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Danger of wider war

U.S. targets Iran, blames Iraq

By Sara Flounders

The Pentagon's plans for a massive attack on Iran are hardly a secret. For months the major corporate media in the U.S., Britain, France and other countries have described the ominous plans, the thousands of bombing targets already selected, and the hundreds of ships, warplanes and missiles arrayed just offshore. Half the ships in the U.S. Navy are now off the coast of Iran.

While the threat of war is growing, it is important to take note of a shift in the stated U.S. rationale or justification for an unprovoked, criminal attack.

During the late summer a whole series of articles in the U.S. media described Vice President Dick Cheney as "urging strikes on Iran." The media coverage reached a fever pitch of demonization and insult in September during the visit of Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad to New York to address the United Nations.

But the carefully choreographed propaganda hype about the threat of Iran developing a nuclear weapon suffered a severe blow when the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) concluded that Iran's nuclear program was of a civilian nature and that Iran has neither the intention nor the capabilities to develop nuclear weapons. On Aug. 21, Iran finalized a work plan with the IAEA to provide answers to a number of outstanding questions regarding its past nuclear activities.

Iran's research and development of nuclear energy is clearly allowed under international law. It is at such an early stage of development that all efforts to claim that Iran poses a nuclear threat have been refuted. Iran has insisted that its nuclear program is for peaceful purposes. Despite its constant clarifications, however, the U.S. government has continued to openly

threaten a massive strike against the Islamic republic's nuclear research facilities and its entire industrial base.

Another WMD scam

Mohamed ElBaradei, the head of the IAEA, says Iran does not currently pose a threat to the international community and has called for more efforts to push forward dialogue.

ElBaradei has also gone public with his warnings against the Pentagon's war plans: "I would hope that everybody would have gotten the lesson after the Iraq situation, where 700,000 innocent civilians have lost their lives on the suspicion that a country has nuclear weapons."

An article in the London Guardian on Sept. 18 headlined: "Drift into war with Iran out of control, says U.N.," said, "The U.N.'s chief weapons inspector yesterday warned against the use of force against Iran in what U.N. officials said was an attempt to halt an 'out of control' drift to war." Other publications around the world ran headlines that ElBaradei warned against a showdown with Iran on the nuclear issue.

Since these statements the U.S. corporate media has tried to vilify ElBaradei as pro-Tehran and accused him of overstepping his authority.

The IAEA's work with Iran also blocked U.S. efforts to impose far more injurious sanctions through the U.N. Security Council. Many feared that a new U.N. resolution would be utilized as authorization for military action.

Russia and China opposed additional sanctions, claiming that such measures could place in jeopardy Iran's cooperation with the IAEA. Washington was forced to postpone any action in the U.N. Security Council against Iran until at least November.

Nevertheless, Washington continues to line up its imperialist

Continued on page 6



Students, faculty rally against racism at Columbia U.

Prof. Madonna Constantine speaks to anti-racist rally at Columbia University Teachers College on Oct. 10. The African-American professor the day before had found a noose hanging from her office door in the school. A multinational crowd of hundreds of students, teachers and supporters chanted "Not here, not anywhere!" and waved placards referring to the Jena 6 and calling for unity and solidarity.

—Report and photo by Deirdre Griswold

FORT PIERCE, FLA.

Teenaged girl brutalized by racist officer

By Tyneisha Bowens

On Oct. 4, a videotape was released to the public showing a 15-year-old African-American girl being brutalized by a police officer in Fort Pierce, Fla. The video, recorded by the officer's dashboard camera, shows the officer using what can only be deemed excessive and brutal force.

The young girl, whose identity has yet to be officially disclosed, was being taken into custody for violating a law enforcing a curfew for minors in Fort Pierce.

The footage starts with the girl, already crying, being brought to the front of the officer's vehicle. As the officer begins to arrest the girl she attempts to free herself while begging not to be put in jail. It is obvious that she is afraid as she apologizes for breaking curfew and cries out for her mother.

As the minor begins to "resist arrest" the officer takes it upon himself to begin using excessive force. The officer, a white male at least twice her the size, violently twists her arms behind her back and slams her face into the hood of the vehicle.

After expressing pain from the officer's "submission tactics" the girl defends herself by biting at the officer's gloved hand. In response to this the officer forcefully punches the teenager in the mouth and sprays her multiple times at close range with pepper spray.

As he is now able to easily arrest the girl he puts her into his vehicle, completely ignoring her complaints that she is having difficulty breathing.

The officer faces no charges. The 15-year-old girl has been charged with battery, a felony.

Her attempts to free herself from the officer's grasp and protect herself, including biting the officer, have been cited as just cause for the officer's brutal behavior.

To combat the idea that this unarmed girl did anything to warrant physical attack from a large adult male it is important to evaluate the fear that she must have been experiencing.



Continued on page 3

New Orleans activist runs for City Council

Malcolm Suber, a founder and leader of the People's Hurricane Relief Fund in New Orleans, announced his candidacy for an at-large seat on the New Orleans City Council on Sept. 6. The election takes place on Oct. 20.

Suber has been in the forefront of exposing the racist criminal neglect by local, state and federal governmental officials shown toward the majority Black population during and after Hurricane Katrina in 2005. Suber is a Katrina survivor.

Suber and the PHRF have also promoted Black-Brown unity in New Orleans, where there have been attempts by white-dominated corporate interests to drive a superficial wedge between Katrina survivors and immigrant workers.

Suber's campaign will be representing the Reconstruction Party, founded in New Orleans Sept. 2. The following information on Suber's candidacy comes from www.malcolmforcitycouncil.com. Suber's campaign supporters include former Georgia U.S. Rep. Cynthia McKinney and Hip Hop artist and actor Mos Def.

Our people's campaign focuses on building a reconstruction movement for the right of our people to return back home. We've witnessed the failure of federal, state and local officials to do anything to get people back home.

The program of the local white ruling class is clear; they want to change the demographics of this city, without the presence of Black people. Our people have the right to decide what we want our community to look like when it's rebuilt. We won't allow the land-grabbers of Black people's land, the gentrifiers, to chase out those who really built this city.

If we want real justice and equity we'll have to do it

ourselves. Certainly the Democratic politicians, the same old folks, aren't going to do it. The two big capitalist parties, Democrats and the Republicans, make empty promises to the people; they only give awards to those who are politically connected. In the past two years, what they did for Katrina Survivors adds up to almost nothing.

It's going to take a fight on the streets to get people home. We have to seize this opportunity to try and put one of our own in this seat. In the least, we will succeed in raising the proper issues that people have on their minds.

We have a government not of, by, and for the people, but of, by and for the rich. We really believe that working people deserve better than what they are given in this society.

We believe that the Reconstruction Movement needs a Reconstruction Party. This party is being founded in New Orleans to refocus priorities locally and nationally on human needs and a just society. Locally, the focus of the "Reconstruction Party" is a full and just reconstruction of our city and other areas affected by Hurricane Katrina and levee failures, with the full involvement of those whose lives have been damaged by these disasters. We need a party of our own that can advance our program and our interests.

The six-point platform for the recovery of New Orleans is genuine democracy for the majority; housing; health care; jobs and living wage; education; and full and just reconstruction. □



WW PHOTO: G. DUNKEL

Malcolm Suber speaking at a forum in New York's New School October 2005.

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In Jena 6 case

Mass pressure put on district attorney

By Jaimeson Champion

The Sept. 27 bail release of one of the Jena 6, Mychal Bell, and the decision to no longer try him as an adult, was a hard fought victory won by the hundreds of thousands of demonstrators who took to the streets for the massive and historic demonstration in Jena, La., and in other cities across the country on Sept 20.

With a national spotlight shining directly on his office, Jena District Attorney Reed Walters had no choice but to drop his inexplicable attempt to try Bell as an adult.

In recent weeks, many Black leaders around the country have intensified the call for an investigation of District Attorney Reed Walters for prosecutorial misconduct. The Congressional Black Caucus has called for a probe into Walters' handling of the Jena 6 case.

In a letter sent to the U.S. attorney general, the CBC wrote that Walters' handling of the case was an "abuse of prosecutorial discretion" and was an "unbelievable example of the kind of separate and unequal treatment that was once commonplace in the Deep South."

Activists around the country have also been organizing an innovative form of protest against Walters by urging supporters to mail dirty sneakers to the district

attorney's office—to symbolize Walter's ludicrous claim that the sneakers worn by the Jena 6 during the schoolyard fight constituted "deadly weapons."

Walters, whose office already stinks of racism, will now have a new smell to contend with.

Walters has come to symbolize racism in the U.S. criminal injustice system. The Klansman in a lawyer's suit was so blatantly racist in his attempt to railroad the Jena 6 that it is shocking that an immediate investigation of his office is even a subject of debate.

But it is also very important to stress that the kind of racially motivated prosecution on display in the Jena 6 case is not just the action of one rogue district attorney. Rather, it is a symptom of the systematic racism inherent in the U.S. criminal justice system. It is an example of racist processes that are played out in Black communities across the country every single day.

From a Black youth in New York City sentenced to years in prison for a minor drug offense under the Rockefeller laws, to a group of Black teenagers in Jena being tried for attempted murder when they were simply standing up to racism in the schoolyard, the way Black defendants are prosecuted and sentenced in the U.S. is dramatically different from the

treatment received by their white counterparts.

The manner in which the Jena 6 and other Black youths are treated nationwide exposes the notion of "equality under the law" as nothing more than empty rhetoric. The grass-roots anti-racist movement that has been galvanized by the recent events in Jena clearly recognizes this fact.

Signs and banners proclaiming "We All Live in Jena" and "We are All Jena," which have been prevalent at the demonstrations in recent weeks, have signaled that the movement plans on intensifying the fight against racism and national oppression throughout the United States. □

Protester in Jena, La. on Sept. 20.

WW PHOTO: GLORIA RUBAC



ww
commentary

Rock star's anti-racist video on Jena 6

John "Cougar" Mellencamp, a longtime popular white rock singer and songwriter in the United States, recently wrote a powerful song about the case of the Jena 6—Black youths facing serious charges for attacking a white student.

The song, entitled, "Jena, Take Your Nooses Down," is performed on a video that includes amazing images from the civil-rights movement, including shots of Malcolm X, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., photos of the Jena 6 and of horrific lynchings of Black people.

The song refers to the three nooses hung from a "white" tree by racists after Black students sat under it at a high school in September 2006.

When the mayor of Jena, La., denounced the video as "inflammatory" and "defamatory," Mellencamp responded, "The song is not written as an indictment of the people of Jena but, rather, as a condemnation of racism in America."

Go to www.mellencamp.com to see the video and read Mellencamp's explanation.

—Monica Moorehead

FORT PIERCE, FLA.

Teenaged girl brutalized by racist officer

Continued from page 2

Both women and people of color have historically been victims of acts of police brutality. We as oppressed people have never had the luxury of placing our protection in the hands of officers who serve a historically and currently racist, sexist state.

We remember and still experience the days when officers are given terrorist reign over our communities and our bodies by the U.S. federal and state governments. Furthermore, young people in this country have few if any rights. The fear anyone would feel while being arrested is magnified when the person is a young woman of color.

Therefore the young girl's attempts to protect herself are a product of the inability of this corrupt state to do so for her and are completely valid.

This videotape is now all over the

Internet, as are comments and discussions based on its content. Responses to the video vary from disgust and outrage to declarations that the officer's actions were just and even provoked.

While many online bloggers and responders are calling the officer's actions an obvious racist and sexist abuse of power, others, like the right-wing online media outlet freerepublic.com, are attempting to validate the violent arrest.

This videotape's release all too closely corresponds with the mobilizations around the Jena 6 injustice in Louisiana and the racist murder of DeOnte Rawlings in Washington, D.C. These racist injustices are blatant attacks on our Black youth and have inspired what has been called the New Civil Rights Era.

The writer is a leader of Raleigh FIST-Fight Imperialism, Stand Together-youth group. Contact fist@workers.org.

Sports figures demand justice for Jena 6

Jocks 4 Justice is a group of sports writers and athletes, former and current, who are progressive on a number of issues. The Oct. 3 statement from J4J demands justice for the Jena 6 in Louisiana. For more information on Jocks 4 Justice, email edgeofsports@gmail.com or go to slamonline.com/online/2007/10/jocks-4-justice/.

We the undersigned members of the sports community call for the egregiously punitive criminal charges to be dropped against Mychal Bell, Carwin Jones, Theo Shaw, Robert Bailey Jr., Bryant Purvis, and Jesse Beard, also known as the Jena 6.

We don't call for this because all six young men are accomplished athletes in their own right, but because this case is drenched of the worst double standards and excesses of the criminal justice system.

The story by now has become well known. It started in September 2006 at Jena High School in Central Louisiana, where three lynching nooses were hung from a tree after black students dared sit underneath what was known as "the white tree."

Tensions escalated over the course of the semester that resulted in several altercations. Last December six African American students were involved in a school fight in which a white student suffered a concussion—but was able to attend a school function that same evening.

They were subsequently charged with attempted second-degree murder and conspiracy, charges that would put them in jail for a combined 100 years without parole. The Jena 6 range in ages from 15 to 17.

One of the Jena 6, Mychal Bell, was found guilty in less than two days by an all-white jury. He was convicted of aggravated battery and conspiracy charges and faced up to 22 years in prison. His original sentence has since been thrown out, ruled unconstitutional since he was tried as an adult.

Recently, the prosecution has announced that charges against Shaw and Jones have been reduced and we are grateful that Mychal Bell's initial conviction was dismissed.

That is precisely why now is the time to keep up the pressure and get all of these ridiculously punitive charges dismissed as well. We stand with the thousands around the country who marched on Sept. 20 to just say no to double standards and racism in the criminal justice system.

Sincerely,

• Etan THOMAS, *Washington Wizards*; Author, "More Than an Athlete" • Joakim NOAH, *Chicago Bulls*; Final 4 Most Outstanding Player 2006 • Scott FUJITA, *New Orleans Saints* • Troy VINCENT, Former NFL All-Pro; President NFL Players Association • Billy HUNTER, President, NBA Players Association • Doug CHRISTIE, 14 year NBA Veteran; Author, "No Ordinary Love" • John AMAECHI, Former NBA Player; Author, "Man in the Middle" • Anthony PRIOR, Former NFL Player; Author, "Slave Side of Sunday" • Jeff "Snowman" MONSON, Ultimate Fighting Championship • Dr. John CARLOS, 1968 Olympic Bronze Medalist; 1/2 of the immortal Black Power Salute; Olympic Project for Human Rights • Lee EVANS, 1968 Olympic Gold Medalist; Olympic Project for Human Rights • Eddie Mustafa MUHAMMAD, Former Light Heavyweight Champion J.A.B. • Jim BOUTON, Former New York Yankee; Author, "Ball Four" • David MEGGYESY, Former NFL Linebacker; Author, "Out of Their League" • Toni SMITH, Former member of Manhattanville College Women's Basketball Team; Famous for her 2003 on the court stand at the start of the Iraq War • Dennis BRUTUS, Former Director of SANROC (the South African Non Racialist Olympic Committee); Professor emeritus Africana studies at University of Pittsburgh • Dr. Phillip SHINNICK, Former world record holder in long jump; Ambassador of UNESCO; U.S. Olympian • Jemele HILL, Columnist, ESPN.com • Scoop JACKSON, Columnist, ESPN.com • Lang WHITAKER, Executive Editor, SLAM Magazine • Ben OSBORNE, Editor in Chief, SLAM Magazine • Lester RODNEY, Oldest Living Sportswriter; Sports Editor, Daily Worker 1936-1958 • Michael TILLERY, Co-Founder and Writer, "The Starting Five"; SLAM Magazine Contributor • D.K. WILSON, Writer, "The Starting Five"; Counterpunch Political Newsletter, The Chicago Sports Review • Dave ZIRIN, Writer, The Nation and SLAM Magazine; Author, "Welcome to the Terrordome"



Tommie Smith and Dr. John Carlos, medal winners, raise their fists in a Black Power salute at the 1968 Olympic Games.

SAN FRANCISCO

Historic strike of low-paid security guards

Special to Workers World

With large, loud and disciplined rallies and marches through downtown San Francisco, security officers ended a historic three-day strike against their employers, targeting three large companies including ABM, on Sept. 27. The security guards work in this city's high-rise office buildings.

Organized by their union, the 6,000-member Local 24/7 of the Service Employees International Union, the predominantly African American, Filipino and Latino security officers marched behind a banner reading, "Stop the Double Standard Now."

The union is demanding that security companies and building owners improve wages and conditions for guards and sign a new union contract. Local 24/7 charges that employers maintain a double standard, paying these security guards less and providing fewer benefits than other workers in the same buildings.

The union is demanding wage and benefit parity with janitors in the downtown buildings who make an average of \$5 more per hour and have better benefits.

This is the first-ever strike by security officers on the West Coast, according to the union. Company attempts to bring in strikebreakers

were turned away by the militant picket lines. Workers picketed at struck buildings, and held rallies at 6 a.m., noon and 4:30 p.m., during the three-day strike.

Strikers returned to work after three days in a good-faith gesture as negotiations resumed. One employer attempted to lock out the returning workers. But after the workers marched and occupied a building lobby, the lockout was ended and they went back to work.

On Oct. 4, however, after security companies refused to negotiate a fair union contract, security guards and their supporters marched through downtown, sat in and blocked an intersection.

Family medical care is a key demand. One security worker, Jason Chen, interviewed on KPFA Radio, said family medical care costs him \$500 a month and eats up over one-quarter of his paycheck. Pay for security officers, according to the KPFA report, is around \$10 to \$12 per hour, which doesn't go far in a high-cost-of-living area like San Francisco.

They have been working without a contract for three months since the old contract expired.

The California Legislative Black Caucus has issued a report on "Poverty Conditions in Private Security," which highlights the plight of security officers working in



Day three of strike.

PHOTO: SEIU WEBSITE

office buildings owned by the likes of Morgan Stanley Real Estate and prominent San Francisco property millionaire and Democratic Party fundraiser Walter Shorenstein. Over half the security union's membership is African American.

Local 24/7 modeled the campaign after an earlier Service Employees drive by downtown San Francisco janitors that resulted in substantial gains for the workers. Many janitors, as well as labor and community supporters, had joined picket lines to support the security guards.

San Francisco's mayor and board of supervisors have urged building owners to negotiate with the union to close the wage gap and provide affordable health care, the union said. Local 24/7, formerly the International Union of Security Officers, voted to affiliate with the Service Employees in 2001.

For more information, go to www.stophthedoublestandard.org or call Gina Bowers at 310-291-5711. □

DETROIT

Nurses fight for union

A raucous demonstration of more than a hundred nurses outside of the Detroit Medical Center on Oct. 4 supported the organizing efforts of the nurses working inside. On Oct. 1, the DMC Organizing Committee for Change had filed a petition for a union recognition election with the National Labor Relations Board. More than half of the nurses at DMC component hospitals Harper and Hutzel have signed cards supporting the union.

Unionized nurses from across the state came out from the Michigan Nurses Association convention held nearby to show support for the DMC nurses, who are standing up to an anti-union campaign by the hospital administration, and to encourage the DMC not to interfere with the upcoming vote.

In addition to conducting intimidating one-on-one meetings, disciplining nurses for distributing union material while continuing to pass out anti-union information, the DMC CEO Mike Duggan has threatened to thwart the election by claiming that most nurses are supervisors and therefore exempt from union representation.

The DMC organizing drive is an important battle in this city that is devastated by auto plant closings and the massive loss of industrial jobs. Michigan's Democratic Gov.



Jennifer Granholm is promoting jobs in health care statewide but particularly in Detroit as an antidote to the chronic, pervasive unemployment and lack of opportunity for youth.

But will they be jobs where workers are organized and able to fight for better conditions for nurses and patients from this community? Or will they be jobs where the business bottom line comes first?

Mike Duggan, former deputy Wayne County executive, and former Wayne County prosecutor with connections at the upper echelons of both Democratic and Republican

parties and now CEO at DMC, is no friend of workers.

Appointed to "turn around" the financially strapped DMC, he did so with federal, state and city funds and renegotiating contracts with the doctors at the Wayne State University Medical School.

In a leaflet addressed to the Detroit community, the DMC registered nurses call on the DMC to "stop the use of public funds to fight RNs." The DMC nurses ask supporters to tell CEO Mike Duggan at 313-745-1250 to sign a fair election agreement with the RNs.

—Report & photo by Cheryl LaBash

ON THE PICKET LINE

by Sue Davis

Stop Social Security 'no-match'

A federal judge in San Francisco has extended a temporary ban that has stopped a draconian law targeting immigrant workers from going into effect.

The ban, set to last until Oct. 11, began on Aug. 31, when another federal judge issued the temporary injunction sought by the AFL-CIO, the American Civil Liberties Union, the National Immigration Law Center and several San Francisco labor organizations.

The groups sued the Department of Homeland Security, Immigration and Customs Enforcement, and the Social Security Administration to stop the Homeland Security's new "no-match" rule.

The rule, which would affect 8.7 million workers, requires bosses to give workers 90 days to fix problems if their Social Security numbers don't match the system's database. If the "no-match" problem isn't resolved, bosses must then fire workers or face criminal prosecution or fines of up to \$14,000 per worker.

However, a recent government study revealed 17.8 million errors in the Social Security Administration's database, with more than 70 percent affecting U.S.-born workers.

The Oct. 2 New York Times reported a startling move: Several management organizations, headed by the super-reactionary U.S. Chamber of Commerce, support the ban.

"In court documents," wrote the Times, "the business groups argued that the impact of the rule in terms of hiring and training office workers to comply with the new procedures and deadlines, and firing employees whose discrepancies were not resolved in time, would be 'substantial, immediate and irreparable.'"

Meanwhile, the struggle continues in the streets. In Aurora, Ill., about 20 Latin@ workers who make valves at Ballco Manufacturing walked off the job Sept. 20 after 10 employees were fired for not providing "proper" employee documentation. Under the current act employers must verify worker eligibility within three days from the start of employment.

Some picketing workers have held their jobs for six or more years.

The unorganized workers received help from the Chicago Workers Collaborative, a workers' rights group organized by the Electrical Workers union (UE).

Restaurant delivery workers want justice

Twenty-two Chinese immigrant deliverers at two New York City Saigon Grill restaurants were fired in March after they complained about being paid only \$120 for a 75-hour work week. That's \$1.60 an hour—a blatant violation of both federal and state minimum wage laws.

After filing a lawsuit in New York state court that accused the restaurants of minimum wage and overtime violations, the workers set up weekly picket lines organized by the group Justice Will Be Served.

On Oct. 4 their case was also submitted to a National Labor Relations Board law judge. The judge will rule on whether the restaurants illegally retaliated against the workers because they organized to assert their rights. If the ruling is favorable to the workers, the restaurants will have to reinstate them, pay them back wages and agree to not engage in further retaliation or intimidation.

Justice Will Be Served is a coalition of advocacy groups for immigrant workers, which includes the 318 Restaurant Workers Union, the Chinese Staff and Workers' Association and the National Mobilization Against Sweatshops. This case is also supported by the New York City Central Labor Council.

Mass. workers win union rights

Massachusetts Gov. Deval Patrick signed a state law on Sept. 27 that enables workers to form unions by signing authorization cards. The law is similar to the majority sign-up provisions of the federal Employee Free Choice Act, which, unfortunately, the Democratic-majority Congress did not pass this year.

Last year Gov. Mitt Romney, now a front-runner for the Republican presidential nomination, had vetoed the same bill.

This victory is the latest for state workers around the country. Over the summer, public workers in New Hampshire and Oregon won majority authorization and state workers in Delaware won collective bargaining rights.

Chrysler strike solidarity stops production

The following report was phoned in by Martha Grevatt, a Chrysler worker for 20 years, from the United Auto Workers picket line in Northeast Ohio in the early afternoon on Oct. 10. Before a tentative agreement was announced that same day, production was shut down for seven hours. There will be an analysis on the one-day strike in next week's WW.

Forty-nine thousand Chrysler workers walked off the job across the country today [Oct. 10]. We got word from our union stewards at 11 this morning that the deadline for a contract had passed and a strike was on.

We didn't waste any time leaving.

Forklift drivers and sweeper drivers were honking their horns on the way out. Scores of people are volunteering at the union hall. People are picketing out here in northeast Ohio; for some it is not their assigned shift but they want to be out here. Referring to the Wall Street equity firm that bought Chrysler in August, one picketer commented: "I believe Cerberus is playing hard ball. They are showing their real hand."

A lot of people are honking in support. The cafeteria workers, who are in the HERE union, just drove by waving and honking. We all know that we need to give the company a taste of workers' power and shut them down. □



Chrysler workers. Martha Grevatt, on the right, has worked at Chrysler for 20 years.

WW PHOTO: SUSAN SCHNUR

Grassroots revolt against trans exclusion from federal job bill

By Leslie Feinberg

When the Democrats are the minority in Congress, they promise "a chicken in every pot" if voters elevate them to the majority. Once the Democrats hold numerical sway on Capitol Hill, however, many hopeful activists learn the hard way that their goose is cooked.

In a Sept. 27 back-room maneuver, House Democratic leaders cut transgender people out of the H.R. 2015, known as the Employment Non-Discrimination Act—ENDA. The wording in H.R. 2015 would have made it illegal to bar employment or promotions or to fire a worker based on sexual orientation or gender identity.

The new version—H.R. 3685—deleted protection against discrimination based on "gender-related identity, appearance, or mannerisms or other gender-related characteristics of an individual.

House Speaker Nancy Pelosi of San Francisco and Rep. George Miller, who chairs the House Education and Labor Committee where the House vote would have taken place, were behind the move to jettison this crucial job protection. Rep. Barney Frank of Massachusetts, a gay man, had the unenviable job of trying to sell the sell-out, relying on the language of Machiavellian pragmatism.

More teeth were also removed. The new bill excluded state and local govern-

ments from requiring domestic partner benefits.

In a statement Lambda Legal explained, "This version of ENDA states without qualification that refusal by employers to extend health insurance benefits to the domestic partners of their employees that are provided only to married couple couples cannot be considered sexual orientation discrimination."

And it exempted religious-based employers—from hospitals to universities—from federal compliance.

However, even if H.R. 3685—ENDA-lite—had passed it was still considered only a symbolic vote, since a veto from the White House was a sure bet.

The bill in different forms has floated in the ebbs and flows of Democratic control of Congress and the White House since 1994. In 1996, when ENDA was first voted on in the Senate, it ran the gauntlet of yea's and nay's alongside the federal Defense of Marriage Act.

DOMA won and ENDA failed. DOMA barred any federal recognition of same-sex relationships.

Democratic President Bill "I feel your pain" Clinton made common cause with notorious anti-gay ideologue Jesse Helms to win passage of DOMA, and signed it.

Unprecedented unity

Democrats may have been unprepared for the firestorm of protest the Sept. 27

move to drop transgender from ENDA ignited. On the day of the announcement that gender identity had been stripped out of the bill, nine national lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans organizations united in opposition.

The groups included Pride At Work (AFL-CIO); Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays; the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force; and the National Center for Lesbian Rights. Even the National Stonewall Democrats broke ranks with their own party to unite against the ENDA exclusion.

Angry individuals fired off a barrage of letters and emails to congressional representatives.

Activists set up 24-hour protests outside Pelosi's and Frank's offices on the West Coast and East Coast respectively. Pelosi was targeted by a demonstration outside her appearance as a feted guest of honor at the Human Rights Campaign national dinner on Oct. 6.

Within days, it was clear that HRC—which describes itself as one of the largest LGBT civil-rights organizations in the United States—was refusing to unite for transgender inclusion. Donna Rose, the only trans person on its Board of Directors, publicly resigned on Oct. 2 as a result. More resignations reportedly followed.

More than 90 national and state LGBT groups signed a letter that was hand-

delivered to congressional representatives on Oct. 1. These groups include the National Black Justice Coalition, International Federation of Black Prides, Mautner Project, National Youth Advocacy Coalition, American Institute of Bisexuality and BiNet USA.

More than 150 organizations announced in an Oct. 15 news release that they'd formed United ENDA—a united front to win a fully inclusive ENDA.

The National Organization for Women issued its own news release, stating that it joined with "hundreds of civil, women's and human rights organizations" to demand passage of the inclusive ENDA bill, H.R. 2015.

Nancy Wohlforth, co-president of Pride At Work, summed up, "Transgender people face the highest rate of unemployment in our community and it would be unconscionable for us to sit idly by and see them stripped from this important piece of federal legislation."

The National Center for Transgender Equality stated in a 2006 survey that 57 percent of trans people polled reported job discrimination and 60 percent earned less than \$15,300 a year.

The ENDA vote is currently stalled in the House Education and Labor Committee as the Democratic leadership regrouped in the face of unprecedented unity for job protection for transgender, transsexual and intersexual workers. □

Marion Jones demonized by big business sports

By Kathy Durkin

Marion Jones was the first woman to ever win five Olympic medals. In stellar performances, Jones, one of the best track-and-field athletes in the world, won these prizes at the Sydney summer games in 2000.

But no matter how high she rose and how much she accomplished, Jones was not immune from the racism faced by athletes who are from oppressed communities. Having been singled out by the federal government in an investigation into BALCO, a company that made or supplied performance-enhancing drugs to athletes, she became the first athlete to be convicted in this case.

On Oct. 5, after being constantly hounded, harassed and intimidated for years, Jones pleaded guilty to perjury to federal agents about use of performance-enhancing substances. She faces imprisonment.

On Oct. 8, Jones turned in her hard-earned medals to Olympics officials.

The media have relentlessly pursued and vilified Jones in the most callous way, whipping up racism and sexism in the process.

Worn down by the unrelenting pressure, Jones tearfully announced that she was retiring from track and field, which she loves.

But there is much more to her situation than the official story.

The Olympics, although touted as a fair-playing field where the best world athletes show their skills and compete, is big business. Billions of dollars are at stake. Corporations invest millions to reap billions. The 11 top sponsors of the Sydney Olympics, which included McDonald's, Nike and Coca-Cola, paid a total of \$605 million.

From 2002 to 2006, the International

Olympics Committee took in nearly \$4 billion, much of it from corporate sponsors. Other funds come from broadcasting rights and licensing fees.

Networks pay millions of dollars for exclusive broadcasting rights; NBC alone is expected to pay \$894 million to show the 2008 games in Beijing.

But the athletes are paid nothing. They are regarded as workers, as a means to make mega-profits for the International Olympics Committee and its corporate backers. The IOC, a reactionary body that has profited from the athletes' labor, seeks to maintain absolute control over all of the world games' participants. It has no sympathy for the athletes. At any moment, the IOC can quickly turn against them.

Yet every athlete trains for years for these games. Athletes are pressured to push themselves to their maximum endurance, to compete at the most intense

level, and to do anything to get an edge over their competitors—at all costs, even endangering their own health, all in order to bring home Olympic gold.

It is widely known that the use of performance-enhancing drugs, including steroids, is rampant throughout the sports world at every level, especially at the top. This phenomenon is worldwide. The Olympic Games are no exception. These drugs which bring in massive profits for the big pharmaceutical companies are readily available, even through the internet.

This is what sports competitions under capitalism look like.

Misplacing blame

It is the athletes from oppressed communities who face the most scrutiny, no matter how talented, wealthy, or adored by their fans. They are in the greatest danger of government prosecution and

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NEPAL

Revolutionaries call on mass support to end monarchy

By David Hoskins

Nepal's communist revolutionaries walked out of that country's interim government in mid-September and announced immediate plans to launch street protests. The walkout followed the government's rejection of a 22-point set of demands by the Communist Party of Nepal-Maoist (CPN-M) that were meant to ensure free and transparent polls for planned Constituent Assembly elections in November.

Three weeks later, on Oct. 5, the government announced the November elections would be postponed.

The Nepali Congress Party and other reformist parties objected to two key points in particular. These basic points would have declared Nepal a republic before the polls, to ensure that the monarchy does not interfere with elections, and would have established a proportional representation-based election system. Nepal still has a king, despite massive protests against the monarchy last year.

The government's rejection of these demands, say the revolutionaries, risks providing cover to the criminal supporters of King Gyanendra in the army and among underground terrorist units, allowing them to disrupt elections, and has created an unnecessary crisis in election preparations.

Other organizations have voiced support for the CPN-M's electoral demands. Amik Sherchan, chair of the People's Front Nepal, has stated that the 22 prerequisites were legitimate and that "the Maoists were left with no option but to launch a program of strong protests to establish a republic." People's Front Nepal is a semi-underground leftist organization and a member of Nepal's interim government.

The CPN-M remains in Nepal's interim parliament, where it has become the second-largest party since pulling out of the government. Three other groups, including the militant Communist Party of Nepal (Marxist-Leninist-Maoist), have merged with the CPN-M since it withdrew from the cabinet. The CPN-M has emphasized the need for a single revolutionary communist party to fulfill the aspirations of Nepal's workers and oppressed.

Maoists call street protests; student organizations join

After all four Maoist ministers announced their resignations from the government, the CPN-M called for street agitation to begin on Sept. 25. Dr. Baburam Bhattarai, a leading party official, declared that, "Efforts to declare a republic from the parliament have failed. Now we will declare a republic from the streets." The CPN-M has promised to hold actions in all of Nepal's 4,000 villages and at every district administration office in order to advance their people's agenda.

The actions are being unrolled in carefully crafted phases. The first phase was held from Sept. 19 to 21, when the Maoists held a door-to-door public awareness campaign surrounding their demands. A week of rallies began in the capital on Sept. 22 and was planned to spread geographically. The revolutionaries are preparing to launch an exposure campaign to reveal corrupt government officials and business people.

Students, too, vowed mass participation in the street protests. The All Nepal National Independent Student Union-Revolutionary (ANNISU-R) laid out its own protest agenda. Public hearings in schools and universities began on Sept. 19 and were expected to continue until Oct.

3. Motorcycle rallies across the country began Sept. 29 and torch-lit rallies were to follow.

More than 4,000 soldiers in the People's Liberation Army (PLA) had earlier walked out of their cantonments to protest in favor of the 22 demands raised by the revolutionaries. The PLA is the armed wing of the CPN-M and has voluntarily confined itself to a U.N.-monitored cantonment during the peace process initiated by the revolutionaries. More than 30,000 PLA soldiers are stationed in 28 cantonments around the country.

Revolutionaries champion people's needs

Many of the government's ruling parties fear an embarrassing setback in the polls at the hands of the revolutionaries. The popular program advocated by the Maoists and the revolutionary student and youth organizations has done much to earn the support of Nepal's oppressed workers and peasants.

The revolutionaries have consistently exposed corrupt landlords and held them accountable in People's Courts set up around the country. For many of Nepal's poor, this is the only system of justice available to them.

The revolutionaries have been in the vanguard of the fight to abolish Nepal's brutal feudal monarchy. The CPN-M initiated 10 years of armed struggle which, combined with the street protests it helped coordinate, brought an end to King Gyanendra's absolute rule late last year. He had clung to power with the support of the U.S., Britain and India. The revolutionaries continue to be the most consistent force advocating the total abolition of Nepal's monarchy and the establishment of democratic republicanism with fair elections.

Additional campaigns have established free health care in poor districts and the creation of a Health Team Project coordinated by the PLA's medical department to create units of medical specialists and support staff in rural areas.

In August the Young Communist League (YCL) mobilized 600 cadres over a course of three days to collect tons of garbage from the streets of Kathmandu.

Nepal's poverty cries out for revolutionary change

Nepal is an impoverished country of 29 million people that until recently was ruled by a feudal monarchy dominated by the huge capitalist state of India to its south. Only 10 percent of Nepal's population has access to electric power. More than 85 percent of the people live in rural areas without running water or basic sanitation.

Malnutrition is rampant among children and at least one-third of the population lives below the official poverty line. While literacy runs a little less than 50 percent, it is only 39 percent among women. Meanwhile, Nepal's infant mortality rate currently exceeds 63 deaths per 1,000 live births.

Nepal ranks among the 50 poorest countries in the world. The poor living conditions have fueled the militant consciousness of the masses and paved the way for revolutionary forces to enjoy a mass base of support for the armed struggle launched by the CPN-M in 1996.

In light of the accomplishments of the revolutionary forces in providing for the basic needs of Nepal's suffering people, it comes as no surprise that many in Nepal's ruling parties are hesitant to compete with the CPN-M at the polls on a level playing field. □

Danger of wider war U.S. targets Iran, blames Iraq

Continued from page 1

allies. An Oct. 1 article in the London Independent was headlined: "U.S. plan for air strikes on Iran 'backed by Brown.'" Gordon Brown is Britain's new prime minister.

On Sept. 16 Foreign Minister Bernard Kouchner of France declared: "We have to prepare for the worst—the worst is war." Last month the new French president, Nicolas Sarkozy, said after visiting Bush that the world had "a catastrophic alternative: an Iranian bomb or the bombing of Iran."

The setback for the Bush administration on the U.N. front has not stopped the Pentagon's plans. Instead it has changed the script.

New rationale for an attack

The New Yorker magazine ran a long article in its issue dated Oct. 8 headlined "Shifting Targets: The Administration's Plan for Iran," by journalist Seymour Hersh, well-known for his foreign policy articles containing "insider information," including Pentagon and White House leaks. Hersh describes how the Bush administration has redefined the war in Iraq as a "strategic battle between the United States and Iran."

Every problem that the U.S. occupation forces face in Iraq is blamed on Iran.

There is wide speculation that the rea-

son Gen. Peter Pace was replaced as chair of the Joint Chiefs of Staff was based on his publicly stated view in February that he saw no firm evidence of Tehran supplying weapons to Shiite militias inside Iraq.

Pace was replaced by Adm. Michael Mullen, formerly U.S. chief of naval operations. Mullen was in charge of coordinating naval war games in 2006 and 2007 off the Iranian coastline. Mullen said he considers it "unacceptable that Iran is providing U.S. enemies in Iraq and Afghanistan with capabilities that are hurting and killing U.S. troops." (Inside the Pentagon, June 21)

Gen. David Petraeus, the top commander in Iraq, is always willing to repeat the White House's line on the U.S. occupation's "success" in Iraq while blaming Iran for its catastrophic failure. Speaking to a group of reporters on Oct. 5 at a U.S. military base 20 miles from the Iranian border, Petraeus once again claimed that Iran was giving Iraqi militia groups advanced weaponry and guidance: "They are responsible for providing the weapons, the training, the funding and in some cases the direction for operations that have indeed killed U.S. soldiers."

U.S. military officers have repeatedly presented what they say as evidence of Iranian-produced arms, including a new concave design in improved explosive



Sept. 29 protesters in Washington, D.C.

WW PHOTO: DUSTIN LANGLEY

devices. The latest generation of IEDs is called explosively formed projectile bombs. The key components of these EFPs are copper discs, rolls of electrical wire, plastic pipes for casings, ball-bearings and batteries. These simple projectiles are capable of penetrating the armor of 60-ton Abrams tanks.

IEDs account for 70 to 80 percent of the U.S. deaths in Iraq. Instructions on building IEDs are readily and widely available, even on the internet. Iraq has tens of thousands of highly educated engineers, technicians, scientists and machinists. The idea that Iraqis lack technical expertise or that Iraqi resistance fighters would need to import these weapons from Iran is ridiculous. Every resistance struggle is able to develop effective low-tech weap-

ons. As a popular insurgency grows, so does the wide application of useful technology.

But to acknowledge that there is overwhelming opposition to the U.S. occupation in Iraq is to acknowledge that the U.S. war is not winnable.

The real danger is that U.S. imperialism, unwilling to accept the inevitable, will escalate the war to other countries. The insatiable hunger of the capitalist class to control the rich resources of the entire region drives them recklessly forward. The international movement that has organized wide opposition to the horrendous devastation of U.S. war in Iraq must more seriously mobilize opposition to the growing danger of a far wider war against Iran. □

Who will stop U.S. atrocities in Iraq?

By Deirdre Griswold

The latest atrocity story to reach the U.S. media from Iraq is that masked private security guards escorting several SUVs opened withering fire on a car in downtown Baghdad on Oct. 9, killing two women and wounding two others.

According to a sister-in-law of Marou Awanis, one of the murdered women, she had been using her car to taxi government employees to help raise money for her three daughters.

It was another case in which racist profiling led to bloody carnage for no other crime than DWI—driving while Iraqi. According to the Associated Press, the company the gunmen work for has been identified as the innocuous-sounding Unity Resources Group, an Australian-owned firm that employs Special Forces veterans and former police from that country, the U.S., New Zealand and Britain.

The gunmen have not been publicly identified, nor have their past records or nationalities been revealed.

This hideous incident comes on the heels of demands by the Washington-installed Iraqi “government” for compensation after another, even larger killing. Even this dependent regime is demanding that the U.S.-owned Blackwater Co.

pay \$8 million to each of the families of 17 Iraqi civilians massacred by its employees in September while they were escorting U.S. diplomats through the besieged and half-destroyed Iraqi capital.

An Iraqi commission investigating Blackwater says its gunmen have killed another 21 people, in addition to the 17 massacred last month, since it began escorting U.S. diplomats in Iraq.

These diplomats are so hated now that the State Department pays millions of dollars in lucrative contracts to Blackwater to provide them with private gunmen when they emerge from their bunkers to go anywhere.

Everyday news like this makes a mockery of claims by the Bush administration that it is winning the hearts and minds of the Iraqi people and preparing that country for “democracy.”

It also exposes the Democratic Party, which posed as an opposition to Bush’s policies when campaigning for congressional seats last year but now is ready to support this war for years to come. And, when asked point-blank in one of the candidates’ debates if she would oppose an Israeli attack on Iran’s nuclear facilities, Hillary Clinton, considered the front-runner for the Democratic nomination because she has raised the most money,

said no. Such an attack is a likely scenario for the beginning of a U.S. assault on Iran.

The International Atomic Energy Agency has confirmed that Iran is developing nuclear power, which all the IAEA member states have the right to do, and has no facilities for making nuclear weapons. An attack on Iran would be a blatant act of aggression and would widen the horrendous war begun by Washington over control of the world’s most concentrated oil-rich area, the Middle East.

The people of the United States don’t want this war. Their votes and the polls have shown that for some time. Military recruiting has dropped to a new low, despite large cash payments for signing up. Moreover, the people are deeply repelled and worried by the government’s open defense of torture, secret renditions and spying that has been a corollary to the war.

Look for the gorilla

So who wants the war? Who is it that pours immense funds into the coffers of political candidates supporting the war, making it a done deal that whoever wins in 2008, the war will go on? Who is willing to spend trillions of dollars of taxpayers’ money on aggression to control the earth’s dwindling fossil fuels, responsible

for the catastrophe of global warming, but practically nothing on a strategy to reorganize this chaotic and wasteful economy to reverse climate change?

As the detective novels tell us, look for the motive. And in this capitalist society the motive behind imperialist aggression is as apparent, but also as unmentioned, as the 800-pound gorilla in the room.

We’re talking about those who have the most reason to defend the capitalist way of life—the capitalists themselves. Not just the oil barons, although they’re very concentrated, politically powerful and have an immediate stake in controlling the world’s oil and gas.

This is a capitalist war for profit. It’s as simple as that. They’re a small class but they dominate this society with the enormous wealth they have plundered from workers around the world.

Yet they are afraid. What they fear is class war—not the one-sided war against the workers the bosses have been waging for years, but one in which this multinational class of women and men, gay and straight, immigrants and those born here, brutalized by racist police, burdened with debt, losing their pensions and health care, say “Enough!” and refuse to be fodder for the bosses’ cannons—or their profit machine. That day is coming. □

Koreans agree on peaceful economic cooperation

By Deirdre Griswold

The steadfastness of the leaders and people of north Korea, combined with the message sent to their politicians by the masses in south Korea—through countless demonstrations, meetings, confrontations and through the polls—that they fervently want reunification and peaceful collaboration with their sisters and brothers in the north, were the necessary conditions underlying a recent breakthrough in relations on the Korean peninsula.

On Oct. 4, Kim Jong Il, representing the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea in the north, and Roh Moo Hyun, representing the Republic of Korea in the south, met in Pyongyang, the capital of the DPRK. They signed a broad agreement to strengthen economic collaboration between the two parties and take concrete steps to ease the tensions that have existed ever since the U.S. massed troops in southern Korea at the end of World War II. Desperately trying to turn back the socialist revolution, led by Kim Il Sung, that was liberating the north, the U.S. set up a puppet government in the south and eventually waged a war against the north that was responsible for 4 million deaths.

For nearly half a century, no one and no goods were allowed to move across the Demilitarized Zone that cut the country in half. During most of that time, repressive military dictators chosen by Washington ruled the south and, although the war against the north ended in a cease-fire, a state of war has been in place ever since.

There was a brief thaw in the 1990s, and on June 15, 2000, the leaders of both halves of Korea met and signed a historic document moving toward peaceful cooperation. But that was followed by a hardening of the U.S. position. In his State of the Union address in January 2002, President George W. Bush labeled the

DPRK part of his imagined “axis of evil.”

At that time, the Pentagon seemed poised to win a quick victory in Iraq and Afghanistan and could then turn its attentions further east. Bush’s rhetoric appeared to be the prelude to stepping up its aggression against the DPRK, which was struggling to build back its economy after many setbacks.

Today, the Pentagon doesn’t know where it will get the troops to continue its occupations in the Middle East, let alone commit more to the nearly 30,000 soldiers it stations in south Korea.

Bush’s policies are discredited around the world, and U.S. military threats, while taken seriously, don’t produce the political results they once did.

The DPRK had responded to Bush’s threats by concentrating on building up its defenses. Its “army first” policy meant sacrifices by the people, but its clear determination and proven ability to develop all means of defending itself from attack—including an advanced missile system and a small stockpile of nuclear weapons—deterred the White House from going further with its bellicose campaign.

Meanwhile, the indignation of the masses in the south against the Bush regime grew by leaps and bounds. Polls showed the majority of people were for getting the U.S. troops out of their country and did not fear the north’s weapons.

This February, at six-party talks held in China, the north agreed to dismantle its nuclear program, which was for both military use and to generate power, in exchange for guarantees on obtaining a different type of nuclear reactor for power generation and fuel deliveries to meet the country’s power needs until the reactors went online.

The recent agreement between north and south reaffirmed the February nuclear plan.

The agreement signed on Oct. 4 is but

a step on the long road toward reunifying the Korean people and ending the U.S. military occupation of the south. But it is a significant one.

In addition to reaffirming the goals of reunification and independence set out in the June 15, 2000, joint declaration, the recent summit spelled out measures of economic cooperation that will strengthen the two halves of Korea.

They include:

- Work on opening railway freight traffic between Munsan and Pongdong and rebuilding and repairing the rail lines between Kaesong and Sinuiju, as well as the highway between Kaesong and Pyongyang, for joint use. The south is helping build the Kaesong Industrial Project in the north.

- Build zones for cooperation in ship-building in Anbyon and Nampho and work together in agriculture, health care and environmental protection.
- Develop exchange and cooperation in social and cultural fields such as history, language, education, science and technology, culture, arts and sports.

The White House has yet to release a statement giving its reaction to this development. A month earlier, however, Bush and Roh were visibly at odds when, in a media conference, Roh questioned the U.S. president on whether Washington would now work toward a peace treaty officially ending the 1950-1953 Korean War. □

The crises deepen — What is to be done?

Issues to be discussed:

- Washington’s threat to expand imperialist war to Iran
- Jena 6 case: potential for a new movement
- Immigrant workers intensify fight for rights
- Katrina/Rita survivors still seek right to return
- First U.S. Social Forum
- Capitalist globalization creates new conditions for workers here & worldwide
- Workers hit with mortgage foreclosures as capitalist economy sinks
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Costa Ricans vote for CAFTA under threat

By Heather Cottin

Although hundreds of thousands of Costa Ricans had earlier voted with their feet in a massive march against the Central American Free Trade Agreement, the nation narrowly voted to accept CAFTA on Oct. 7 after U.S. threats and intimidation.

So-called free trade, which really means imperialist-imposed rules that undercut indigenous industries, has spelled destitution to thousands of farmers and small businesses in Central America. Guatemala's National Peasant and Indigenous Coordinating Organization (CONIC) warned Costa Ricans against the CAFTA accords:

"A year already of CAFTA implementation in Guatemala, and the experience has been disastrous . . . imports increased the price of corn, [our] sacred and basic food." CONIC leaders noted that in Mexico, after NAFTA was passed, thousands of farmers had to move to the cities because they could not compete with U.S. companies' low prices for corn. (Prensa Latina, Oct. 5) Once these farmers have been dispossessed, the price then goes up.

A farmer in El Salvador from Cacaopera in Morazan province recently told Workers World: "Since CAFTA, our unemployment is over 60 percent. Privatization of basic things like water and electricity and health care has made life for the poor even worse. Our young people are leaving the countryside, never to return."

The depopulation of the rural areas in Mexico, Guatemala, El Salvador, Nicaragua and Honduras has fueled increased emigration to the U.S. It is not sanctioned by law, as is the migration



Sept. 30 massive march.

of capital to the region from imperialist countries. But it is necessary for the survival of rural and urban populations. The remittances they send back to families are keeping millions of people alive in the face of increasing poverty and privation accelerated by the "free trade" rules.

As family farms and even large plantations, or fincas, have declined throughout

the region, peasants have fled to the cities seeking work. Jobs are available in the transnational factories called maquilas, but they can pay as little as \$6 a week and CAFTA and NAFTA regulations do not protect the right of unions to organize, so private guards and police brutally enforce anti-labor practices.

The ruling class elements in Costa Rica support free trade. In Mexico and the rest of Central America, the upper and middle classes, a small but powerful group, stand to benefit from CAFTA. Since they control the media in Costa Rica, they promoted CAFTA, claiming that U.S. companies have brought jobs and gobs of money to Central America since the passing of their free trade agreements.

Central Americans and Mexicans facing joblessness and agricultural depression have been forced to migrate to support their families.

When they come to the U.S.

they face raids, deportation and racism perpetrated by Washington and the anti-immigrant corporate media. So the same U.S. government that pressured for CAFTA and NAFTA treats Mexican and Central American immigrants as criminals and scapegoats for the declining economy in the U.S.

U.S. companies have pushed free trade

agreements that enable them to close their U.S. factories and lay off workers. Paying workers low wages in Third World countries has profited U.S. manufacturers. The poor pay the price—both in Latin America and the U.S.

But Washington and Costa Rica's government are not concerned with the poor, except to use them. The White House told Costa Ricans that if they did not vote for CAFTA, it would not extend trade preferences now afforded to Costa Rican products. (Associated Press, Oct. 7) The major newspaper in Costa Rica published on its front page a letter by U.S. Trade Representative Susan Schwab warning that the U.S. would refuse to renegotiate the terms of the free trade agreement with Costa Rica if CAFTA was voted down.

In other words, the Bush administration threatened the Costa Rican economy with economic strangulation. According to Eugenio Trejos, rector of Costa Rica's Technological School, competition among transnational companies jeopardizes public ownership of electricity, telephone and water services.

When the vote finally came, it was close, with only 51 percent in favor of CAFTA. Costa Ricans will now face a frenzy of privatization and commodification of their economy.

Costa Rica boasts of being the most prosperous country in Central America. What lies in store for it is what has happened to Mexico and Central America: greater disparities between rich and poor, more agricultural dependency, higher prices for staples, and soon more people in the streets demanding an end to imperialist free trade agreements. □

WASHINGTON, D.C.

Jury decision is victory for Simón Trinidad

By Berta Joubert-Ceci

After deliberations, on Oct. 4 a Washington, D.C., jury did not agree with the United States government's charge of drug trafficking against Colombian Ricardo Palmera. This verdict forced Federal U.S. District Judge Royce Lamberth to declare a mistrial in the case.

Palmera, whose nom de guerre is Simón Trinidad, was the peace negotia-

tor of the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia—People's Army, FARC-EP. He has been incommunicado in U.S. federal prison since he was illegally extradited from his homeland on Dec. 31, 2004, on charges of kidnapping, terrorism and drug trafficking.

The trial, which began last Aug. 20, was meant to "prove" that Trinidad—and therefore the FARC-EP—were involved in the cocaine trade. He had been accused of

conspiracy in the production and smuggling of drugs. It was part of the U.S. demonization campaign and all-out war against the Colombian insurgency because this insurgency and the unarmed social movement in Colombia are the defenders of that country's sovereignty and are preventing the robbery of their country's vast resources by rapacious transnational companies, predominantly those from the U.S.

The current neoliberal Colombian government, allied to the U.S. government, is selling out the country's resources to foreign companies while privatizing essential services like health care and education, leaving the majority of the population in dire need.

In its quest to win a conviction and consequently toughen the war against the FARC-EP, the U.S. government, which did not have a shred of evidence against Trinidad, used mostly paid informants from Colombia, who gave implausible and ridiculous "facts" in their testimony.

The government's case was based only on their alleged finding of a laboratory for the processing of cocaine in the region of San Vicente del Caguán between 1998 and 2002. Since this zone was previously controlled by the FARC-EP and Trinidad was a key member in the peace negotiations that were held in that zone with then-Colombian President Andrés Pastrana, the U.S. government illogically concluded that Trinidad was involved in the drug trade.

The prosecution brought 20 witnesses from Colombia, among them several who are said to have been in the FARC-EP, but have now joined Colombian

President Álvaro Uribe's program of demobilization.

But the prosecution did not have any physical evidence. None. No documents. No videos. No photos. Only the untrusted word of these unreliable witnesses.

The prosecution tried to use the terrible drug crisis affecting so many poor communities in the U.S. During his opening, Jim Faulkner, the prosecutor, mentioned that 75 percent of the Colombian cocaine reaches the U.S. and that this cocaine is used to produce crack cocaine.

In spite of this, the mostly African-American jury handed a victory to Trinidad and a defeat to the U.S. government. Seven of the jury members voted for Trinidad's innocence, and according to an article in the Colombian newspaper El Tiempo, of the five who believed he was guilty, "even they had doubts."

This trial is the third for Trinidad in U.S. District Court in Washington. The two previous ones were for the charges of kidnapping and terrorism.

In a moral victory for the FARC-EP and Trinidad, the first trial had to be declared a mistrial because the jury did not reach a unanimous verdict. This, in spite of 21 witnesses and mountains of videos, photos and documents that the government hoped would "prove" their case.

Before the second trial began, the judge in the first trial had to recuse himself because of preferential treatment towards the prosecution. It was only in a second trial that, after fierce attempts by the prosecution, Trinidad was pronounced guilty of "conspiracy to take hostages" mainly because he is a member of the FARC-EP. □



Police attack anti-Columbus Day protest

On Oct. 6 the Transform Columbus Day Alliance, Colorado AIM and supporters challenged the parade honoring Christopher Columbus as a hero. This year marked the hundredth year since the first official celebration in Colorado—which was the first state to officially recognize Columbus, the mass murderer and slave trader, as deserving praise instead of vilification.

Hundreds of protesters, far outnumbering those participating in the parade, came out to chant against, at this point, the most right wing and racist elements that see no problem with the genocidal conquest of the Americas by Europeans.

The city used nearly one hundred cops and sheriffs, many in full riot gear, some with assault rifles and weapons bearing tear gas pellets at the ready. Eighty-eight protesters were arrested and brutalized by cops, who laughed and jeered at protesters right along with the participants in the Columbus Day parade.

The police tactics were brutal and brought many protesters to tears. What happened on Oct. 6 is another example of why the protest at the Democratic National Convention next August is so important.

—Report and photo by Larry Hales

People packed the hall of New York City's Local 1199 SEIU on Oct. 6 to celebrate the life of Che Guevara on the occasion of the 40th anniversary of his assassination.

The keynote speaker was a representative of the Cuban government, Bausilio Gutierrez, vice president of ICAP—the Cuban Institute of Friendship with the People.

Gutierrez thanked the enthusiastic crowd for all the solidarity that has been shown to Cuba for close to 50 years since the revolution triumphed in 1959.

Bausilio said that one reason so many people worldwide stand with Cuba is for the principles the Cuban people have defended. These principles are some of the very ones that Che Guevara most embodied: international solidarity and a communist attitude of leading by example.

"Che was ready to give everything for the people's struggle, including his life,"

Gutierrez said. The event was organized by the July 26th Coalition, a broad coalition of many progressive and left-wing groups.

—Teresa Gutierrez



Honoring Che



PHOTOS: ROBERTO MERCADO

Bausilio Gutierrez, above, from ICAP and Julie Fry, left, from the New York Free the Five Committee and Workers World Party salute Che's legacy Oct. 6.

Who was Che Guevara?

By Caleb T. Maupin

Ernesto "Che" Guevara was born into a middle-class Argentine family. As a child he suffered from asthma. It was in his illness that he began to desire a life helping the afflicted. He made it his life's goal to become a doctor.

He went to medical school and became trained as a physician. Che traveled on a motorcycle across Latin America, an experience which he wrote about. The book was later adopted for a 2004 movie of the same name, "Motorcycle Diaries." He saw the horrors of poverty, starvation, war and repression, and it was at this point that he became committed to social change.

Until his death he affirmed that he was still a doctor, but he committed himself at an early age to fight against social ills. As he began to discover that poverty, war, starvation and brutality were symptoms of a worldwide disease called imperialism, he believed that the resistance of the people throughout the world could cure this affliction and allow humanity to taste real freedom.

First Che went to Guatemala when Jacobo Arbenz was president, in the early 1950s. Arbenz was the democratically elected leader who was nationalizing land, and who had legalized the Guatemalan Communist Party. Che put his hope into the democratic process, but the U.S. imperialists did not. A U.S.-backed coup overthrew Arbenz in 1954 and installed a right-wing dictator.

Che learned that reform and elections could not provide the path to power for the oppressed peoples. Action and armed struggle were necessary. Che soon joined with Fidel Castro and his July 26th Movement and they went on to bring down the U.S.-backed dictator Fulgencio Batista on Jan. 1, 1959. Now, the Cuban people had a country of their own. As that revolution developed, socialism was declared the road that the people would take to find liberation.

In Cuba, Che was involved in the efforts to nationalize the land and to administer the national bank. He also served in the revolutionary courts which brought justice to those who had brutally repressed the Cuban people for so long.

Che wrote an essay entitled

"Man and Socialism in Cuba," in which he laid out how socialism's goal was the creation of a "new socialist human" or a new human race, cleansed from the greed and brutality that was inherent in capitalist relations.

Che traveled throughout the world to many of the socialist countries trying to encourage unity among them, as he viewed them each as peoples who formed part of the world revolution.

In 1964 while the Cuban masses and its leadership were constructing socialism, Che left Cuba to help organize armed struggle on behalf of other peoples fighting for liberation. He joined the fight of the people of the Congo. Later he attempted to form a guerrilla group in Bolivia. While he was engaged in that struggle in Bolivia, he was captured the U.S. trained Bolivian army, and with CIA agent Felix Rodriguez on site, put to death.

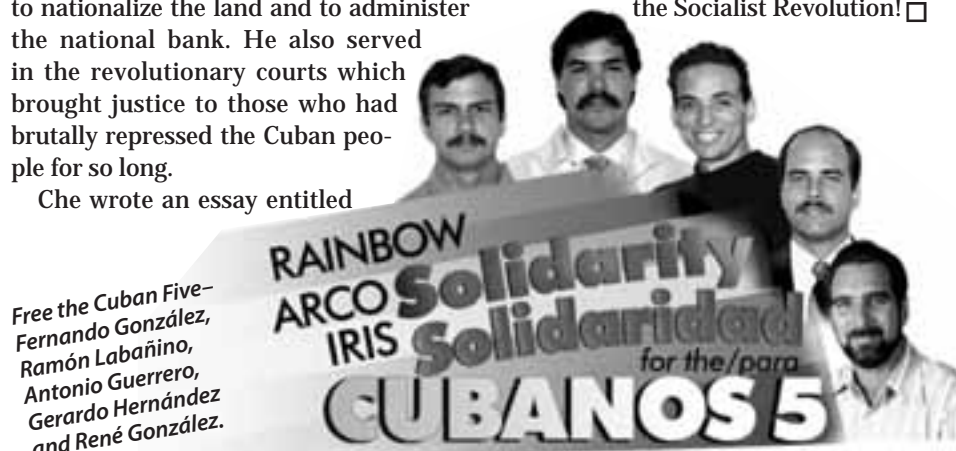
Che lives on as a symbol to oppressed people everywhere. One can hardly attend a progressive demonstration without seeing the image of Che Guevara, based on a photograph taken by Alberto Korda.

Reactionary pro-imperialist forces have recently attempted to tarnish Che's image with a propaganda campaign claiming his example is already forgotten, but the proof of Che's example sits on the island of Cuba, where there are jobs, health care, and education for all, and the workers and farmers are in power.

The proof of Che's example sits also in Venezuela, where workers are attempting to win and build a socialist society through the Bolivarian revolution. The proof of Che's example sits in Zimbabwe, where the African people are getting their land back from the colonialists who have illegally owned it for so long.

Che was on the right side of history. He was on the side of the oppressed, struggling to free themselves from the chains that bind them. He will live on as a symbol of the quest for permanent worldwide revolution.

Long Live Che Guevara! Long Live the Socialist Revolution! □



Free the Cuban Five—
Fernando González,
Ramón Labañino,
Antonio Guerrero,
Gerardo Hernández
and René González.

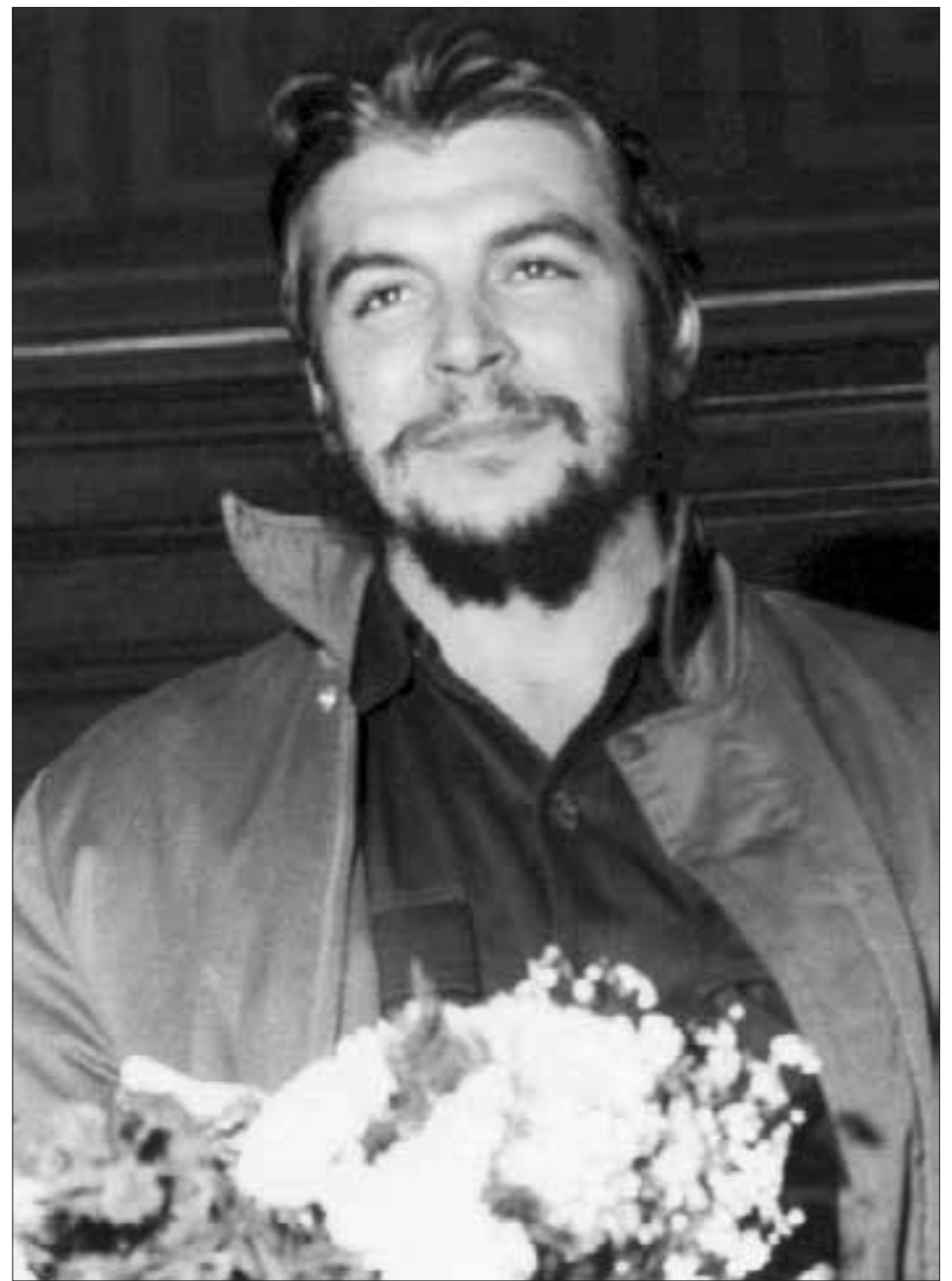


PHOTO: PRENSA LATINA/JULIO ROBLES

Reflections by Cuban President Fidel Castro on Che

Reprinted from the Oct. 8th front page of *Granma*.

I make a halt in my daily struggle to bow my head in respect and gratitude to the exceptional combatant who fell in combat on October 8th, forty years ago; for the example he passed on to us as leader of his Rebel Army Column, crossing the swampy grounds of the former provinces of Oriente and Camagüey, while being chased by enemy troops.

He was the liberator of the city of Santa Clara and the mastermind of voluntary work; he accomplished honorable political missions abroad and served as messenger of militant internationalism in East Congo and Bolivia. He built a new awareness in our America and the world.

I thank him for what he tried and failed to do in his home country, because

he was like a flower prematurely severed from its stem.

He left to us his unmistakable literary style. He was elegant, swift and true to every detail of whatever happened to cross his mind. He was a predestinate, but he didn't know it. He still fights with us and for us.

Yesterday, we commemorated the 31st anniversary of the killing of all passengers and the crew of a Cubana airliner blown up in mid-air, and we are on the threshold of the tenth anniversary of the cruel and unjust imprisonment of the five Cuban anti-terrorist heroes.

We likewise bow our heads in respect to them all.

It was with great emotion that I watched and heard the commemoration ceremony on TV.

Fidel Castro Ruz
Oct. 7, 2007

The heroic sit-down of youth

The ruling class in this country would like us to believe that young people are apathetic. But the youths participating in the Sept. 29 demonstration in Washington showed another side entirely.

They were aching to struggle. They were determined not only to demonstrate and to shout, but were ready to get arrested, ready even to put their bodies on the line to stop the war at home and abroad waged against the poor and oppressed of the world. They sat in the street for hours, daring the Washington police to arrest them as they blocked traffic in an important intersection.

That readiness for struggle was a new, important sign. It goes hand in hand with what another section of young people who are in the U.S. Armed Forces are doing: mobilizing to combat the war.

Another aspect of the sit-down was instructive. The Washington police broke with their usual practice and refused to arrest them, instead directing traffic away from the blockage. At times, police have arrested hundreds, even thousands of demonstrators for doing no more than the young people at the Troops Out Now Coalition's protest were doing. So it begs the question: "Why didn't the cops handcuff these young people and take them away?"

It was obvious that this was no decision made by the cops on the spot. There was a political decision that instructed the cops what to do.

The most likely reason is that the police were instructed to avoid actions that would give publicity to the demonstration. First of all, it was an exceptional anti-war action in that it united many nationalities, was militant and anti-imperialist, and joined the struggles against the war at home and abroad. Second, the Iraq war has become so unpopular that tens of millions of people—who may not be ready to come into the streets themselves—could be aroused and angered if they see cops roughing up young people protesting that war.

Maybe those giving orders in Washington were having nightmares that the mood against the war was growing angrier, and that the street sit-down of Sept. 29 was simply the dress rehearsal for demonstrations ready to break out in the near future. They didn't want to accelerate this development by an untimely crackdown.

For the sake of the Iraqis, the U.S. rank-and-file troops and for all of humanity, all of those who oppose this war are hoping that these worst nightmares of the ruling class come true. □



WW PHOTO: LIZ GREEN

Protesters occupied three intersections on major arteries in Washington, D.C. on Sept. 29 for hours, ordering pizza and setting up their tents from the Encampment which had taken place earlier during the week.

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Momentum builds to abolish death penalty

By Gloria Rubac

"I still have a smile on my face, and such a tremendous weight has been lifted from my shoulders," said Lawrence Foster this week. His grandson, Kenneth Foster Jr., was spared the executioner's needle just six hours before he was to be put to death in Texas on Aug. 30.

Since the victory of Foster's death sentence being commuted to life in prison, the fight against executions has been like that rolling stone—it's gathering no moss. One event after another has either been a welcome blast of good news for abolitionists or has been so outrageously bad that it is shocking people's consciousness.

On Sept. 25 the U.S. Supreme Court agreed to hear a challenge filed by two Kentucky death row prisoners, Ralph Baze and Thomas Clyde Bowling Jr. Their challenge claims that the state's lethal injection process is cruel and unusual punishment because it can inflict unnecessary pain and suffering.

This case has broad national implications.

The only time the U.S. Supreme Court ever ruled directly on a method of execution was in 1878, when it upheld the use of the firing squad. In 1999, the justices agreed to hear a challenge to Florida's use of the electric chair, but the state substituted lethal injection for electrocution before the case could be decided.

Also on Sept. 25, Michael Richard, a mentally disabled man from Houston, was executed. The chief judge of Texas' highest court refused to stay open an extra 20 minutes to hear Richard's appeal on the lethal injection issue after his attorneys called saying their computer had malfunctioned and they needed the extra 20 minutes to present their appeal.

Judge Sharon Keller, Texas Court of Criminal Appeals' presiding judge, refused the request and didn't even tell several other judges who stayed late expecting an appeal. They expressed their anger publicly.

Her callous decision put Texas on the front page of the New York Times and into many foreign media as editorial after editorial in major newspapers expressed shock and dismay.

Two days after Richard was executed, Carlton Turner was scheduled for execution in Texas on Sept. 27. His case was presented to the Texas Court of Criminal appeals and turned down. Then the U.S. Supreme Court took his appeal based on the lethal injection issue and granted him a stay.

Texas had yet another execution scheduled for Oct. 3. Heliberto Chi, a native of Honduras, was also granted a stay, this time by the Texas Court of Criminal Appeals. It became apparent that executions were going to stop until the Supreme Court meets next spring or summer at the earliest.

Shedding new light on death penalty

A recent four-part news series published by the Atlanta Journal-Constitution, "A Matter of Life or Death," stated that Georgia's death penalty is "as predictable as a lightning strike." Based on an investigation of 2,328 murder convictions between Jan. 1, 1995, and Dec. 31, 2004, the paper determined that the state's capital punishment system is unfairly shaped by racial and geographic bias.



According to a new study released by the American Bar Association, Ohio's capital punishment system was declared so flawed that it should be suspended while the state conducts a thorough review of its fairness and accuracy.

The study, conducted by a 10-member panel of Ohio attorneys appointed by the ABA, found that the state's death penalty is prone to racial and geographic imbalances and that it meets only four of the 93 ABA recommendations to ensure a fair capital punishment system.

"Regardless of one's views of the morality of the death penalty, it is beyond question that if Ohio is to have a death penalty it needs to be one that is fair, accurate and provides due process to all capital defendants and those on death row. Unfortunately, this is not the case," said Phyllis Crocker, a Cleveland State University law professor and member of the Ohio review team.



In a recent meeting with the Fort Worth Star-Telegram editorial board, Texas Lt. Gov. David Dewhurst urged legislators to re-examine the state law that allows an accomplice to be tried by the same judge and jury as the shooter in murder cases. He agreed with Gov. Rick Perry's decision to commute Kenneth Foster's death sentence to life in prison based on similar concerns.

Dewhurst also called on legislators to establish a state innocence commission to study wrongful convictions and possible reforms to the criminal justice system. "We only want the truly guilty to be subject to punishment in Texas. None of us want an innocent person convicted. ... I'd like the Senate to coalesce on a position," Dewhurst said.

His concerns, in large part, stem from a series of 14 DNA exonerations in Dallas County, which has reversed more convictions because of DNA evidence than any other U.S. county.

In addition, just this week in Houston, where concerns about wrongful convictions and the handling of DNA evidence have gained substantial attention in recent years, DNA evidence has prompted the Harris County district attorney's office to release Ronald Taylor, a man convicted of sexual assault in 1995.

"At the HPD Crime Lab, it is not just DNA evidence that sends people to death row. Three people I know were sent to death row because of faulty ballistics testimony. They are Nanon Williams, Johnnie Bernal, and Martin Draughon," said Texas Death Penalty Abolition Movement organizer Njeri Shakur.

Shakur told WW that the Nanon Williams Support Association has reestablished itself and supporters are ready to again go to the public with Williams' case. "A special investigator hired by the City was paid a lot of money to tell us what is wrong with the system. But the mayor, police chief and the DA won't follow his recommendation to hire a special monitor," stated Shakur.

A new report released this week by Amnesty International, "Execution by lethal injection—a quarter century of state poisoning," calls on medical professionals to refuse to participate in executions and details ongoing concerns about current lethal injection protocols that could result in inmates feeling excruciating pain during their executions.

"Governments are putting doctors and nurses in an impossible position by asking them to do something that goes against their ethical oath. ... Medical professionals are trained to work for patients' well being, not to participate in executions ordered by the state. The simplest way of resolving the ethical dilemmas posed by using doctors and nurses to kill is by abolishing the death penalty,"



WW PHOTO: GLORIA RUBAC

Mother of Gary Graham, aka Shaka Sankofa, on left.

said Jim Welsh, Amnesty International's Health and Human Rights coordinator.

This week there is a rally in Bastrop, Texas, on Oct. 13, in support of Rodney Reed, an innocent man on Texas death row, from Bastrop, just outside of Austin, sponsored by the Campaign to End the Death Penalty.

All out for Oct. 27!

On the same day in Houston, the outreach committee of the 8th Annual March to Stop Executions will present Old School Meets New School: Bridging the Gap from Freedom Riders to Freedom Writers; Topic the Death Penalty. Hosts and moderators will be noted television personality Darian Ward, spoken word artist Brother Equality and DJ and radio host Brother Zin.

On Oct. 20, a "Pre-march Fundraiser and Kenneth Foster Victory Celebration" will be hosted by the 8th Annual March to Stop Executions at SHAPE Community Center from 7 p.m. until midnight.

The march will take place on Oct. 27, beginning at Emancipation Park in Third Ward of Houston across the street from where the Black Panther Party headquarters once stood. The theme of this year's march is "Celebrating our Victories, Remembering our Losses, Fighting for Abolition."

The guest of honor will be Clarence Brandley, who was freed from death row after ten years by a struggle waged by the Houston community. Also, the family of Brandley as well as the family of Kenneth Foster will be honored. The march will be led by death row families, including those of Frances Newton, Shaka Sankofa and Joseph Nichols, families that lost their loved ones to the executioner's needle.

International Concerned Family and Friends of Mumia Abu-Jamal, Houston City Councilwoman Ada Edwards and Sister Helen Prejean, author of "Dead Man Walking," are among many who have endorsed the march.

Momentum against the death penalty is growing. The movement against injustice is building as witnessed by the past summer's campaign to save the life of Kenneth Foster. As Foster's friend and supporter Claire Dube said, "We made the impossible possible. We saved Kenneth." Abolitionists around Texas are aiming for another impossibility—abolition of the death penalty not just for those who can prove their innocence in a courtroom but for all the poor and oppressed who are systematically targeted for state repression.

Go to www.marchtoendexecution.org to endorse or contribute to the march.

The writer is a Houston organizer with Texas Death Penalty Abolition Movement.



WW PHOTOS FROM ARCHIVES OF THE DEATH PENALTY MOVEMENT IN TEXAS. MANY WERE TAKEN BY GLORIA RUBAC.

Biofuels and world hunger

By G. Dunkel

While obesity is a major health problem in the United States, and a growing problem in other developed countries, 854 million people throughout the world are hungry, according to the United Nation's Food and Agricultural Organization. The FAO defines hunger as a person not getting enough food every day to sustain themselves.

Ten million children under the age of 5 die each year from hunger, according to an article in the *Lancet*, a major medical journal. Three billion people out of the 6 billion in the world face premature death due to lack of nutrition or potable water, according to the FAO; 2.4 billion people have to cook with wood or other biological products and 1.6 billion have no access to electricity.

In the past year, the problem of hunger—especially in the least developed areas of the world like sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia—has grown sharper because the price of corn has shot up, more than doubling in the past 12 months and the price of wheat has reached a ten-year high. The world has less than 60 days of corn stockpiled, the lowest level in decades, and the stock of wheat is at a 25-year low.

The reason for this increase is the policy recently adopted by the Bush administration to produce a major amount of ethanol from corn. Ethanol can be used as a substitute for fuels produced from petroleum.

In the developed countries, not much corn is consumed directly. Instead, it is used as feed to produce milk and dairy products, eggs, meat (beef, chicken, pork), cereals, peanut butter, soft drinks and snacks.

But in countries like Mexico and South Africa, with a significant level of economic development—certainly not at the level of the U.S. or Western Europe, but nonetheless substantial—corn meal is a staple.

Mexico came close to food rebellions earlier this year, when the price of corn meal rose by 400 percent. Thousands of angry workers came out in the streets all over the country, waving corn cobs. These workers were used to spending up to a third of their income on corn meal to make tortillas and were even used to fluctuations in corn prices—but a 400 percent increase was catastrophic.

Mexico is the fourth-largest producer of corn in the world and under NAFTA it can import supposedly cheap corn from the U.S. Mexico's President Felipe Calderón cobbled together a "voluntary" price control plan, enforced by angry consumers.

Prices of white corn meal in South Africa

have risen by 186 percent in the last two years, due to poor harvests throughout much of southern Africa and the demand-driven world price, which has been pushed higher by the demand for ethanol produced by corn in the U.S. The number of people the U.N. calls "food insecure," particularly in Zimbabwe, Swaziland, Lesotho and southern Mozambique, has gone from 3.1 million in 2006 to 6.1 million this year.

Imperialists use corn as weapon

In an article entitled "Foodstuff as Imperial Weapon: Bio-fuels and Global Hunger," Cuban President Fidel Castro pointed out, "The sinister idea of turning foodstuffs into fuel was definitely established as the economic strategy of the U.S. foreign policy on Monday, March 26th last." Fidel Castro quoted an Associated Press dispatch about George Bush's meeting with car company executives in which the U.S. president called on the industry to modify engines to run on ethanol in order to reduce "reliance on imported oil."

In this dispatch, Bush said he was going to call on Congress to mandate the production of 35 billion gallons of ethanol by 2017, which Fidel Castro points out is a phenomenal amount that "will happen after a great number of investments, which could only be afforded by the most powerful companies whose operations are based on the consumption of electricity and fuel."

Bush has claimed that the shift to ethanol might help clean up the environment. Analysts argue, however, that the carbon released into the atmosphere by the energy required to produce this amount of ethanol and the huge amount of fertilizers needed to grow the corn would most likely be higher than the carbon released by using oil.

The costs involved in substituting ethanol for oil will be very high, but there also might be vast profits, something that drives capitalists ever onward. Politically, the U.S. ruling class would very much like to reduce its and the world's dependence on oil from countries like Venezuela and Iran.

Brazil is one of the world's major producers of ethanol. It uses the waste from sugar production, a substance called bagasse, to create ethanol. About 30 percent of the automotive fuel in Brazil is ethanol. Brazil's ethanol producers just announced that they intend to invest \$9 billion to increase production. Environmental activists in Brazil point out that this investment will require clearing a major amount of Brazil's Amazon rain forest.

A number of African countries—in-

cluding Benin, Mali, Nigeria and Senegal, led by Ghana—have been testing producing biofuel from jatropha, a weed that is widely used to protect fields from livestock, which don't like its taste or feel. The seeds of jatropha contain oil, which has been used for a long time to produce soap. But researchers have found that it is much cheaper to produce biodiesel from jatropha than from corn or soy beans. And burning jatropha-derived biodiesel produces one-fifth the carbon of burning petroleum-derived diesel. The residue left after oil production can even be used as fertilizer and to produce soap.

Since it is a perennial weed, jatropha grows well in very poor, arid conditions without fertilizer or irrigation. Its roots, lying close to the surface, stabilize the soil and for this reason it currently is planted on earthen dams and dikes.

Mali, an extremely poor, landlocked African country, hopes to eventually power all of the country's 12,000 villages with affordable, renewable energy sources derived from jatropha, which is widely used as a hedge by Malian farmers. Aboubacar Samake, head of the jatropha program at the government-funded National Centre for Solar and Renewable Energy, told Reuters, "As things stand, a snake can bite someone in a village and they have to go to [the capital] Bamako to get a vaccine." With power, local clinics can keep vaccines refrigerated.

India gave the Economic Community of Western African States \$250 million to investigate exporting biodiesel. Mali, however, is not going to start producing jatropha for export until it has met the needs of its own people for energy.

"They came to explain the project to us and said that if we grow jatropha it can produce oil to make the machine work," Daouda Doumbia, an elder in the Malian village of Simiji told Reuters. Simiji was recently outfitted with a biodiesel generator. "I grow groundnuts, and this activity can go alongside it as a partner crop," he explained.

Ghana, which is trying to develop jatropha cultivation, has found that producing the oil is profitable for local farmers if they can get it to market.

The real problem Africa and technologically underdeveloped regions of the world have is poverty. They don't have the money to develop, feed and educate and care for their populations. And the whole thrust of the energy policies of the U.S. and Western Europe is to force the countries which they have kept impoverished to solve the world's economic and ecological problems, to the detriment of the oppressed. □

Marion Jones demonized by big business sports

Continued from page 5

ostracism by the sports industry for any alleged infraction.

Olympic medalists Ben Johnson and Justin Gatlin are among other Black athletes who have been penalized for allegedly using performance enhancers.

Baseball great and home-run leader Barry Bonds has also been targeted in the BALCO scandal, and may very well be indicted in the near future. He has already been tried and convicted in the media.

The corporate media play a major role in perpetrating the denigration of players of all sports. Instead of looking at the intense pressures athletes are constantly under, news agencies, reporters and sports columnists go on the offensive and try to break them down. They especially malign

players from the oppressed communities, whether they're participating in baseball, football, basketball or the Olympics.

It is an outrage that Marion Jones has been vilified by the media.

Where is the justice here? One of the greatest women athletes of all time has been forced into retirement. Her spirit has been broken. She is financially ruined. And she faces prison.

There should be sympathy, solidarity and respect shown for her.

Those who make enormous profits from the Olympics and all sports, those who pressure young athletes to win at all costs, those who use and then discard and denigrate them—this is who should take the blame for a situation they created.

What's really needed is for the profit

motive to be taken out of sports, including these world games, and for the athletes to be treated with high regard. □

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EDITORIAL

Pakistán y Myanmar

En su crisis, parece que el régimen militar de Myanmar carece de apoyo popular. Sin embargo, hay señales que alertan a la cautela, de la forma en que los medios de comunicación corporativos presentan sus reportajes sobre Myanmar, un país que su ex explotador colonial, Bretaña, aún llama Birmania. Estas alertas deben provocar a las personas progresistas y antiimperialistas a estar cautelosas.

Es instructivo comparar el tratamiento que reciben en esos medios de comunicación los generales que dirigen Myanmar con el de los generales que dirigen Pakistán, un estado cliente de los EEUU. Ambos regímenes han lanzado acciones sangrientas contra figuras religiosas opositoras, pero sin la misma reacción en los medios corporativos del Oeste.

El cuestionable presidente de Pakistán, Gen. Pervez Musharraf, al igual que el grupo militar en Myanmar, enfrenta una oposición tanto religiosa como laica. Al igual que el grupo militar, el mandó que sus tropas abrieran fuego contra las figuras religiosas en rebelión. El 10 de julio, lanzó un sangriento ataque militar contra una mezquita en el medio de la ciudad de Islamabad. No cabe duda que Musharraf es un dictador listo para imponer fuerza bruta si considera que ello le mantendrá en el poder.

La reacción de la prensa corporativa a Musharraf fue, sino simpatizante, por lo menos, comprensiva. He aquí un reporte cronológico reciente de Reuter: "Después de un sitio que duró más de una semana, Musharraf ordena que las tropas asalten a la Mezquita Roja en Islamabad para aplastar un movimiento de corte Talibán. Por lo menos 105 personas mueren". Esto era típico, el caracterizar a las víctimas como talibanes, en otras palabras, como extremistas fundamentalistas musulmanes, y que por lo tanto no merecen compasión. Ni fotos ni videos de las tanquetas ni de los soldados baleando a la gente aparecieron en público.

La revista "Newsday" tiene otra reacción sobre Myanmar: "Pero parece que la junta militar en Myanmar, también conocida como Birmania, sólo conoce una sola manera para resolver esta crisis: la fuerza brutal y sangrienta".

Esta actitud era típica de los medios corporativos a través de los EEUU, Canadá, Europa Occidental y Australia. Las escenas de monjes siendo baleados dominaba la cobertura noticiera. Los medios de comunicación lanzaron su peor crítica contra los generales de Myanmar y cualquier partidario de ellos.

Tratan a la oposición civil, especialmente a esos elementos con estrechas conexiones y apoyo de los países imperialistas, como héroes populares, así como tratan los monjes budistas.

Nuestro mensaje es: tengamos cuidado. Tal cobertura tiene la intención de justificar una intervención imperialista. En Pakistán, la cual tiene fronteras con Irán y Afganistán, podría implicar una intervención militar si la lucha de las masas allá tiene la posibilidad de remover a los generales que actualmente están controlados por los EEUU.

El imperialismo de los EEUU o de Bretaña, e incluso de los aliados en la OTAN o Australia o Japón, nunca interviene con fondos o armas para ayudar a una lucha de liberación o independencia. Si esas fuerzas imperialistas están involucradas, podemos estar seguros que hay recursos naturales o intereses geoestratégicos en juego.

En el caso de Myanmar, no importa cómo se resuelva la lucha popular de ese país del sudeste de Asia, los imperialistas de los EEUU y de la OTAN no tienen ningún derecho a intervenir. □

Delegación entrega peticiones para liberar a los 5 cubanos

Por Deirdre Griswold
Washington, D.C.

Una delegación de representantes de comunidades progresistas en los Estados Unidos llevó a cabo una conferencia de prensa frente al Departamento de Justicia el 28 de septiembre y luego entregó una carta y una petición dirigida al Fiscal General de los Estados Unidos Peter Keisler, exigiendo la liberación de los 5 cubanos que han estado en prisiones estadounidenses por casi diez años.

La petición fue firmada por más de 1.000 organizaciones e individuos.

La delegación, compuesta de varias decenas de personas, trató de presentar los documentos personalmente a Keisler. Pero fueron detenid@s por los guardias frente a la puerta, a pesar de que Teresa Gutiérrez, del Comité de Nueva York para Liberar a los Cinco y organizadora de la conferencia de prensa, intentó en varias ocasiones de tramitar la reunión con el fiscal.

Finalmente, un representante del departamento quien sólo se identificó como "Dean", aceptó la petición y un paquete de información sobre el caso de los Cinco, diciendo que se los

entregaría a los oficiales pertinentes del Departamento de Justicia.

En la rueda de prensa frente al edificio, representantes de movimientos antiguerra, sindical, de mujeres, LGBT, sobrevivientes de los huracanes Rita y Katrina y grupos solidarios con Cuba, hablaron sobre el porqué la demanda de liberación de los Cinco Cubanos es importante para sus comunidades.

La petición fue iniciada por la organización Solidaridad Arcoiris para los 5 Cubanos (Rainbow Solidarity for the Cuban 5), y l@s orador@s pertenecen a una amplia y diversa gama de organizaciones. Much@s de l@s asistentes estaban en Washington para participar en el Campamento frente al Capitolio, que luego de una semana, concluyó en una marcha contra la guerra el 29 de septiembre con el tema de "Alto a la Guerra en Irak y a la Guerra Doméstica—dinero para la necesidades del pueblo, no para el Pentágono."

Un contingente en solidaridad con América Latina en la marcha llevaba carteles en apoyo a los Cinco.

L@s orador@s en la conferencia de prensa incluyeron a Berta Joubert-Ceci de la Red Nacional de Mujeres en Lucha; Brenda Stokely del

Movimiento de la Marcha del Millón de Trabajador@; Ivey Parker de la Coalición de Nueva York en Solidaridad con l@s Sobrevivientes de Katrina/Rita; Ignacio Meneses de la Red Nacional sobre Cuba y el Intercambio Sindical EEUU/Cuba; Imany Henry de Solidaridad Arcoiris para los 5 Cubanos; Mia Campbell de FIST (Luchemos Contra el Imperialismo, Unámonos); y Sara Flounders de la Coalición Tropas Fuera Ya, auspiciadora de las actividades antiguerra.

L@s orador@s recalcaron que el gobierno de los Estados Unidos hipócritamente llama a los 5 Cubanos "terroristas", cuando de hecho ellos estaban en los Estados Unidos tratando de prevenir ataques terroristas contra su país. Su caso está en proceso de apelación.

Varias organizaciones representaban a gente pobre que lucha por justicia en los Estados Unidos, como l@s sobrevivientes de Katrina/Rita, inspirad@s por el récord de Cuba que provee medic@s y profesor@ gratis a muchos países necesitados.

Más información sobre los Cinco Cubanos se puede encontrar en: www.freethethefivey.org. □

Antiimperialista da charla en evento LGBT en Arizona

Especial para Mundo Obrero
Tucson, Arizona

"A diferencia del presidente de los Estados Unidos," Leslie Feinberg recordó al público de más de 1.000 personas en Tucson el 28 de septiembre, "el presidente de Irán fue elegido por una mayoría de votos."

Feinberg, cuya serie de artículos "Lavanda y Rojo" aparece en el periódico Workers World/Mundo Obrero, fue la oradora principal en el evento anual de este año de Wingspan — el Centro Comunitario de Personas Lesbianas, Gay, Bisexuales y Transgénero del Sur de Arizona. Este evento en el Centro de Convenciones de Tucson vendió todas las entradas.

Feinberg llamó al odioso alboroto sobre el presidente de Irán Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, "una emboscada política". Dijo que "toda la agitación de la prensa sobre la charla del presidente iraní en la Universidad de Columbia, coincide con los planes discutidos abiertamente por el Pentágono de desatar una guerra contra Irán. Esta propaganda de apoyo para la guerra," enfatizó, "tiene el objetivo de desviar la atención del movimiento de lesbianas, gays, bisexuales y personas trans, y de otros movimientos progresistas, en contra de Irán y así desarmar toda oposición a la guerra."

Ella explicó que "el pueblo iraní sabe muy bien lo que quiere decir un 'cambio de régimen' para su país. Recuerdan la pesadilla de terror y torturas que Esta-

dos Unidos y Bretaña impusieron cuando instalaron a un rey, el Shá de Irán."

Rechazando los pretextos de Washington para una guerra de agresión, Feinberg dijo, "El Pentágono no es ningún vehículo para la liberación sexual ni para la liberación de las mujeres. De hecho, ha incorporado la humillación contra la mujer, l@s homosexuales, y las personas transexuales, y además la violación, a su ciencia de tortura desde Abu-Ghraib a Guantánamo."

Ella se pronunció por el fin de la guerra encubierta contra Cuba y por la libertad de los Cinco Cubanos.

Feinberg enfatizó que la fuerza y el dinamismo del movimiento LGBT en los Estados Unidos pueden ser medidos por su independencia de la clase dominante.

El mensaje de Feinberg, incluyendo "¡Ninguna guerra contra Irán!", fue aplaudido por much@s en el público pero no por tod@s. El evento de gala, al cual asistieron much@s activistas de todas las edades y nacionalidades, también incluyó a patrocinadores corporativos, políticos locales y estatales, y a la policía.

Feinberg hizo un llamado a la solidaridad contra la brutalidad policial, "desde la batalla de Jena contra la injusticia racista, a las Cuatro de Nueva Jersey — jóvenes lesbianas afro-americanas que están enfrentando muchos años en la cárcel por defenderse contra un asalto en las calles de Greenwich Village — hasta l@s activistas del Proyecto de Leyes Silvia Rivera que



FOTO: SARA BALBUENA

Leslie Feinberg (derecho) a Wingspan.

fueron brutalizad@s y detenid@s sin motivo por la policía esta semana en las afueras de un evento para recaudar fondos." Feinberg también hizo un llamado por la defensa de los presos políticos Mumia Abu-Jamal y Leonard Peltier.

Se podía oír gente gruñendo cuando Feinberg dijo que Tucson queda en una parte de las enormes tierras que fueron robadas a México por los Estados Unidos. Ella elogió a Wingspan por su solidaridad con el movimiento del Primero de Mayo por los derechos de inmigrantes. Hizo un llamado para que se formen contingentes en el "Espíritu de Stonewall" en las marchas para los derechos de inmigrantes que van a desarrollarse por los Estados Unidos.

"Necesitamos calor en las calles," concluyó Feinberg. "Al empeorarse la situación económica para tantas personas trabajadoras y oprimidas, la luchas de clases va a brotar. Nuestro movimiento necesita estar en las calles dondequiera y cuando quiera que el pueblo sea reprimido y oprimido. Ese es el espíritu de Stonewall."

Feinberg dijo a Mundo Obrero, "Yo había repartido hojas para que la gente firmara para la Solidaridad Arco Iris para los Cinco Cubanos. Al llegar a la puerta, 50 personas habían llenado las hojas y me las pusieron en las manos, incluyendo la conocida cómica latina lesbiana Marga Gómez quien era la maestra de ceremonias del evento." □