW newspaper managing editor who recently participated in an international conference held in Rome in solidarity with the Iraqi resistance. 7 pm. (Dinner at 6:30) At 55 W.

17 St., 5th Fl., Manhattan. For info (212) 627-2994.

Sat., Oct. 22
 Workers World Newspaper Public Forum: Forging a United Front between the Black liberation, workers' and anti-imperialist struggles; Assessing the Millions More Movement. See ad on page 11 for more information, including list of panelists. 3 p.m. At New School, 66 W. 12 St., Manhattan.

WASHINGTON, D.C.

Wed., Oct. 19
 IAC forum: Connecting the anti-war movement with the struggle for Black liberation. Featuring: Tariq Khan, student activist & counter-recruiter; Dustin Langley, Troops Out Now coalition; Spirit of IAC-DC. 7 p.m. At 1525 Newton St. NW. For info (202) 232-0057.

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This paper is for you

Here's what Clarence Thomas, a West Coast union leader, has to say about Workers World newspaper: "The Million Worker March Movement office in Oakland receives

a weekly bundle of Workers World newspapers because this newspaper has helped to facilitate the MWMM's efforts to present an independent voice by providing consistent coverage on our political positions on fighting racism and sexism inside the labor movement, the recent split inside the AFL-CIO, the Katrina crisis and its impact on the Black nation, our visit to Houston to hear and speak to Katrina survivors and our support for the Millions More Movement, including our historic meeting with Minister Louis Farrakhan.

"There is no other way that we could have reached a broader layer of workers and activists on these issues and more if it weren't for the support of Workers World newspaper, and our membership appreciates this. It's important for labor to have its own media because it is important for workers to speak in their own name."

Thomas is a co-chair of the MWMM as well as an Executive Board member of Local 10, International Longshore and Warehouse Union.

Whether you're a worker, a student, retired, unemployed or an anti-war activist, or just someone who believes in equal rights for all the oppressed, this newspaper speaks for you. You can get bundles to keep your co-workers, neighbors and friends informed.

For details, contact us at Workers World, 55 West 17th St., New York, NY 10011, phone (212) 627-2994, or send an email to bundles@workers.org. □

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

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

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Somerville meeting reveals widespread racial profiling

By Gerry Scoppettuolo
Somerville, Mass.

When local police assaulted five Black youth last April in this Boston suburb, they struck a rock of resistance. The five young men, all high school students, have endured, along with their families, unjust expulsion from school even before their cases are heard and have had to spend thousands of dollars for lawyers to rebut a racist frame-up by the police.

But the community fightback organized by the Somerville 5 Defense Committee has resulted in the struggle against police violence becoming something more. A Community Speakout Against Racial Profiling and Police Brutality was held on Oct. 4 at the Somerville Public Library.

An overflow audience of people of color and working class whites filled the room. One by one the stories of racial profiling and police brutality and frame-up were told by youth and families.

The meeting was chaired by Bob Traynham from USWA Local 8751 Boston School Bus Drivers Union. A featured speaker was Brother Rodney X from the Nation of Islam in Boston, who spoke of the link to New Orleans. He stated, "Katrina was racial profiling of a whole people. All great movements like yours start small. The system of white supremacy comes out

of poisoned minds and it can be stopped."

The two sons of Carol and Ralph Anderson were among the five youth falsely arrested on April 20. Their parents told the audience, "Our normal family life became a living nightmare overnight.... It [racial profiling] can happen to anyone. My sons' story is another story for thousands, maybe even millions of young men of color in this country. We must unite and fight back and keep fighting."

Somerville resident Jenny Rodriguez spoke out about how her husband was falsely arrested in 2000 in front of their children and charged with drug dealing. The family had to sell their house to pay for legal defense and subsequently had all charges overturned. The family is now suing the police.

A young Haitian man told how, of a group of 15 Haitian friends, he was the only one left who had not been arrested or deported in the past two years because of false police charges. A 17-year-old African American told of being expelled from nearby Watertown High School on unproven police charges and forced to search for months for a school that would take him.

According to police statistics, over 1,700 youth were expelled last year in Massachusetts, merely on the basis of being charged with a felony. Of this number, 300



WW PHOTO: LIZ GREEN

Somerville 5 youth and their parents at Oct. 7 meeting

never went back to any form of school.

The mood of the room was summed up by Josephine Brown, president of Local 381 Laborers Union and one of only a handful of African-American union presidents in Massachusetts: "The prison system is a business, a pipeline from the

streets to the jails. They make it easier for kids to sell drugs than to lead a normal life. We've got to fight back. Oppression anywhere is oppression everywhere!"

The meeting ended with organizing to picket Cambridge Superior Court and to plan future meetings. □

Three police shootings in 30 days

Community demands justice

By Martha Grevatt and Susan Schnur
Cleveland

On Aug. 30 at 5 a.m., Cleveland police invaded the home of 15-year-old Brandon McCloud and stormed up to his bedroom. They then shot him 10 times, claiming he had been hiding in the closet and lunged at them with a knife. His family, however, insists he was sleeping in his bed. Bloodstains on the bed linens back up the family's version of events.

One month later to the day, Laray "Larry" Renshaw was chased down, shot and killed in the stairwell of an apartment building, allegedly while involved in a drug deal. Renshaw's killer, Patrolman John Franco, says the 36-year-old man tried to grab his gun. Renshaw was unarmed.

Between these two cold-blooded killings, Cleveland police also shot and wounded a third African-American male.

The community is fed up. Renshaw's killing nearly sparked a rebellion in the neighborhood. Crowds of youth surrounded the cops; some were heard saying, "Next time we'll shoot back." A local imam urged restraint. His advice was heeded—for the moment.

Hundreds took to the streets two days later, marching, blocking streets and chanting, "Who killed McCloud? Police. Who killed Renshaw? Police. What do we want? Justice! When do we want it? Now!" The next day the protest moved downtown as angry residents marched into City Hall to demand justice. On Oct. 8, Renshaw's relatives were among the crowd demanding answers at a meeting sponsored by Mayor Jane Campbell.

"Accentuate the positive" seemed to be the message beaming from the mayor, who had the incredible effrontery to say that prior to these three incidents, the city had gone 14 months without a fatal police shooting. The meeting announced the city's hiring of a so-called expert on reducing the use of deadly force.

The "expert," John Timoney, has been involved in the brutal repression of anti-

globalization protests, most recently in Miami. He was previously employed with the New York and Philadelphia police—not exactly a glowing recommendation. He brags that while fatalities in Miami are down, arrests are up. His main message is to extol the virtues of Tasers—"stun guns"—without acknowledging the growing number of deaths associated with their use.

Those challenging city officials from the audience included relatives of Renshaw, Craig Bickerstaff and others killed by police in recent years. Other speakers included community activists Abdul Qahhar and Art McKoy, whose organization "Black on Black" helped organize the marches, and Cleveland State University professor Ronnie Dunne, whose academic study of racial profiling here points the guilty finger at this city's police. Officer Franco's arch-racism was documented by McKoy, who spoke recently with a white couple in the neighborhood where the cop lives. This couple told him that Franco harassed them repeatedly for renting to a Black family.

A concerned mother explained the anger of the youth: they have no jobs, their parents have no jobs, and the cops treat them like dirt. In fact, the most visible symbol of the poverty in the East 140th/St. Clair neighborhood is a huge vacant field, the former site of the General Motors' Fisher Body plant. Over 20 years after its closing, nothing has been built there to replace even a fraction of the jobs that fed this once-thriving community.

Just over a year ago, while Vice President Dick Cheney and Democratic vice presidential candidate John Edwards were in the city pretending to debate the issues, statistics came to light calling Cleveland the poorest city in the country. With growing poverty, joblessness, overcrowded schools, police brutality and the not-so-distant memory of racist disenfranchisement during the 2004 presidential election, No amount of police terror will stop the community's thirst for justice. □

Bloomberg disses Harlem's Apollo

By Stephen Millies

No bombs were found in baby carriages in New York City on the weekend starting Friday, Oct. 7.

Thousands of cops flooded the subways. Troops armed with loaded M-16s patrolled Pennsylvania Station because of an alleged threat of strollers carrying explosives. The hemisphere's busiest train depot was shut down for several hours.

All this even though Russ Knocke, a spokesperson for Bush's Homeland Security Department, had expressed "very serious doubts" over whether any "terrorist" danger existed.

That didn't stop New York Mayor Michael Bloomberg from trying to scare the daylights out of people. New Yorkers are asking whether the billionaire mayor was just looking for favorable headlines while diverting attention away from criticism over his ducking out of a debate with his election opponents at Harlem's world-famous Apollo Theater.

The capitalist media conferred sainthood on crudely racist Rudy Giuliani following 9/11. So why shouldn't media tycoon Bloomberg try to be re-elected through terrorist alerts?

Michael Bloomberg should have showed up in Harlem, if only out of respect for the memory of Alberta Spruill, the 57-year-old Harlem resident who died of a heart attack on May 16, 2003, shortly after cops threw a concussion grenade at her door.

Less than a week later, Ousmane Zongo was gunned down by a police officer in a warehouse where the unarmed Burkina Faso immigrant repaired African crafts. Timothy Stansbury Jr. was killed on Jan. 25, 2004, in Bedford-Stuyvesant's Louis Armstrong Houses by Officer Richard Neri, who claimed he was "startled" by the Black teenager.

This terrorism took place during

Bloomberg's first term as mayor. Now he's seeking a second term.

Forbes magazine estimates that Bloomberg has a fortune of \$5.1 billion. According to the CIA's World Fact Book, that's a larger amount than the Gross National Product of Burundi, which has 6.4 million people.

If this billionaire gave \$10,000 to every one of the 100,000 people stranded in New Orleans, he'd still have 80 percent of his wealth left.

The 40th richest person in the United States actually vetoed a bill to clean up lead paint in apartments. Bloomberg said it would cost landlords too much money. Real estate interests claimed "only" 5,000 children suffered from lead poisoning.

Every year 5,000 kids, overwhelmingly Latin@ and African-American, were being brain-damaged in New York City because of lead. City Council member Charles Barron led a struggle that overrode Bloomberg's veto.

Bloomberg doesn't have to worry about lead paint in his private mansion at 17 East 79th St. in Manhattan. Or his 26-acre estate in Westchester County.

Any remaining lead paint was presumably removed during a \$10.5-million rehab of Bloomberg's oceanfront home in Bermuda. Mayor Mike also has an apartment in London's Cadogan Square and a condominium in Vail, Colo.

Every night 10,000 people sleep on New York's streets or in shelters.

Even The New York Times is concerned about Bloomberg spending \$50 million so far on his re-election. In 2001 he spent \$75 million of his fortune, or \$105 per vote. A lot of money—but the rewards he has delivered to his fellow billionaires come to so much more.

So when Bloomberg cries "terrorist," the people *should* be on alert—and watching his hands, not his lips. □

After hurricanes

Labor shortage sows seeds of class struggle

By Milt Neidenberg

They're coming back to New Orleans. The lure of jobs is a strong incentive. An extreme shortage of skilled and unskilled labor exists there and in the Delta region. A strategic center of world trade and commerce and a major hub, it supplies oil and natural gas to many parts of the world as well as importing them. Almost half of the country's oil refinery capacity is concentrated on the Gulf Coast. Much of its output is transported on the Mississippi River.

The Gulf ports are conduits for farm products and many other commodities that move in and out of the country. Racist criminal negligence by the Bush administration drove out working poor and oppressed families, overwhelmingly Black. Now the ruling class is desperate for labor to rebuild the economic infrastructure in New Orleans and the Gulf Coast that was destroyed by hurricanes Katrina and Rita.

The Washington Post on Oct. 8 touched on one aspect of the labor shortage and its consequences. Headlined "Labor Crunch Stalls Katrina Recovery," the article describes the difficulties experienced by the fortunate ones, primarily white and well off, who can return to homes still standing in New Orleans: "As people come back ... they are finding they need much more than electricians. Those fortunate enough to own homes that were not destroyed by wind or flood need roofers, air conditioning technicians, plumbers, carpenters, mold-removal specialists, flooring experts and general contractors. The problem is that while plenty of unskilled laborers are piling into town looking for cleanup and demolition work, there is a serious shortage of specially trained laborers." Yes! The unskilled labor coming back is Black, Latin@ and white, including immigrants, primarily Mexican.

More than 1.3 million Mexican workers lived in the areas hit by hurricanes Katrina and Rita, many undocumented. The floods and winds swept away the records. There are no footprints to determine who has no papers. Although these workers are fearful of seeking aid from the Federal Emergency Management Agency, the Department of Homeland Security—

which oversees FEMA—has waived any sanctions against employers for knowingly hiring undocumented workers.

"Labor and immigration experts predict more undocumented workers will move to the Gulf Coast because of the relaxed rules and available demolition and construction jobs," reported Edwin Garcia of the Knight Ridder News Service from Biloxi, Miss. (Fort Worth Star-Telegram, Sept. 30) The majority of Mexican workers who settled in southern Louisiana and Mississippi have worked in maintenance jobs at coastal casinos. The women got house-keeping jobs in hotels. These workers, who were paid \$7 an hour before Katrina hit, are now being rehired at \$8 an hour and above, according to one Mexican worker quoted by Garcia.

The profit-hungry companies who got the no-bid contracts are bound by the laws of supply and demand. In a moment of labor shortages, they are forced to pay prevailing wages, Bush's suspension of the 1931 Davis-Bacon Act notwithstanding. With union organizers on the scene who are sensitive to national oppression, the potential is promising to raise the living standards of millions in "right to work" states in the entire Gulf Coast and New Orleans region.

The Bush administration can't escape the huge costs of rebuilding the Gulf Coast and restoring its strategic position in global trade and commerce. However, Bush thinks he can utilize the same approach that has served up billions in no-bid contracts in Iraq to his corporate buddies. His economic advisers have designed a Gulf Opportunity Zone program that

provides waivers to non-union, sweatshop primary contractors and sub-contractors. This mirrors the "enterprise zones" the U.S. has set up throughout the world to exploit labor and resources.

The intent is to avoid paying prevailing wages set by law, to ignore health and safety statutes, and to provide write-offs, tax relief and bonuses for businesses that invest in the recovery and reconstruction of the Gulf. According to a Labor Department memo, federal contractors are relieved of all legal affirmative-action requirements to hire "minorities, women, Vietnam veterans and disabled people on Katrina-related projects ... for three months."

True, the Bush administration is on the offensive to put its corporate cronies in charge of a massive long-term reconstruction program, but labor shortages will mean skilled and unskilled jobs that the corporate scoundrels need to fill. It is too early to cite figures, but a movement has begun to organize and mobilize Black workers, their communities and other allies to demand that recovery and reconstruction be focused on areas destroyed by Katrina and Rita. Solidarity Centers are being set up and organized by Black leaders. The AFL-CIO and the Change to Win Federation also have organizing centers in the area.

Black leadership and self-determination

Demands are overwhelming for the right to return, decent jobs, housing and health care so New Orleans and Gulf Coast families can live in dignity and security.

This perspective is resonating among the Solidarity Centers, in New Orleans and throughout the Gulf Coast. Black leaders from Community Labor United, the People's Hurricane Relief Fund, the Black Activist Network and others are preparing the way. The right of return to safe and livable homes and communities is an indispensable part of a more comprehensive program of self-determination.

Millions of union members—especially the lower paid who tend to be from oppressed nationalities, women and in service industries—are angry at the Bush administration and FEMA for their criminal and racist behavior. They identify with the plight of those Black families, many of them led by women, who struggled to keep their children and loved ones together during the Katrina catastrophe. It is incumbent on the organized labor movement—the two labor federations—to provide resources and support.

The storm clouds of inflation and unemployment hover over the capitalist economy. The Bush budget for fiscal 2006 plans to pay for the costs of Katrina and Rita by cutting Medicare, Medicaid, food stamps and other entitlements and discretionary programs. Corporate America is slashing wages, health care and pensions.

The road to resistance lies in connecting the dots of imperialist wars with the war at home. The immediate need is to build a united front with those Black forces now on the front lines in New Orleans and the Gulf Coast. Fresh winds of struggle will blow, clearing out the social debris of a decadent system predicated on racism, poverty, class oppression and war. □

FAA report confirms concerns of striking airline mechanics

By Sue Davis

It's a miracle there hasn't been an accident since the trained mechanics who service Northwest Airlines planes went on strike on Aug. 19 to defend their jobs.

The most recent batch of Federal Aviation Association reports confirm what the machinists, represented by AMFA Local 33, predicted. There are "training deficiencies among the replacement workers, thin staffing, maintenance blunders and mistakes in recording aircraft repairs." All these things jeopardize passenger and crew safety.

Eleven FAA reports, filed from Aug. 20 to Sept. 12, detail various violations. For instance, a Sept. 3 report reads: "Aircraft in for an 'A' inspection. Stabilizer trim check failed. Stabilizer brake failed; no parts in stock; the mechanic working the stabilizer trim problem had only two weeks of 757 experience."

Another Sept. 3 report reads: "Captain's side windshield anti-ice system inoperable and maintenance had been deferred. Windshield was approximately 65-70 percent covered with fog, rendering it very difficult to see during taxi—clearly a safety hazard."

According to AMFA Local 33 President Ted Ludwig, Northwest has not been filing required electronic maintenance reports "in order to hide its inability to perform aircraft maintenance in full compliance with regulations."

"It's time for NWA to stop cutting corners on maintenance and passenger safety," reads a statement posted Oct. 9 on the union's website. "They need to negotiate a fair contract to get our people back

in there ASAP to fix these problems and restore the public's faith in NWA safety." AMFA's motto is: "Safety in the air begins with quality maintenance on the ground."

Broad solidarity grows

Unions and labor councils all over the country are lining up to show solidarity with the AMFA strikers. Besides passing resolutions supporting the strikers, some unions are contributing to the strike fund. For instance, the United Auto Workers recently donated \$880,000. Individual checks were mailed to each of the 4,500 strikers on Oct. 4.

But it's not just unions that are showing support. Students at the University of Michigan called a picket line on Oct. 5 outside Northwest executive and Michigan University Regent Andrea Fischer Newman's apartment in Ann Arbor. "These aircraft mechanics deserve fair treatment for the hard work that they do," said Art Reyes, a member of Students Organizing for Labor and Economic Equality. (Oct. 5, The Michigan Daily)

Northwest flight attendants, cleaners and mechanics also joined the picket line. They accused Newman, an NWA senior vice president, of lying to employees about the airline's financial health before it filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy this summer. Also stressing safety issues, some protesters carried signs that read: "Don't gamble with NWA." □

Hospital workers strike over contract



Over 200 striking health care workers, their families and supporters rallied on Oct. 5 at the California Pacific Medical Center in San Francisco along with Rev. Jesse Jackson and other notables. Virtually all the people who keep the hospital running, outside of management, doctors and RNs, have gone on strike there and at two other Sutter Health Plan-owned hospitals. They charge the management with bad faith bargaining and are demanding a contract. The workers are members of the Service Employees union.

—Story and photo by J. Marquardt

Atlanta advocate for homeless says

'Katrina showed the system is broken'

By Dianne Mathiowetz
Atlanta

The City of Atlanta, which has a national reputation for its attempts to criminalize homeless people, has officially welcomed tens of thousands of Katrina survivors from the Gulf Coast states.

Elected officials on the state and local level, public agencies and private organizations as well as countless individuals quickly responded to the human crisis as more and more people from the Gulf states arrived with literally nothing but the clothes on their back.

Atlantans donated millions of dollars, collected food and clothing, and offered to share their own homes.

Atlanta, despite its image of wealth and prosperity, ranks among the U.S.'s poorest cities because of the large number of residents who subsist on types of public assistance, including SSI and Social Security, and on the low wage scale that dominates the service industries.

This writer interviewed Anita Beaty, executive director of the Metro Atlanta Task Force for the Homeless and an outspoken advocate for the poor. The Task Force successfully sued the city of Atlanta over "quality of life" ordinances passed prior to the Olympics in 1996 that attempted to sweep the streets of homeless and poor people. More recently, Beaty and the Task Force were key elements in the struggle against passage of a panhandling ordinance making it illegal to ask for help in Atlanta.

WW: What conditions existed in Atlanta for poor workers and homeless people prior to Hurricane Katrina?

Anita Beaty: In the last five years, at least 10,000 units of affordable or publicly sponsored housing have been destroyed. Gentrification of in-town neighborhoods plus the actual tearing down of housing projects such as Capitol Homes, Grady Homes and the McDaniel-Glenn complex has created a desperate shortage of affordable housing within the city limits.

Money for Section 8 vouchers has been cut by the federal government and, since this is market driven, it is not a guaranteed source of housing.

Plus the city recently closed a 125-bed shelter for women and children despite a growing need for additional space, not less.

In early summer, Atlanta opened the Gateway Center with great fanfare as being a significant step forward in eliminating homelessness. Yet this rehabilitated jail has only 30 beds for women and children and 45 for men. People can only stay for two weeks before they are put out on the street again.

Atlanta, like most cities, is in desperate need of affordable, decent and safe housing. And by affordable, I mean low enough rents that make it possible for minimum-wage workers to live there.

The mayor of Atlanta, Shirley Franklin, has committed millions of dollars in assistance to provide housing, food, employment, health care and so on to Katrina survivors. How do these actions square with her record regarding Atlanta's poor?

The open hospitality policy announced by the mayor demonstrates what Atlanta

is capable of doing to aid those in need of the basics to survive. It is the response I would like to see for anyone who has no place to sleep or nothing to eat.

Unfortunately, the truth of the matter is that the panhandling ordinance originated from the mayor's office. The city has no housing policy except for gentrification. Developers are being allowed to build luxury housing where public housing used to stand with a very small number of units designated as "affordable." It was the city that closed the women and children's shelter on Milton Avenue.

Hundreds of homeless and poor people are arrested every week in Atlanta for jaywalking, for sleeping in public parks, for loitering and for public urination. There are no public toilets in Atlanta and the mayor has not seen fit to take on addressing this need.

What is revealed by Mayor Franklin's policy toward those who survived Hurricane Katrina is a differentiation between the "deserving poor"—those whose lives have been devastated by a natural disaster—and the "non-deserving poor"—those whose lives are devastated by illness, addictions, job loss, eviction, domestic violence, etc.

A man and his family were living in their car after leaving New Orleans. He was arrested for begging for money at Lenox Mall and spent the night in jail. The city dropped the charges when it was revealed that he was a Katrina evacuee.

A single mother was evicted from her apartment in an Atlanta suburb. She went to one of the centers set up to assist Katrina survivors and she and her son were given a place to live. Once it became known that she was not from the Gulf Coast, she was arrested and is facing felony charges.

United Way organized a job fair that was advertised as being for those unemployed by Katrina. More than 15,000 people showed up, forcing them to close the doors hours early. Most of those who came looking for a job were unemployed Atlantans.

Conference aims to unite struggles to reclaim cities

By Cheryl LaBash
Detroit

A National Conference to Reclaim Our Cities (NCRC) will convene here Nov. 11-13 at Wayne State University. It was initiated by numerous activists and organizers, including Detroit City Council members JoAnn Watson and Maryann Mahaffey.

A wide variety of issues and concerns will have a place at this conference, from affordable health care, social security/pensions, education and housing to the rights of workers, immigrants, women, the lesbian, gay, bi and trans community, and the struggle against racism, prisons and police brutality. Those on strike at Northwest Airlines, for example, can discuss how corporate bankruptcy is used against unions and plan for united action to fight back.

Recent events in New Orleans and throughout the Gulf Coast have brought home the daily disaster facing poor and



The cruel irony is that Katrina uncovered what the real situation is for tens of millions of people. It revealed the underbelly of extreme poverty in the richest country in the world—and it did it on television for the whole world to see.

The movement has to meet this opportunity to demand that the conditions of poverty be addressed now and at all levels of government.

What demands should the public be mobilized around?

Any real approach has to include these demands: that there is a right to decent, safe and affordable housing for everyone. We need a universal living wage. This automatically links wages to the cost of housing and other basics. We need universal health care which insures that illness doesn't lead to losing your home. And we need access to quality education for every-

one. Of course, there are other issues, too, such as true public transportation that makes possible getting to jobs, schools, hospitals, libraries, etc.

So many other countries provide a better social structure for their populations. While the system has never been particularly effective in meeting the needs of people, Katrina reveals that it is broken. The concept that evacuation in the face of a natural disaster depends on private transportation illustrates its criminal inadequacy.

Relying on charity to meet these immense needs is insufficient. Katrina shows how generous people can be but charity is erratic and is often selective.

There needs to be a systemic policy guaranteeing housing, health care, education and income that covers everyone in society. □

working people in all U.S. cities, towns and states. The billions of tax dollars diverted to the Pentagon for wars of occupation, as in Iraq and Afghanistan, have left millions of people without the resources to meet their basic human needs for jobs, shelter, education, food and health care.

The program for the NCRC will reflect this reality. A special plenary with organizers from the South will speak on the fight for the right of evacuees to return home and control how New Orleans is rebuilt. There will be a plenary on the crisis affecting all U.S. cities, and a third plenary directly linking the anti-war struggle to the fight for social and economic justice at home.

Speakers will include Clarence Thomas, co-chair of the Million Worker March Movement from the San Francisco Longshore workers union, Nellie Bailey from the Harlem Tenants Council, Larry Holmes of the Troops Out Now Coalition, Maureen Taylor from Michigan Welfare Rights, and many others.

Workshops will deal with topics like fighting utility shut-offs, the New Orleans Solidarity movement, impact of the Pentagon budget on our cities, police brutality and immigrant rights, the New Orleans solidarity movement, and the Rosa Parks 50th anniversary National Strike Against Poverty, Racism and War on Dec. 1, 2005. Sunday morning will be devoted to action proposals.

People interested in attending the conference, speaking at a workshop, having a table, and/or helping to get the word out in their communities should call (313) 680-5508 or email national_conference_of_cities@earthlink.net.

Registration (\$20) and donations can be made online at www.reclaimourcities.us, which also contains an updated brochure.

Registrations and donations can also be mailed to the NCRC in care of UAW Local 2334, 2727 Second Ave., Suite 314-D, Detroit, MI 48201. Make checks out to the NCRC. □

Delegation to Gulf Coast says:

'Poor left to fend for themselves'

Special to Workers World
New Orleans

A delegation to the region devastated by Hurricane Katrina has found that, six weeks after the storm, the poor and largely Black residents of the Gulf States have yet to see any real form of relief from the government or Red Cross.

The delegation included Elena Everett, state chair of the North Carolina Green Party and national co-chair of the party's Peace Action Committee; Peter Gilbert, a national leader with the youth group Fight Imperialism—Stand Together (FIST); Sara Flounders, co-director of the International Action Center; and Dustin Langley, a Navy veteran and IAC activist.

They reported that the French Quarter of New Orleans had electricity and water while the poor neighborhoods of the city had neither. Millions of dollars in contracts have been handed out to Bush cronies to enable the Quarter to open for business while, just blocks away, the streets have still not been cleared of storm rubble.

Despite criminal neglect, curfews and racist threats, however, many people in the region are asserting their right to remain in their neighborhoods.

Mama D, a community activist in the city's Seventh Ward, has turned her home into a relief center for her neighborhood. The area, which was under 5 feet of water, has yet to see any help from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), other government agencies or the Red Cross. Instead, those who have remained in their homes have faced harassment from local law enforcement, curfews and threats from gangs of racist vigilantes.

In the Bywater neighborhood, local activists with Get Your Act On are collecting food, cleaning supplies, bleach and other supplies to help people stay and to encourage others to return.

At the Common Ground Collective in the Algiers neighborhood, local activist Malik Rahim has transformed his home into a relief and organizing center. Activists from across the country are working with the community to distribute food and other supplies, to organize cleaning teams to help people move back into their homes, and to put tarps on rooftops damaged by Katrina. They have established an emergency medical clinic in a neighborhood mosque that has treated more than 2,000 patients.

Law enforcement and the military are visible everywhere, maintaining roadblocks to keep residents from returning to their neighborhoods. Returns have only been allowed in a carefully controlled neighborhood-by-neighborhood plan in which residents have no say.

In whiter, more upscale neighborhoods, people have been allowed to return and been provided with water and electricity. In poor and Black communities, troops with M-16s enforce a curfew and harass residents.

Rahim says the people experienced "a deliberate policy of ethnic cleansing, a deliberate attempt to remake New Orleans. There was no need to relocate anyone outside of the city. Algiers, which was not flooded, has enough space to house the entire population of evacuees. We have 20 parks where they could set up tents and 17 schools that could be opened to provide shelter."

The delegation toured a FEMA tent city used by a handful of police, firefighters and corporate contractors. The compound

contained large, 30- by 18-foot air-conditioned tents, showers, laundry facilities and field kitchens. It could have housed 2,000 evacuated residents but was filled to only about one-fifth of capacity.

Langley, the Navy veteran, says, "The government has stockpiles of these tent cities—they were also used to house soldiers during the invasion of Iraq. They could easily house every resident of New Orleans who wanted to stay if the government were interested in providing any real assistance. Instead, the agenda is to displace them and scatter them across the country."

'The working-class Red Cross'

Saving Our Selves After Katrina is an ad-hoc coalition of community activists operating out of donated warehouse space in Mobile, Ala.

Elena Everett said, "It was amazing to see how much can get done when helping people is the priority. S.O.S After Katrina's base operates as a dispatch center to provide supplies to more than 75 community distribution centers throughout the region. Organizers have distributed more than 200 tons of food, water, diapers, medical supplies, personal hygiene kits, generators, bleach and tools. We saw Vivian, an organizer with SOS, sending out medical teams, food and equipment all over the region. This small group of volunteers is doing more than the entire government and Red Cross combined."

Paul Robinson, a leader of S.O.S. After Katrina and a director of the Alabama Alliance to Restore the Vote, a coalition working to restore voting rights to ex-

felons, described how the organization came together: "We were riding around after the storm and we realized that the poor folks living next to these relief sites were not getting served—simple things like ice and water. These are folks who had no resources before the flood, and now they were really out. We tried to go through official channels, called up some government officials, but they said FEMA handled everything. I called up my coalition partners and they had similar experiences across the state, so we decided to come together and launch S.O.S. We're the working-class Red Cross."

In Biloxi, Miss., some neighborhoods were under 25 feet of water right after the storm. The delegation delivered a generator to a neighborhood that had not yet seen any relief. The houses in the area are filled with sludge and toxic black mold. The residents are sleeping in cars or camping out in their back yards. To get any help, one resident said, they have to go to a FEMA or Red Cross center in Montgomery, Ala., more than 150 miles away.

Just a quarter of a mile away, however, was a parking lot filled with trucks, trailers, supplies and contractors hard at work on rebuilding a local casino.

Delegation member Gilbert noted, "It's not that capitalism doesn't work—it's working just like it's supposed to. The poor are left to die and all the resources go to making sure that the profits keep coming in."

Flounders agreed, saying that the government's agenda is to "leave the poor to fend for themselves and to clear out the City of New Orleans to be redeveloped." □

Katrina & Reparations

Continued from page 1

Labor United, Millions More Movement, Malcolm X Grassroots Movement, December 12th Movement and many others have collectively set up the People's Hurricane Relief Fund as a vehicle for establishing solidarity committees nationwide to build a united front to win real justice for the Katrina survivors.

What kind of justice for the survivors? Justice that includes the right of Black Katrina survivors to return to their respective homes and to rebuild their communities in any fashion that they want; the right to a decent and guaranteed income provided by state and federal governments; the right to a living wage including upholding the prevailing wage laws under the 1931 Davis-Bacon Act; the right to decent housing, not the substandard housing that many of the Katrina survivors had before the hurricane even hit; the right to control reconstruction funds to rebuild their communities, not for no-bid Halliburton contracts; the end to martial law including police terror and the right to decent health care and education.

All these demands and more encompass the fundamental right to self-determination and reparations that have been systematically denied to African Americans since the days of slavery and the overthrow of Reconstruction following the Civil War. Some of these organizers and their supporters have called for a national conference of Katrina survivors on Dec. 9 in Jackson, Miss., and a national march in New Orleans to raise the right of return for these evacuees.

All of these demands would be justified even if it weren't for the Katrina crisis but this crisis has helped to galvanize the Black movement in a such way not seen since the 1960s. But these Black forces need and deserve the full support and solidarity of broader progressive forces and are starting to get it.

The Troops Out Now Coalition, along with some of these Black forces, has helped to initiate a Dec. 1 nationwide day of absence—a day of no school, no work and no shopping—to shut down war, racism and poverty. That day marks the 50th anniversary of the arrest of Black seamstress Rosa Parks, who in 1955 refused to give up her seat to a white man on a segregated bus in Montgomery, Ala. Her heroic action not only sparked the Montgomery bus boycott but launched the modern-day civil rights movement.

Already, there are many hundreds of endorsers for this day of nationally coordinated protests.

Anti-war activists can play a strategic role in supporting the demands of the Black-led People's Hurricane Relief Fund by demanding that the hundreds of billions of dollars being spent on brutal wars and occupations against Iraq and Afghanistan instead go to provide human needs at home.

There is no better way to show concrete anti-racist, working class solidarity with the Katrina survivors than to support the efforts of the People's Hurricane Relief Fund and the actions planned for Dec. 1, 9 and 10. □

By Mumia Abu-Jamal from death row

'We need a movement of millions'

The following transcript is taken from an audio commentary.

Long live John Africa.

On a move!

I want to thank Minister Louis

Farrakhan and the Millions More Movement for the kind invitation to join y'all here. As we gather, in person or electronically, we do so in a time of peril.

We do so in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, when the state showed us all that they don't give a damn about Black life. But every day of our lives we see smaller but no less lethal Hurricane Katrinas. Every year in public schools, millions of Black, Latin@, and poor kids are miseducated, thereby destroying, as surely as any hurricane, their life hopes and chances.

In our communities, our taxes pay for our own oppression, as racist and brutal cops make our lives hell daily. We are consumers of a media that is as dangerous as any hurricane, for it poisons our minds and the minds of millions of others by wholesale lies designed to demean and denigrate us.

Look at the tale of horrors that came out of Katrina: the horror stories of mass rapes and mass murders, told by Black politicians and Black cops to deflect attention from the armed, roving gangs of New Orleans cops, who stole everything that they could get their hands on. By putting out these lies, they turned hearts and minds from their betrayal of their own constituency, Black and poor New Orleansians, who needed transport, food, clean water, toilet facilities, and medical care and safety.

What's the point? That they represent, not the interests of those who voted for them, but the wealthy and well-to-do. If you doubt me, ask yourself what percentage of the tens of thousands of people in the Superdome or the convention center—those people the government left to starve, in the dark, thirsty, deathly afraid—were registered Democrat?

If we're honest, we'll agree over 90 percent. What did it matter? It didn't. Their loyalty was rewarded with betrayal. Did it matter that there was a Democratic governor? Kathleen Blanco's first order was to send National Guard into the streets, where she authorized them to shoot to kill to protect property. Did any of you, in a week, see such governmental passion displayed to protect human life? Did you see any interest in protecting Black life?

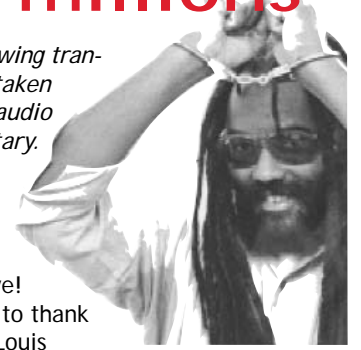
I didn't think so.

What we saw then was what we've always seen—the government as adversary, not ally. In prisons all across America, in police stations, and in court-houses, we experience daily hurricanes of hatred and indifference. These institutions, just like other government branches, are threats to our welfare, not tools of our will. They are tools of white supremacy, even and sometimes especially when their leaders have Black faces.

We have Black politicians with virtually no political power which means, once again, we pay for our own oppression. Our taxes pay for them, but they don't serve our people's interests. They serve the state of white supremacy. They serve the will of capital.

We need a movement of millions to build true social power. To free our minds and our bodies from the mud that we languish in.

We need a movement of millions to transform our current social reality of



Harlem forum examines race, class & war

By Monica Moorehead
Harlem, N.Y.

The Harlem Tenants Council sponsored an Oct. 7 forum entitled "Connecting the Dots: The Gulf Wars—Iraq to New Orleans." The forum attracted a multinational crowd representing mostly a cross-section of New York boroughs. The meeting was chaired by HTC leader Nellie Bailey.

Before the round-table discussion began, a People's Video Network documentary on Hurricane Katrina was shown. It included footage taken by Johnnie Stevens of interviews and statements made by survivors, most of whom had been transported from New Orleans to the Houston Superdome. These African-American and white survivors spoke about the lack of humane treatment from local, state and federal agencies during this unprecedented crisis.

International Action Center co-director Teresa Gutierrez introduced the film to the Harlem audience. She and Stevens had traveled to Houston and Louisiana to show solidarity with the Katrina survivors. Comparing the Katrina crisis to the war in Iraq, Gutierrez pointed out that just as the White House wants to take over Iraq in the interests of Big Oil, the reconstruction of New Orleans is being carried out in the interests of wealthy whites and corporate profits.

The panel of speakers included Carlita Mahrs, a Katrina survivor from New Orleans who has resettled in New York City. Mahrs, an interim steering committee member of the newly formed People's Hurricane Relief Fund of Community Labor United, presented a list of demands formulated by the national grassroots movement; it includes the right of Katrina survivors to return to their home cities.

Mae Jackson, formerly with the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee

Mumia

Continued from preceding page

repression and destitution. We need a movement of millions to bring back light to the eyes of our people. To engage in a struggle for freedom, for justice, and for liberation.

We need a movement of millions of the poor, of workers, of women, of youth, of students, of prisoners, of all those dedicated to change to build independent organizations that can't be bought or sold and will do the work necessary to be free.

We need a movement of millions to bring freedom to the brothers and sisters of the Move 9, to bring freedom to Sundiata Acoli, to bring freedom to Mutulu Shakur, to Russell Maroon Shoats, and hundreds of other Black prisoners of war and political prisoners.

We need a movement of millions to resist the state oppression that has brought us Patriot Acts, but not patriotic actions, wars for empire and countless attacks on the poor. We need a movement of millions to make common cause with oppressed people the world over. In Cuba, yes in Iraq, in Venezuela, in the Congo, in Haiti, in the Philippines.

We need a movement of millions that is anti-imperialist, that is anti-racist, and that unites us, not divides us. We need a movement of millions, and let us begin right here. Thank you, on a move!
Long live John Africa. Free the Move 9.

From death row, this is Mumia Abu-Jamal. □

and a member of Art Without Walls, talked about the plight of hundreds of Katrina evacuees who have relocated to New York. Their immediate concern is to receive vital social services, which New York agencies have been reluctant to provide.

Attorney Joan Gibbs, a faculty member at Brooklyn's Medgar Evers College, spoke on the grossly inadequate response from the International Red Cross and the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) towards the Katrina survivors. She mentioned that President George W. Bush has the authority to appoint people to the Red Cross board, showing that this agency is dependent on the White House and the military.

Dr. Sam Anderson, a leader of Black New Yorkers for Education Excellence, made everyone aware of how historical Black colleges in Louisiana have been impacted by Katrina—especially Dillard, Southern and Xavier. He stated that these three colleges combined have suffered over a billion dollars worth of damages. Precious archival materials housed at these colleges were destroyed by Katrina.

Anderson mentioned that public schools in New Orleans will not be reopening until 2006 and that the local ruling class and reactionary politicians are pushing for the privatization of education in the form of charter schools as a vehicle for undermining public education. Anderson



WW PHOTO: MONICA MOOREHEAD
Katrina survivor Carlita Mahrs

called for a "second Reconstruction" to take place in the Gulf Coast that must directly include Black people in the rebuilding of their areas to meet their needs.

Rev. Lucius Walker from Pastors for Peace praised the Cuban government and especially President Fidel Castro for offering to send 1,500 Cuban doctors to the Gulf Coast region. The U.S. denied these doctors visas. Walker stated that because of its revolution, Cuba now provides health care at home and to many other countries as a human right and not for profit. For instance, Cuba has turned a naval base into a medical school that provides training for students from at least 27 countries. They come from areas that have experienced a higher than nor-

mal number of natural disasters.

Dionne Monsanto from the December 12th Movement connected the struggle in the Gulf region to the right of reparations and self-determination for the Black masses, especially in the areas of health care and education.

Brenda Stokely, a leader of the Million Worker March Movement and New York City Labor Against the War, spoke about the need for progressive groups and activists to put aside any political differences in order to build a united front to fight back against national and class oppression in light of the Katrina crisis. She raised that it is important for this united front movement to demand the right of return of Katrina survivors; the protection of the prevailing wage under the Davis-Bacon Act, which Bush has suspended in the Gulf region, especially for construction workers; and the right to decent jobs, housing and health care.

Stokely also raised three important days of struggle that are coming up: the Dec. 1 National Day of Absence against racism, poverty and war in honor of the 50th anniversary of the arrest of Rosa Parks, whose stand against segregation on Montgomery's buses launched the modern-day civil rights movement; a Dec. 9 conference of Katrina evacuees in Jackson, Miss., and a Dec. 10 national march in New Orleans to "take back" that city. □

Police run wild in New Orleans

Continued from page 1

including the on-going demonization by the New Orleans Police Department and the mainstream media?

In the days following Hurricane Katrina, as the misery of the tens of thousands of New Orleanians who were left to bear the brunt of the devastating storm began to compound, salt was heaped on the wounds of the residents of the city and the poor and people of color that went beyond the borders of the Gulf Coast.

The corporate media began to paint horrific pictures of a New Orleans descending into chaos, where the inhabitants of the city were killing, raping and torturing one another. This false, racist coverage was broadcast everywhere, all to divert ire away from the true criminals and the gross criminal neglect that led to close to a thousand reported deaths, with more left unaccounted for.

Recently, the superintendent of the racist police department resigned, amid reports of these gross exaggerations by local officials and the media. It had come out that only six people out of the nearly 1,000 bodies found were thought to have died under questionable circumstances. Out of 10 bodies at the Superdome, two are thought to have been killed by other persons and brought to the Superdome. Almost all the others died while waiting for help; one person committed suicide.

Wherever these reports came from, local officials worsened the situation by using them to depict Black people and the poor of New Orleans as subhuman. State and national officials followed suit, and the media ran the reports hourly, often embellishing, but with no actual footage to substantiate the rumors.

Chaos of the unnatural kind

There was chaos. But the chaos was of

a capitalist nature. The only emergency planning consisted of ordering those who "have the means" to evacuate, quartering thousands more in facilities with no food or water, and asking millions of others to "pray down the hurricane," as Governor Kathleen Blanco of Louisiana suggested.

Further injustice came as the horrors of New Orleans revealed that the levees began to fail and millions of gallons of water poured into the city. The media denigrated the poor, overwhelmingly Black inhabitants of the city, labeling people searching for food as "looters."

There was at least one caption that depicted two sets of people differently, one Black, the other white. One caption showed a Black couple with food and labeled them "looters." Another caption from the same news source showed a white couple with food and described them as "finding" food.

Whatever footage existed of so-called "looters" showed people taking food and clothes, not fighting over the items, but helping one another. Yet none of this was widely shown. There are images that exist of great individual heroism, like strangers pulling next-door neighbors on inflatable mattresses, and of a young man who was able to confiscate a bus, fill it with evacuees and drive them to Houston.

Over 15,000 people waited at the New Orleans Convention Center, starving and thirsty, withering in the blistering heat and humidity, even as fetid water was permeating the New Orleans atmosphere. This was broadcast all over the world, but the head of FEMA at the time, Michael Brown, claimed to not be aware. Yet he was not above relating fictional stories of mass rapes, murders and "looters."

The National Guard was let loose, along with local police who have a history of brutality and corruption, and they were given

the go-ahead to shoot to kill. One television interviewer was able to capture the sentiments of so many. The reporter, wading in waist-deep water, ran into a group of three young Black men. When the young men heard that police and the National Guard were allowed to kill, they lifted their bare feet out of the water and said, "Why would they shoot us when we don't have shoes? People lost everything and we don't have shoes, so we went to get us some shoes."

It was people like these young men who were being targeted, who were left behind and being hunted for trying to meet basic needs. The stores would be declared a total loss and recoup their losses from insurance companies. Not to mention that these very stores had robbed the people of New Orleans of their labor, paying meager wages and little to no benefits.

This is to be expected, as the media is hardly anything else other than the bull-horn for the rulers and their aims. It is not to be expected that the media would report on killings that could be attributed to the police and National Guard, as they rolled into the city prepared to protect property and shore up the French Quarter. In fact, in the days after the hurricane hit, New Orleans looked more like a militarily occupied zone than an area devastated by a powerful storm.

Instead of resembling an area organized to help the people, New Orleans looked like an occupied area in Iraq.

One thing that the media could never gloss over is the great outrage at the racist coverage, and that outrage will grow this fall with the Black-led Millions More Movement and the Dec. 1 strike to shut down the war, racism and poverty. No amount of praying, or obfuscation coming from the corporate media, will pray down this coming storm of righteous anger. □

With Iraqi resistance everywhere

Bush and top generals in open rift

By Fred Goldstein

From Iraq to the Gulf Coast, the Bush administration is on the defensive and is being attacked from all sides. The relentless Iraqi resistance to the occupation has caused an open rift between Bush and his top military commanders.

"The U.S. generals running the war in Iraq," wrote the Los Angeles Times on Oct. 1, "presented a new assessment of the military situation in public comments and sworn testimony this week: The 149,000 troops in Iraq are increasingly part of the problem."

During a trip to Washington, "the generals said the presence of U.S. forces was fueling the insurgency, fostering an undesirable dependency on American troops" and "energizing" anti-U.S. forces, which they dubbed as "terrorists across the Middle East."

Bush and Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld have refused to contemplate U.S. troop reductions. Bush has been repeating over and over in his speeches and press conferences that the U.S. will "stand down" when the Iraqi forces stand up. As a defense of his policies he has been promoting the idea that Iraqi puppet forces are getting more highly trained and battle ready. The Bush-Rumsfeld position is that U.S. troops will leave when they win.

Rift with Bush out in the open

But there was an open rift on both issues at the Sept. 29 hearings of the Senate Armed Services Committee. Gen. John Abizaid, head of the Central Command in charge of all forces in the Persian Gulf, and Gen. George Casey, head of U.S. forces, testified that the number of so-called "level one" Iraqi battalions "at the highest

level of battle readiness" had dropped from three to one since June—one battalion out of 110.

In addition, Casey testified that U.S. troop reductions were required to "take away one of the elements that fuels the insurgency, that of the coalition forces as an occupying force." These sentiments were echoed by Abizaid.

The Wall Street Journal of Oct. 5 carried a lengthy analysis of the views of the military command, citing similar sentiments among the top U.S. generals in Iraq. Noting that Abizaid is "a fluent speaker of Arabic," it said he told Congress that "we must reduce our military footprint" in the region.

The crisis is illustrated by the words of one general who wants more troops. "One Marine general," wrote the Journal, "speaking privately, compares his plight to that of the 'little Dutch boy trying to plug up holes in the dike.' He would shift Marines to one city of the al Anbar province only to see the militants flee and take refuge in another area of the province where there was less of a U.S. presence."

In other words, the U.S. military commanders are telling Bush out in the open that they have been sent on a Mission Impossible—to subjugate the Iraqi people and force them back into a colonial relationship.

The generals have spent almost \$300 billion. They have carried out merciless offensives, killed over 100,000 Iraqis, destroyed cities, towns, and villages and imprisoned tens of thousands of Iraqis. And the result has been to widen and deepen the resistance.

In the course of this bloody occupation, almost 2,000 U.S. troops have been killed and 15,000 wounded, by official statistics. The resistance has forced the occupiers to

openly concede the obvious—that the occupation is the problem, and an insoluble one for U.S. imperialism at that. Now a section of the high command is looking for a way out.

Bush answers the generals

Bush answered his commanders on Oct. 6 in a lengthy speech before the National Endowment for Democracy, a CIA front created by Congress. In the talk, available on the White House web site, he declared the war in Iraq to be central to his phony "war on terrorism." He declared that "no concession, no bribe, or act of appeasement" would be acceptable. "We will never back down, never give in, and never accept anything less than complete victory," he concluded.

The speech ranted and raved with vicious, racist rhetoric about an imagined "radical Islamic empire that spans from Spain to Indonesia." It was billed by the White House as a major policy statement.

The remarks "suggested a renewed effort by the administration to regain favor in the wake of criticism over its handling of Hurricane Katrina and were intended in part as a response to the anti-war movement.... Bush, in his remarks, appeared to counter recent statements by military commanders in Iraq, including two generals who told lawmakers last week that the presence of U.S. troops was fueling the insurgency in Iraq..." (Los Angeles Times, Oct. 7)

When the two top generals in charge of the occupation/war in Iraq openly challenge Bush and Rumsfeld, it must reflect a growing disillusionment among significant sections of the ruling class with the deepening quagmire. All the Bush policy makers are holding their breath and crossing their fingers, hoping the Oct. 15

vote in Iraq on a U.S.-designed constitution will give them a lift.

'Federalism' means divide and conquer

They have resorted to devising a so-called "federalist" constitution. They hope to make up for their inability to defeat the resistance with this divide-and-conquer strategy—using different puppet groupings in the Iraqi ruling class to divide the Iraqi people against each other. They promise spoils in oil revenue and territory to different factions of their Iraqi clients—falsely dubbed the "Shiites" or the "Kurds" or the "Sunnis."

However, these quislings, who want to climb to power behind the guns of the occupation, are not to be mistaken for the Iraqi people or for any religious or national sector.

That is why everyone who can see the real situation—who knows the difference between the factions that negotiate with the occupiers in the Green Zone and the masses in the resistance, from al Anbar to Baghdad to Basra—knows that the constitution will solve nothing for Washington.

Indeed, the commanders on the ground did not wait until after the constitutional vote to make their dismal prognosis. No one—with the possible exception of Bush, Cheney and Rumsfeld—believes that the situation of the U.S. colonial occupation forces will be improved by any constitutional vote. As the commanders have said, it is the occupation that fuels the resistance.

Ruling class disillusionment

Zbigniew Brzezinski, a reactionary, anti-communist strategist of U.S. imperialism who was President Jimmy Carter's national security adviser, expressed publicly what many in the ruling class political establishment must be starting to think.

In a scathing column entitled "American Debacle," Brzezinski wrote of the Iraq adventure:

"That war, advocated by a narrow circle of decision-makers for motives still not fully exposed, propagated publicly by rhetoric reliant on false assertions, has turned out to be much more costly in blood and money than anticipated. It has precipitated worldwide criticism. In the Middle East it has stamped the United States as the imperialistic successor to Britain and as a partner of Israel in the military repression of the Arabs. ... [T]hat perception has become widespread throughout the world of Islam." (Los Angeles Times, Oct. 9)

This was written by a Cold Warrior who in 1979 originated the counter-revolutionary war in Afghanistan, the largest CIA operation in history, and funded many of the fundamentalist forces that have now turned against Washington.

This type of ruling class bitterness over the debacle in Iraq and the growing dismay over the ineptitude and disorganization by the Bush administration during the Hurricane Katrina crisis go a long way to explain why Bush is under such fire from all sides.

It helps explain why Bush adviser Karl Rove is being called to testify before the grand jury again; why Tom DeLay, Bush's strongest right-wing ally in the House of Representatives, has a double indictment; why Bush's former chief of procurement in the Office of Management and Budget,

During typhoons

How China & Vietnam were able to save lives

By Paddy Colligan

China and Vietnam were able to move millions of people out of harm's way when struck by fierce typhoons, Khanun and Damrey, at the end of September.

The most affected areas were Vietnam's northern coastal regions and China's Hainan Island, a large island in the South China Sea. These typhoons were the worst in a decade for Vietnam and in three decades for China.

Typhoons, the Pacific equivalent of Atlantic hurricanes, are regular occurrences in this area but this season's have been especially intense.

While these typhoons did result in over 100 deaths, tens of thousands homeless and serious damage to Vietnam's agriculture, the two countries were remarkably successful in averting even greater loss of life.

Both countries managed to carry out efficient, rapid and large-scale evacuations of their populations without the astounding traffic jams or shameful and horrifying abandonment of the poor, elderly, ill and people of color that so characterized the Hurricane Katrina crisis in the U.S.

How could an economically poor coun-

try like Vietnam and a rapidly developing country like China succeed in this area when the most powerful imperialist country, the U.S., failed so dramatically? The answer is priorities and organization.

Using buses, trucks and boats in advance of the typhoons, China moved 1.8 million people and Vietnam evacuated 300,000 from vulnerable coastal and low-lying regions to solid buildings, such as schools and other government buildings, located on higher ground. China also moved 35,000 boats to avoid their damage by the winds and storm surge.

Vietnamese farmers returning home after Typhoon Damrey passed over were then trapped by flash floods, but military amphibious vehicles were used to rescue them. One local official observed that while the dike system in northern Vietnam had been seriously damaged, the people were successfully evacuated.

Once the storms had passed, emergency shipments of food and water were rushed in. In Vietnam, 25,000 soldiers were immediately assigned to ensure the safety of the people: first to rescue the stranded; then to shore up the damaged dike systems to protect the farmland; to help with the environmental cleanup

after many villages and rice paddies were flooded with sea water, and finally to rebuild homes.

The Vietnamese government's plans for this kind of disaster include taking food from national reserves and from regional warehouses to distribute to the people in the affected regions. Medical teams were quickly rushed in to avoid or minimize any cholera outbreak.

Most loss of life in Vietnam came from the difficulty of predicting flash floods following the heavy rains of Typhoon Damrey. Some occurred in the mountains behind the affected coast and others in areas to which people had returned to try to reconstruct their homes and farmland.

Both China and Vietnam had long revolutionary struggles against imperialist domination that were led by parties committed not only to national liberation but also to building socialism—a process that is still ongoing as they strive to develop.

Natural disasters cannot always be avoided, but governments and communities organized to ensure people before profits can succeed in averting unnecessary loss of life and in bringing about a return to normal conditions as quickly as possible. □

Continued on the next page

U.S. bombs Iraq to force in new 'constitution'

By John Catalinotto

On Oct. 15 occupied Iraq will vote in a referendum on a "constitution" that effectively divides the country in three parts. It was drafted by the occupying U.S. force and is being imposed by 152,000 U.S. troops and U.S. air power. It is unlikely to legitimize the puppet regime any more than the Jan. 30 national voting farce did.

In an attempt to bomb the most rebellious areas of Iraq into submission, the Pentagon has unleashed "Operation River Gate" in western Anbar province near the Syrian border. Major targets were the 12 bridges over the Euphrates River, eight of which had been destroyed by Oct. 6.

"We're going to fight our way to the referendum, and we're going to fight our way to the election," Pentagon spokesperson Maj. Gen. Rick Lynch told the media on Oct. 6. He said that U.S. troops held four bridges and that the remaining eight had been eliminated. Saddam Hussein's trial by the puppet government is scheduled for Oct. 19; there will be a parliamentary election in December.

For the U.S. to unleash its bombers on the nation's infrastructure was in itself an admission that Washington has abandoned hope that the referendum and election will stabilize Iraq in the near future. Many Iraqis are now concerned that U.S. policy is focused more on splitting the Iraqi nation by using a divide-and-rule strategy.

The current offensives are able to punish Iraqis, whose resistance had succeeded in stalling the U.S. war machine, but not stop them.

Almost 5,000 U.S. troops and 4,000 puppet Iraqi troops, according to General Lynch, have been taking part in this assault on the Euphrates river valley, which runs from the Syrian border to the town of Ramadi, some 70 miles west of Baghdad. The two main operations are called "Iron Fist," an attack on the town of Si'ida, near the Syrian border, and "River Gate," further south in the Euphrates valley.

Thousands of Iraqi refugees from northern towns fled to Syria to escape the bombing and fighting. This comes at a time when Washington has threatened "international isolation, economic sanctions and possible military action" against Syria. (Lebanon Daily Star, Oct. 11)

Jet fighter-bombers and phalanxes of heavily armed helicopters have been used in the attacks. Lynch says the "operations will continue through to the election," and were aimed at denying resistance forces "and foreign fighters the Euphrates river valley as an avenue of approach into Iraq; that we deny any safe havens to the insurgency along the Euphrates river valley; and we... allow the Iraqi government to re-establish control over their border with Syria."

In Iraq's south, the U.S. and British military have launched another offensive, this one directed at the forces following

Muqtada al-Sadr, who also opposes the new constitution dividing Iraq.

Even those politicians taking part in the current Iraqi puppet government, if they are from the region of the country most strongly supporting the resistance, have criticized the U.S. military offensive. They complain that the people cannot vote if they have to risk being bombed. It is assumed that the Iraqis of this region, who are mostly Sunni, will either vote "no" on the referendum or will boycott the election.

On Oct. 5, Sunni politicians Saleh al-Mutlak and Hussein al-Falluji, who are in the national assembly, said their colleagues would meet soon and might call for another voting boycott if U.S. forces did not halt major operations in western Iraq. "If U.S. forces keep attacking Sunni cities, then in three or four days' time we will announce a boycott of the referendum," said Mutlak. (Toronto Globe and Mail, Oct. 6)

Opponents of the 'constitution'

Of course, all the resistance groups from the Sunni areas of the country oppose the constitution. In all public statements they oppose even negotiating with the U.S. until the occupiers agree to leave the country.

But even in the south of Iraq, groups like the Mehdi Army, who follow Muqtada al-Sadr, have opposed the constitution. In an interview in Beirut in late September with the Italian daily newspaper *Il Manifesto*,

Sheik Hassan Zargani, foreign representative of this movement, said:

"We are against the articles of the constitution which prescribe the division of the country, but at the same time it is not our intention to provoke a confrontation between yes and no that would play the game of the occupiers.

"We are against the occupation of Iraq and we fight it in any possible political, social and institutional way and also with arms. And we will continue to do so until liberation. At the same time we think that it must take forms that do not damage the Iraqi people and the civilian population."

Regarding religious differences, he said: "The problem in Iraq is of a political and not religious nature. The risk of frictions of this type derives from two factors linked to the occupation: In the first place the institutional political structure imposed on Iraq by the USA, with the distribution of all the responsibilities and of posts in the state power on the basis of percentages assigned to the several ethnic and religions groups. A system in which the parties and the politicians are not called upon to do well for Iraq, the country, but for their community or ethnic group, itself damages the collective.

"There is then the ominous effect that many politicians, often having returned to the native land after decades abroad, who have no popular following, try to justify their power by stoking the flames of the religious and ethnic differences." □

Bush and top generals

Continued from preceding page

David Safavian, was arrested on charges of covering up a crooked land deal.

It explains why the Senate voted overwhelmingly to defy Bush and pass a bill sponsored by his Republican arch-rival, Sen. John McCain, outlawing torture in U.S. military prisons. Bush has threatened to veto the bill. It explains why his nominee to the Supreme Court, Harriet Miers, who has been his personal staff assistant, is under attack from all sides.

For a variety of reasons, the Bush presidency is being discredited.

But these conflicts are within the ruling class and their representatives. The contending groupings and factions are all part of the imperialist establishment. Neither Brzezinski nor McCain nor any leading Democratic Party politician is calling for the U.S. troops to get out now.

For all their disgust with the losing war effort, they are all trying to find a way to save the situation for U.S. imperialism. The fact is that none of them has a viable proposal that can pull the Pentagon's irons out of the fire.

But the anti-war movement has no interest in trying to save the situation for U.S. imperialism. It has no interest in devising any "timetable" for troop reduction or withdrawal or any other face-saving formula.

In the spirit of international solidarity with the Iraqi people, who are fighting for self-determination and national independence, the demand should be the immediate and unconditional withdrawal of all U.S. forces. Whatever internal problems exist in Iraq can only be settled by the Iraqis themselves. □

Peltier Defense Committee condemns Ojeda assassination

This Sept. 29 statement, "Incident at Oglala Repeated in Hormigueros, Puerto Rico—Filiberto Ojeda Ríos: He crossed over to the Spirit World like a warrior," is posted on leonardpeltier.org, where you can find out more information on how to get involved in the struggle to free political prisoner Leonard Peltier of the American Indian Movement.

The Leonard Peltier Defense Committee strongly condemns the assassination of the Puerto Rican independentista movement leader Filiberto Ojeda Ríos by the FBI and urges its supporters to understand the parallels with our history and extend their solidarity to the Puerto Rican freedom fighters.

On Friday, Sept. 23, 2005, a day in which Puerto Rico celebrated the 137th anniversary of its [first declaration of] independence from Spain, a day when the people renew their struggle against colonialism in all its forms, the U.S. government sent its forces to strike right at the heart of the Boricua people.

As hundreds gathered to hear the recorded words of Filiberto Ojeda Ríos exhorting all to unite for truth, justice and a better life for the hard-working people of that beautiful island, the FBI executed a paramilitary operation, surrounded Ojeda Ríos's house and started shooting hundreds of rounds, just like they did in the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation on June 26, 1975 (one day after the anniversary of the Battle of Greasy Grass, when the Lakota nation was victorious over [General George] Custer and the invader army).

He tried to defend himself and his family, just as our beloved warrior Leonard Peltier did, and was murdered by an FBI sniper, just like our own Joe Stuntz. The colonial forces then blocked access to ambulances and anybody who could help so that Filiberto would bleed to death. There was no need to kill this man. Even in the colonial courts he had been absolved from any wrongdoing and had only been accused of robbery. He was considered a fugitive because he removed the electronic anklet used to track him and lived in hiding tending his garden in the mountains.

The government's real reason for targeting him was that he wanted to lead the people towards freedom from colonialism and injustice. We need to understand that this is the reality and it makes all of us who struggle for justice potential targets. Just as Don Filiberto called for the unity of the Puerto Rican independentista movement, we must also unite through the threads of our collective history of struggle.

We do not need to use our imagination to see that this is a long-standing modus operandi of the U.S. government and its leading paramilitary agency. The only difference is that today this terror is wanton and global. When will the so-called American people wake up from the stupor of their indulgences and comfort to put a stop to this? They are the only ones that can rein in the monster that goes on killing and destroying in their name. For the sake of the planet, our mother Earth, the international community also has the responsibility to face the real criminals and let them know their behavior is intolerable and must cease immediately. After centuries of the same practices, our colo-



nial oppressors should wise up and learn they do not work. Our thirst for justice is not placated through more injustice, the murder and imprisonment of our leaders, this only deepens it. Those of us who are left are guided by those brave spirits and so inspired. If they gave so much, how can we be in peace doing nothing? Their call, from the Spirit World and from behind the iron bars and stun lethal fences, is irrepressible.

Wanbli Watakpe
Director, Leonard Peltier
Defense Committee



Disaster has a name: capitalism

Continued from page 1

And not the mounting dangers facing the whole world from global warming. Even cautious earth scientists are warning that warmer sea temperatures are fueling the intensity of hurricanes and also contributing to heavy rain, flooding and landslides.

After Hurricane Katrina came Hurricane Rita, which hit Southern states along the Atlantic coast. Then came Hurricane Stan, which caused such severe flooding and mudslides in Central America that over a thousand people were buried alive. In Asia, too, typhoons have recently hit China and Vietnam with unusual intensity.

Where does global warming come from? A huge buildup of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere is trapping the Earth's heat. These gases come from a tremendous increase in the burning of coal, oil and natural gas. Scientists predict the "natural" disasters will get much worse over this century.

None of this can be solved or even dealt with on an individual basis. It takes social planning to organize relief and evacuation when disaster hits. It takes social planning to figure out how people can have adequate housing, heat, cooling and transportation without degrading the environment—and to implement those findings.

The U.S. government plans many things. It plans wars—often on the other side of the world, like in Iraq and Afghanistan. It plans tax cuts for the wealthy. It is now planning a trip to the moon.

Big corporations plan. They have plans to expand their sales, to open factories where wages are cheaper. They plan expensive advertising campaigns to convince people to buy more. Big business works out its plans jointly with political insiders, so that the laws and policies of this country will promote its interests.

But both the corporations and the government, which belongs to the super-rich despite all its talk of democracy, are dead-set against any planning that could give priority to people's needs over profits.

In fact, they are incapable of it. They are of, by and for capitalism, and the drive of the capitalists for profits influences everything they do.

Why don't most areas of the U.S. have adequate public transportation systems? Because the auto, tire and oil companies decided more than half a century ago to gut them so workers would have to buy automobiles—a major source of global warming.

There was no public transportation to get the poor out of New Orleans, or out of Houston a few weeks later when Rita hit. If you didn't have a car, you were sunk—literally. And even if you did have a car in Texas, you couldn't get any-

where on the clogged highways.

These multiplying disasters call out for planning—socialist planning, the only real kind. The kind Cuba has, where hundreds of thousands are evacuated from the coastal areas every time a hurricane hits that Caribbean nation. Its disaster management plan has been cited as a model by the United Nations. Everyone is part of the preparation, from school children to medical personnel to bus and truck drivers. No one falls through the cracks.

Big corporations have no power in Cuba. The land, the factories, the farms, the hotels—everything belongs to the whole Cuban people, not to a white elite. This so enrages the wealthy in the U.S.—who used to love playing with their money in Cuba's casinos before the 1959 revolution—that they've tried for 45 years to destroy the Cuban Revolution and bring capitalism back. But they haven't succeeded.

What future is there for the world's people without planning based on justice and equality? But capitalism will never bring either one. This profit system has created an unimaginable gap between rich and poor, on a global scale. It promotes racism to justify inequality along with sexism and LGBT oppression. Yet poverty doesn't have to be. Every reasonable need can easily be satisfied with today's level of science and technology. And there still could be a profound reorganization of economic life to once again live and work in harmony with nature and its laws.

The capitalist class can't do it—they've proved that. Workers' organizations need to lay out the agenda for profound social change. Most of all, this has to happen in the United States, where the reactionary, racist, super-rich few are holding back the revolutionary changes needed by all the peoples of the world. □

Alberto Lovera Bolivarian Circle, Padre Luis Barrios, Ramsey Clark, Noam Chomsky, Peter Coyote, Marcia Campos, Danny Glover, Bishop Thomas Gumbleton, August Nimtz, James Petras, U.S. Rep. José Serrano, Rev. Lucius Walker and Howard Zinn invite you to:

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Belgian workers block a road near port of Ghent.

CREDIT: NOUVEL OBSERVATEUR

Millions strike in India, France and Belgium

By G. Dunkel

Some 40 million to 60 million workers held a one-day general strike in India Sept. 29. Five days later, 1.3 million workers in France spent a work day demonstrating. Three days later, on Oct. 7, workers in Belgium shut the country down, using militant tactics like setting up burning barricades on auto routes around Brussels.

While these strikes took place in different conditions, in countries with very different working-class traditions, they had some common themes. They all wanted an end to the attacks on pensions and medical care; they all wanted more decent jobs with decent pay; they all opposed the privatizations, generally called "reforms," that the world bourgeoisie is pushing as a solution to the economic problems of capitalism.

Another common theme in all these strikes was that the governments in all three countries refused to consider the demands. Belgian Prime Minister Guy Verhofstadt gave the clearest refusal, saying he would carry out his reforms "with the unions if it is possible, without them if necessary."

In France, all the main trade union confederations, plus the teachers' confederations and left parties like the Greens, the

Communist Party, the Revolutionary Communist League (LCR) and even the Socialist Party supported the call for the Oct. 4 protest. This was basically the same coalition that defeated the European constitution on May 29, but with the addition of the Socialist Party. French newspaper and television reported that the actions had widespread public support.

The union representing Hewlett-Packard workers in France was given a prominent spot in some of the 150 marches that took place there because HP had threatened to lay off most of its French work force, even though it had a profit of \$6 billion last year. Many more unions representing private employees marched than is usual in labor demonstrations in France, along with unions from the government-managed electric company, trains, subway, buses, banks and post office.

The British Daily Telegraph reported that HP had bowed to pressure from French Prime Minister Dominique de Villepin and was going to try to limit the layoffs of its French workers.

In Belgium, the General Federation of Labor (FGTB), a labor confederation close to the Socialist Party there, called the Oct. 7 strike. It lacked support from the other two main labor federations, one Christian and the other conservative. Whatever their affiliation, workers in general still followed the strike call, especially in distribution, public transportation and air traffic. FGTB barricades of burning tires on the auto routes around Brussels created massive traffic jams.

This was the first general strike in Belgium in 13 years. While negotiations were still taking place between the government and the FGTB, the union thought it necessary to put pressure on to increase unemployment insurance payments and to maintain employment in the public sector.

The general strike by millions in India was called by a coalition of unions allied to communist parties that support the Congress Party government. The unions said 60 million people struck, while NDTV, a leading 24-hour news channel, put the figure at 40 million.

By any account, it was the largest trade union demonstration in India in years.

Some 5 million workers in coal, steel and mining took part in this protest.

Air service kept on functioning only because the government ordered air force personnel to replace striking workers in the fire brigade.

The main focus of the unions' anger was the government's plans to sell off profitable state-owned firms, to ease labor laws on hiring and firing, and to open sectors like retail and banking to foreign investment. □



Free the Cuban

www.antiterroristas.cu

The Eleventh Circuit Court of Appeals in Atlanta has declared null and void the Miami trial that imprisoned five Cubans for infiltrating the extremist Cuban American groups in the south of Florida in order to obtain information about terrorist activities directed against Cuba. Nothing justifies their incarceration. Join us in demanding their immediate liberation.

U.S. delegation in Haiti meets victims of repression

By John Parker
Port-au-Prince, Haiti

The Commission of Inquiry of the International Tribunal on Haiti gathered here on Oct. 8 to collect testimonies from dozens of witnesses to the massive campaign of genocide that is occurring daily in Haiti.

The delegation is made up of International Action Center founder and former U.S. Attorney General Ramsey Clark; Kim Ives, filmmaker and journalist with *Haiti Progrès*; Katherine Kean, documentary filmmaker; Dave Welsh, delegate of San Francisco Labor Council; Capt. Lawrence Rockwood, former counter-intelligence officer in the U.S. Army who was court-martialed after unilaterally acting to save the lives of prisoners in Haiti's National Penitentiary in September 1994; Tom Griffin, immigration lawyer in Philadelphia, Pa., and human rights activist and author; and this writer.

Further evidence of complicity and direct involvement in atrocities was discovered through various interviews with victims ranging from 16 to 80 years old who have had loved ones, including infants, killed. These daily killings and massacres are being perpetrated directly or indirectly by the UN body called MINUSTAH now occupying Haiti. This UN force is continuing to provide cover for the illegal U.S. coup and kidnapping of democratically elected President Jean-Bertrand Aristide.

As evidence collected by the commission indicates, the Aristide kidnapping began the process of destroying the social, political and administrative organizations in this country and reintroduced the fascist and terrorist organizations that had thrived during the administration of the U.S.-puppet Duvalier family. These forces have now been incorporated into the police here. Also, civilian attachés who are working with the UN forces are, along with the police, responsible for most of the violence occurring in Haiti today.

One young man shared his story:

"I had a job under the Lavalas government [of President Aristide]. After the government left, I was arrested and fired. We had to pay money to get out of prison. The money I paid to leave the prison has not been paid back.... They have abused me and taken my picture and put it all over the place. They fired me without any reason and arrested me. Up until today we are never in peace. At 2 a.m., 1 a.m., MINUSTAH comes and breaks down our

doors. They also burned down a lot of homes in Bel Air. We can't eat or sleep, we have to keep looking out for MINUSTAH and the police. When we're in the streets we have to look. They've given us spies. As long as you are considered Lavalas [Fanmi Lavalas, a political organization representing a mass, progressive movement headed by Aristide] you are considered a bandit. Even though they are treating us bad and we can't sleep, we keep our meeting in Bel Air, we keep our resistance. We know with God up in the sky we'll keep our resistance.

"MINUSTAH works with the police and keeps machete-carrying civilians on the side. They told us to register for the elections. We did register and they still arrest us. Go to the penitentiary and you'll see all the people in jail and they don't know why they are there. If we see the MINUSTAH with those people we run."

This young man has the documents with letters verifying his firing and arrest.



These documents are signed by Justice of the Peace Pascal.

The writer is a leader of the International Action Center, Los Angeles chapter.

PHOTO: KIM IVES
Victims of the July 6 massacre who lost their homes in military operation by MINUSTAH.

Solidarity messages pour in for slain independence leader

By Tom Soto
San Juan, Puerto Rico

A thousand people marched to the home of slain Puerto Rican independence leader Filiberto Ojeda Ríos in the town of Hormigueros on Oct. 8, chanting "FBI, assassins" and "Filiberto Ojeda Ríos lives."

Some 20 organizations participated, including Friends of the Sea, the Hostos National Independence Movement, the Puerto Rican Independence Party, the Pro-Independence University Federation, the Socialist Front, Mothers Against the War and others.

Since Sept. 23, when FBI agents shot and killed Ojeda Ríos, messages of solidarity have been arriving from all over the world denouncing his death as a political assassination and pledging support for the Puerto Rican independence struggle.

Venezuela denounces murder

Venezuela's UN Mission said it "strongly denounces and condemns the assassination carried out by the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) of the United States of America against the eminent independence leader Filiberto Ojeda Ríos."

In Caracas, the Venezuelan Parliament



PHOTO: JERICHO MOVEMENT

Filiberto Ojeda Rios holds Puerto Rican flag.

approved a resolution of "solidarity to the family, to the independence movement and to the Puerto Rican people in general."

The World North-South Jubilee Meeting being held in Cuba—representing 60 organizations from Africa, Asia, the Caribbean, North, Central and South America—adopted a resolution "energetically condemn[ing] the vile assassination of pro-independence leader Filiberto Ojeda Ríos."

The Organization of Solidarity of the People of Asia, Africa and Latin America condemned the killing by the FBI as "state terrorism." It also condemned U.S. colonial rule over Puerto Rico as a violation of the resolutions of the Decolonization Committee of the United Nations upholding the right to self-determination and independence of the Puerto Rican people.

Summarizing the heroic life of Filiberto Ojeda Ríos, OSPAAAL said: "Death is not real when one has carried out successfully the work of one's life."

Latin America & the Middle East

A joint statement from revolutionary organizations in Latin America and the Middle East said: "We repudiate your vile assassination, and are united and committed, now more than ever, to the cause of independence; we express our indignation for this fallen but not defeated revolutionary, now transformed into a flag of anti-

imperialist Unity and Rebellion."

It was issued by the Argentinian Communist Party, Casa Memorial Salvador Allende, the Chilean Communist Party, the Colombian National Liberation Army (ELN), the Colombian Communist Party, the Colombian Revolutionary Armed Forces (FARC-EP), the Communist Party of Sudan, the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine, the Dominican Workers Revolutionary Party, the Movement of the Revolutionary Left of Chile (MIR), the National Liberation Front Farabundo Martí of El Salvador, the Nicaraguan Sandinista National Liberation Front, the Patriotic Front Manuel Rodríguez of Chile, the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine and Revolutionary Unity of Guatemala (UNRG).

Messages condemning the U.S. action came from across a broad political spectrum, including the Executive Secretary of the Sao Paulo Forum, the Party of Democratic Revolution of Mexico, and the Association of State Workers in Rosario, Argentina.

Supporters of the Hawaiian Sovereignty movement saw it "as an attack on all peoples who seek self-determination and other human rights, including women, people of color, indigenous peoples, the working classes, and LGBTI communities."

The American Indian Movement of Florida, the Jericho Movement in the U.S., the Mexican National Liberation Movement, and three Peruvian groups—the Left Socialist Militant Force, the Hands Off Venezuela International Campaign and the Peruvian Support Committee of the Bolivian Revolution—all sent messages.

The International Action Center's office in New York called on "all progressive individuals and organizations in the United States to raise our voices in condemnation of this latest U.S. crime and to stand in solidarity with the Puerto Rican people. We must put an end to U.S. terrorism, and prevent another witch hunt against the Puerto Rican progressive movement."

Special thanks to the pro-independence newspaper *Claridad* and to the *Socialist Front* for providing many of the above-mentioned solidarity messages.

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Otro cruel golpe azota a Nueva Orleans El alcalde anuncia despidos

Las corporaciones se enriquecen mientras que el pueblo se muere de hambre

Por Mónica Moorehead

El alcalde de Nueva Orleans, Ray Nagin, anunció el 4 de octubre en una conferencia de prensa que 3.000 trabajador@s de la ciudad van a perder su trabajo permanentemente como parte de las continuas consecuencias económicas resultantes del desastre del Huracán Katrina. Est@s trabajador@s recibirán sus últimos cheques entre el 14 y el 21 de octubre.

Nagin dijo que “la falta de ingresos” fue el motivo principal para los despidos masivos, los cuáles no incluirán a los bomberos, la policía, trabajador@s del servicio de agua y alcantarillados, ni al personal médico de emergencia. Los ingresos usuales de \$13 millones al mes por impuestos de venta de mercancía han estado ausentes desde que el huracán

golpeó Nueva Orleans el 31 de agosto.

Nagin también dijo que estos despidos pueden ser sólo el comienzo de otros en el futuro, y que nadie debe estar sorprendido si él anuncia otros despidos en los próximos meses. Los despidos conducirán seguramente a la pérdida de más casas además de las destruidas por el huracán, como también a intensificar otras formas de sufrimiento.

Nagin dijo que no pudo conseguir ninguna especie de asistencia del gobierno estatal o federal tales como préstamos para ayudar a pagar a est@s trabajador@s, y que \$50 millones que la ciudad ha pedido a prestamistas privados han quedado “indeterminados”.

¿Dónde están los billones de dólares que Bush y el Congreso prometieron — hace sólo un mes — y que irían para ayu-

dar a reconstruir Nueva Orleans y ayudar a los sobrevivientes de Katrina? ¿Por qué están yendo cantidades enormes de dinero a Halliburton y otras compañías buitres pero no a Nueva Orleans?

¿Por qué el gobierno federal no está usando todo sus recursos disponibles para traer socorro a esta sufrida ciudad y a sus habitantes — así como hizo en el pasado cuando salvó a los ejecutivos y los accionistas de la Corporación Chrysler?

¿Por qué el costo de la devastación económica resultante de este huracán está siendo pagado por l@s trabajador@s y l@s pobres, casi todos afro-american@s?

Es cada vez más evidente que la clase capitalista, local y nacionalmente, junto a la gobernadora de Louisiana y la Casa Blanca, están explotando esta situación para tratar de cambiar el ambiente

económico y la composición social de Nueva Orleans para cumplir las exigencias de la gente blanca y rica. Esto significa que afro-american@s, latin@s, y otra gente de color y l@s blanc@s pobres no serán bienvenid@s cuando regresen a Nueva Orleans. De hecho, se ha reportado también que algunos dueños de casas en Nueva Orleans están haciendo todo lo posible para desahuciar a l@s inquilinos que tuvieron que irse a otras partes para escapar del huracán.

Una marcha a Nueva Orleans ha sido llamada para el 10 de diciembre, Día Internacional de los Derechos Humanos, para otra vez demandar justicia verdadera, incluyendo el derecho de l@s sobrevivientes de Katrina a regresar a Nueva Orleans. □

Por qué la Secretaria de Estado Rice visitó Haití

Por G. Dunkel

Teniendo en cuenta la desintegración de la posición de los EEUU en Irak; el fracaso de la reciente visita al Medio Oriente de la Subsecretaria de Estado para la Diplomacia Pública, Karen Hughes; y el prestigio e influencia de Cuba y Venezuela en América Latina incrementando a diario, la Secretaria de Estado Condoleezza Rice decidió hacer una visita a Haití el 27 de septiembre.

El propósito de su visita fue el de hacer validar las elecciones presidenciales programadas para el 20 de noviembre—una tarea difícil considerando que su gobierno removió forzosamente al Presidente Jean-Bertrand Aristide en febrero de 2004. Aristide había sido elegido dos veces con amplio apoyo del pueblo haitiano.

Haití es el país más pobre en el Hemisferio Occidental y se cuenta entre los 10 más pobres del mundo. Estrategas estadounidenses sobre subversión piensan que prodigando dinero libremente en las temporadas electorales puede hacer que las cosas salgan según sus intereses.

Sin embargo, el equipo de Rice estaba tan preocupado sobre su seguridad que anunció la visita apenas un solo día antes de su llegada. Cuando su predecesor Colin Powell fue a Haití en 2004, muchos salieron en protesta a las calles. Rice viajó en helicóptero del aeropuerto al palacio presidencial, el que estuvo fuertemente custodiado por efectivos de la Misión de Estabilización de la ONU (MINUSTAH).

En una conferencia de prensa en el Palacio Nacional con el primer ministro ilegítimo, Gérard Latortue, Rice se refirió ambiguamente a “problemas técnicos” que afectaban la elección. Para que haya una transferencia de poder el 7 de febrero, ella dijo, “Hay que tener elecciones y hay elecciones sucesivas que deben tener lugar. Y entonces son en muchos aspectos,

cuestiones técnicas con las cuales hay que bregar, como por ejemplo la del registro de los lugares de votar”.

Mientras que es muy improbable que Rice visitara a Haití para tratar con problemas “técnicos”, hay muchos de estos que pueden ser utilizados como pretexto para posponer los comicios. La compañía que produce las tarjetas de identidad para la elección ha entregado sólo 20.000 para los 2,5 millones de votantes registrados; otras 70.000 se esperan entregar en la primera semana de octubre.

Otro problema es la falta de instalaciones. En Delmas, un suburbio pobre de la capital, la oficina electoral está ubicada en un garaje, con pilas de basura y agua estancada en el patio, y con frecuencia no hay luz.

A pesar de que el Consejo Electoral Provisional (CEP) había anunciado que el registro fue cerrado el 30 de septiembre,

luego de la visita de Rice, anunció que las oficinas de registro estarían establecidas en áreas rurales y comunidades como Bel Air, Cite Soleil y Grand Ravine y estarían abiertas hasta el 15 de octubre. Aproximadamente 2,5 millones de haitianos registrados de una población de votantes elegibles de 4,5 millones no prestarían la apariencia de “legitimidad” que los EEUU quiere y necesita.

Cuando se le preguntó cuál era su verdadero mensaje al actual gobierno de facto, Rice respondió, “Estas elecciones tienen que ser libres y justas e inclusivas”. El CEP ya ha eliminado de la competencia para la presidencia a 20 candidatos, dejando 32 más, y ni siquiera ha comenzado a reducir la cantidad de candidatos para el senado y los consejos municipales.

La declaración preparada de Rice para abrir la conferencia de prensa concluyó, “A través de la historia la gente ha luchado

por el derecho a votar. Algunos hasta han muerto por el derecho de votar. No hay arma más poderosa en la mano de un ciudadano que el voto. Por eso al pueblo haitiano, yo les exhorto a utilizar esa arma poderosa, el voto, en los días próximos”.

Nada puede ser más hipócrita por parte de un país que derrocó al presidente de Haití que fue elegido democráticamente.

El pueblo de Haití es muy político, y entiende que si la clase dominante de los Estados Unidos y lo que ella considera la comunidad internacional—países como Francia y Canadá—no están de acuerdo o desaprueban la elección del pueblo de Haití, ese candidato será remplazado. En 1991, cuando aún existía el ejército de Haití, los EEUU lo utilizó para enviar al Presidente Jean-Bertrand Aristide al exilio. En 2004, utilizaron al equipo armado de seguridad del embajador estadounidense para llevar a cabo el secuestro y el golpe de estado de Aristide.

Cuando le preguntaron cuál era la actitud de los EEUU frente a Aristide, ella respondió, “Bueno, de hecho, la comunidad internacional piensa que no sería bueno que volviera Aristide. Yo creo que esto está bien claro. El pueblo de Haití sigue adelante”.

Nunca ella lo llamó Presidente Aristide, ni siquiera ex presidente. Siempre fue “Sr. Aristide”, aunque él fuera elegido democráticamente dos veces como presidente.

Y esta es la verdadera razón por la cual el gobierno de los EEUU está comprometido a mantener a Aristide fuera del poder y fuera de Haití. El pueblo de Haití rechazó al candidato escogido por los EEUU cuando el pueblo eligió a Aristide. Hay indicios de que están preparándose de nuevo a rechazar la “selección-elección-rechazo” que está siendo planeada. Si esto ocurre, la administración de Bush habrá sufrido una grave derrota política y no será capaz de legitimizar sus agentes en Haití.

Circulo Bolivariano Alberto Lovera, el Padre Luis Barrios, Ramsey Clark, Noam Chomsky, Peter Coyote, Marcia Campos, Danny Glover, el Obispo Thomas Gumbleton, August Nimtz, James Petras, el Congresista José Serrano, el Reverendo Lucius Walker y Howard Zinn les invitan a:

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