

MUNDO OBRERO

El huracán y los inmigrantes 20
Katrina: una cuestión antiguerra 20

editorial

TROOPS OUT NOW Build a united front Stop the war at home

The devastation in the wake of Hurricane Katrina has revealed in stark terms that there must be two fronts in the anti-war movement: the fight to get the U.S. out of Iraq and the fight against poverty, racism and national oppression at home.

The criminal occupation/war in Iraq must be stopped. Each day it continues, more Iraqis die; more Iraqi cities and towns suffer raids, cordons, abuses and every form of brutality from the occupiers and their puppet troops.

And each day more U.S. troops kill and are killed for Washington's now-fading dream of conquest in the Middle East. The ambition for

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As Gulf disasters grow Survivors demand people's control

Money for housing, healthcare & union jobs— NOT PROFITS & WAR

By LeiLani Dowell

Communities and grassroots organizations in the Gulf region and their allies are fighting to beat back the attacks launched on them by the United States government in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina.

A rally and mass assembly will be held on Sept. 24 in Baton Rouge. Organized by Louisiana grassroots organizations and activists, the rally is themed, "Make the Vultures Pay—Don't Let them Prey!" Demands on the flier for the event include, "Tax the oil companies to repay the \$Trillion they've stolen since the war began—use the money to pay for a democratically-run government jobs program to rebuild New Orleans."

On Sept. 19, a press conference was held in New Orleans to announce the opening of a local office and collection point for the People's Hurricane Relief Fund and Reconstruction Project (PHRF) at the home of New Orleans resident Mama Dee.

According to the press release for the event, "PHRF represent[s] more than 45 community based, grassroots organizations in the region determined to oversee all aspects of the relief, recovery and reconstruction of their homes, neighborhoods and lives.... PHRF stated days after Katrina that 'the people of New Orleans will not go quietly into the night, scattering across this country to become homeless in countless other cities while federal relief funds are funneled into rebuilding casinos, hotels, chemical plants and the wealthy white districts of New Orleans like the French Quarter and the Garden District.'"

GULF COAST CATASTROPHE

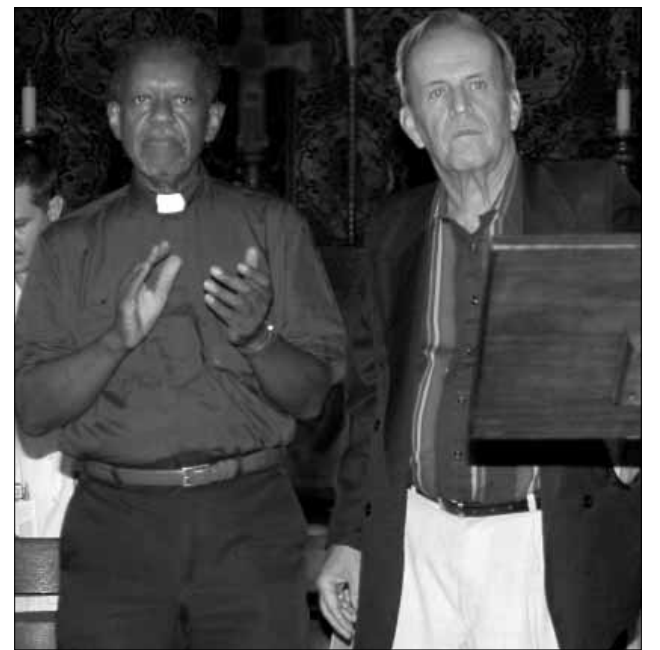
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Curtis Muhammad of Community Labor United, a member organization, said, "The government abandoned the people, the Black and poor people. Now we are seeing the most remarkable determination, generosity, creativity and collectivity on the part of those whose lives have been ravaged, and from people far and wide. It is deeply moving, necessary and hopeful in the face of the horror and neglect that can only be construed as the most blatant racism. Mama Dee is acting in the tradition of the powerful women in our community who have always stepped forward to make life possible."

Will survivors get reconstruction jobs?

The legacy of racism and classism is reflected in the reconstruction efforts in the Gulf region. The Boston Globe reports, "The affluent areas of [New Orleans] are humming with activity as reconstruction efforts pick up tempo, but many of the black working-class and poor neighborhoods remain ... popu-

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PHOTOS: ROBERTO MERCADO

Anti-imperialist leaders bring excitement to New York

Venezuelan President Hugo Chávez, pictured left, speaking at a Sept. 17 South Bronx meeting. Cuba's National Assembly president, Ricardo Alarcon, right (pictured with Reverend Lucius Walker of Pastors For Peace on his left at a Sept. 19 Harlem event). Alarcon and Chávez traveled to New York for the opening sessions of the United Nations Summit.

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FRANCES NEWTON EXECUTED

The struggle is far from over

By Gloria Rubac
Houston

Just days after the execution of Frances Newton by the state of Texas, her mother, Jewel Nelms, put the authorities on notice: "The state of Texas thinks that they can kill Frances and it's over. Well, her execution is NOT the end but the beginning. We're going to prove that she didn't kill her children. We're going to take on the DA and the Houston cops. I'm not going to stop until I clear her name. And then I will sue the police and the DA and the state of Texas for false imprisonment, for wrongful conviction and for the taking of her life."

Newton's parents and sisters witnessed her state murder by lethal injection on Sept. 14. She was the first Black woman legally lynched in Texas since 1853.

As over 300 people protested outside the Walls Unit in Huntsville, Texas, the state put Newton to death without ever having heard new evidence gathered in her case and never allowing her a day in court with competent counsel.

Protesters from around the state joined with the National Black United Front, the New Black Panther Party, the Texas Death Penalty Abolition Movement, the Texas Coalition to Abolish the Death Penalty, the Committee to Free Frances Newton and students from Sam Houston State University in Huntsville. Demonstrations also took place in Houston, Austin, Dallas and other major Texas cities.

When Newton's family walked across the street from the prison administrative building into the death house at 6 p.m., the crowd chanted, "Frances" and then "Innocent!" over and over and over.

About 20 minutes later, when her family walked back across the street, the large, militant, multinational crowd screamed, chanted and cried as it became evident that



Frances Newton

Newton had, in fact, been put to death. A makeshift memorial was built on the side of the street with a beautiful

photo of Frances with candles and incense burning. People vowed to continue the struggle to stop the death machine in Huntsville.

The members of the Committee to Free Frances Newton plan to continue to work to prove her innocence and to use it to expose the racist, arrogant nature of the death penalty.

"We know that these executions are lynchings—of Blacks, of Latinos, and of working class whites. The arrogance and racism of the government that we saw in New Orleans is the same that we see with the death penalty. They have such contempt for the oppressed. People with money are not lynched. We will use Frances' innocence as one more reason to demand an end to this terror used by the rich," said Njeri Shakur, a TDPAM activist.

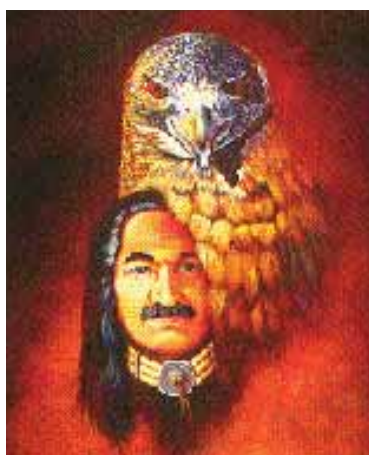
The United States has executed 982 people since the death penalty was reinstated in the mid-1970s. Of these 982 executions, 805 have taken place in the South, in former Confederate states, and 349 have been in Texas.

Texas has nine more executions scheduled for 2005, and at least two of them involve men with supporters who say they can prove their innocence: Jaime Elizalde Jr. and Tony Ford.

Ford's mother is in Texas from Detroit to visit her son. She will attend Newton's funeral on Sept. 20. "I feel I should be there for Frances' family. I know if my son is wrongly executed on Dec. 7, I would want people there for me," Joyce Ford told the "Fight Back!" radio show on Houston's Pacifica station on Sept. 18. □

Free Leonard Peltier!

Following is an Aug. 15 statement from Native political prisoner, Leonard Peltier. The Leonard Peltier Defense Committee is urging everyone to contact the United States Penitentiary to make sure Leonard regains all his hard-earned prisoner rights, especially his religious rights, visitations, regular phone calls and ability to paint. Let the warden know that a lot of people all over the world are concerned about Peltier's well-being. Address your letters to: Warden c/o USP Lewisburg, U.S. Penitentiary, 2400 Robert F. Miller Dr., Lewisburg, PA 17837; Phone: 570-523-1251; Fax: 570-522-7745; E-mail address: lew/execassistant@bop.gov Being mindful of his situation and respectful of his personal affairs, you can write letters of support to Leonard Peltier # 89637-132, USP Lewisburg, U.S. Penitentiary, PO Box 1000, Lewisburg, PA 17837. Go to www.leonardpeltier.org for more information.



body and spirit even more. My loved ones, and all of you, my friends and allies who continue to support me, keep me sane and hopeful.

They say that it is in times of crisis that one can really see who your real allies are. Those of you who have contacted the Terre Haute Prison and the Bureau of Prisons on my behalf, keep me in your prayers, and are supporting my Defense Committee, have made an enormous difference

in my situation. I humbly thank each and every one of you, and firmly believe that your actions most certainly saved my life and prevented me from living in an institution that is well known for its extremely high crime and violence. Also, health problems continue to plague me and the conditions I was subjected to exacerbated them. I know deep within my heart, that if there had not been such an outpouring of support, concern and overall outcry regarding my arbitrary detention, I would have probably stayed in solitary confinement for an indefinite length of time, or

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Aho My Relations,

On August 15, 2005 I was transferred to USP Lewisburg in Pennsylvania. Life has been extra difficult for me since I was transferred from Leavenworth. This system is designed to make one feel very powerless, and what they are doing with me now is definitely aimed to erode my

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Tue., Sept. 27

Film: "Poison D.U.S.," a documentary on the U.S. use and the effects of depleted uranium in the Gulf War. Meet the director, Sue Harris. Sponsored by the International Action Center. 7 p.m. 5274 W. Pico Blvd. #203. For info (323) 936-7266.

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Cuban leader speaks on Hurricane Katrina, Cuban 5

By Teresa Gutierrez
New York

The survivors of Hurricane Katrina would have appreciated hearing how a government should function in a crisis had they heard the president of Cuba's National Assembly, Ricardo Alarcón, speak before the solidarity movement here on Sept. 19 at a prestigious church in Harlem. The National Assembly is Cuba's equivalent to the U.S. Congress.

Alarcón and Cuban Foreign Minister Felipe Pérez Roque were in New York for the opening of the United Nations General Assembly. Pérez Roque made opening remarks before Alarcón spoke.

Alarcón gave a two-hour presentation that addressed Cuban and international issues.

Hurricane Katrina was the first item on Alarcón's agenda. He said that the Cuban people could not even fathom how 2,000 children could be missing as a result of the storm.



Ricardo Alarcón PHOTO: ACN

Cuba has extensive experience in handling powerful hurricanes. Its plans for evacuation and every aspect of hurricane response are based on first protecting its people, not property—as in the U.S. Hurricane crises are handled with humanity and

compassion so that 2,000 children would never go missing.

Alarcón said that 1,586 Cuban doctors—mainly women—are still waiting to come to the U.S. to help the victims of Hurricane Katrina. The U.S. government has denied them entry.

Alarcón wanted the crowd of over 1,000 to know “why in the hell” the Cubans were here. He said Cuba does not operate with secret diplomacy. He pointed out how the people of New York are in the midst of UN visits, with traffic jams as limos drive here and there. But the people of the

city do not really know what all the business is about. He passionately stated how UN business has everything to do with the lives of New Yorkers, despite the fact they aren't informed about what is going on.

A main topic at the UN was eradicating poverty and hunger. The goal was to reduce hunger in half by 2015.

But Alarcón said that the UN session was hijacked and another agenda imposed on the body. The main topic was the “Responsibility to Protect” concept, a U.S./UN concept that could be interpreted as justification for U.S. intervention around the world. Alarcón said the concept could be used so that the UN Security Council could intervene in any conflict or issue.

Other topics raised by Alarcón were the unjust and wrongful war in Iraq and the case of Luis Posada Carriles, who is presently being held in the U.S. He explained why Posada Carriles, who masterminded the mid-air bombing of a Cuban airliner, should be extradited to Venezuela for terrorist actions.

Alarcón moved the crowd with his

review of the case of the Cuban Five, anti-terrorists imprisoned by the U.S. on phony charges of conspiracy. A recent report by the UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention, as well as a ruling of the 11th Circuit Court of Appeals, confirmed that the Five did not receive a fair trial.

Alarcón said Gerardo Hernández, one of the five, expressed the current situation in baseball terms: “The game is zero to zero but we are next to bat.”

Alarcón closed his remarks by reaffirming that Cuba will make sure socialism will not only survive, it will thrive.

The event was co-chaired by Rev. Lucius Walker of IFCO/Pastors for Peace and Bonnie Massey of the Venceremos Brigade. It was opened by a stirring message from renowned author Alice Walker, who welcomed Alarcón and Pérez Roque to the U.S.

Washington delayed issuing a visa to Alarcón to attend the UN Summit, causing him to miss the official ceremony as well as meetings on development financing and current measures to fight hunger and poverty. □

Women leaders unite to free Cuban 5

By Minnie Bruce Pratt

Sept. 20—A delegation of women leaders will travel to the Department of Justice in Washington, D.C., on Sept. 23, to demand that Attorney General Alberto Gonzales immediately free the Cuban Five. This action was called by the New York Committee to Free the Cuban Five in collaboration with the National Committee.

FREE Leonard Peltier!

Continued from page 2

worse I would not have survived in the general prisoner population. Although I have been forced to endure many hardships, I will never surrender, even if all that is left of me is my spirit. Your love and support inspire me to overcome everything.

I hope that here at Lewisburg I will be able to resume living in the general population, practicing the traditional ways and continuing with my artwork. My defense team is preparing to go through some major milestones. They need your support more than ever to re-establish our office and prepare for upcoming reviews and legal battles. Since Russ Redner, Paula Ostrovsky, and Toni Zeidan do not want to accept any salaries or remuneration of any kind, all of your donations will go directly to the office transfer and upcoming campaign.

I again want to express my sincere appreciation and tell you once more that without you I am not sure I could have survived this last month. Every day I think about and pray for a time when I will be among you, shoulder to shoulder, fighting for justice for my people and our Mother Earth.

In the Spirit of Crazy Horse,
LEONARD PELTIER

The five Cubans—Antonio Guerrero, Fernando González, Gerardo Hernández, Ramón Labañino and René González—have been held since 1998 in U.S. federal prisons, under sentences ranging from 15 years to life. They were railroaded into jail, amidst the fierce anti-communist climate in Miami, for monitoring the terrorist activities of right-wing groups against revolutionary Cuba.

The women's delegation asked to speak with the attorney general in order to protest the continued incarceration of the Five, and to demand visitation rights for the prisoners' families.

On May 27 the United Nations Working Group on Arbitrary Detention ruled that the imprisonment of the Cuban Five was unjust and violated international law. In August, a panel of the 11th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals declared the convictions null and void, and said each defendant deserved a new trial.

The Bush administration has repeatedly denied visas to family members and loved ones who wish to visit the Five. Adriana Pérez, who is married to Gerardo Hernández, has not seen him for over six years. The daughter of René González has never seen her father, although she is a U.S.-born citizen.

Impressive spectrum

Teresa Gutierrez of the New York Committee said about the effort of the women's delegation, “Despite the significant steps forward witnessed by the UN ruling and the August 9 court decision, the struggle to free the Five is far from over.”



Antonio Guerrero

Gerardo Hernández

Ramón Labañino

René González

Fernando González

Free the



The women's letter to Attorney General Gonzales is important so that every sector of the population in this country is exposed to this case.”

Women leaders from an impressive spectrum of human rights, peace, anti-prison, immigrant rights, women's, lesbian/gay/bisexual/transgender, anti-war and other organizations signed the appeal.

Individual endorsers included The Rev. Dr. Joan Brown Campbell, former general secretary of the National Council of Churches; Brenda Stokely, national leader of the Million Worker March Movement; distinguished academics Beverly Guy-Sheftall, professor of Women's Studies at Spelman College and Bettina Aptheker, professor of Feminist Studies at the University of California-Santa Cruz; Gloria LaRiva of the National Committee, legendary singer and cultural worker Ronnie Gilbert; and national anti-war organizer Leslie Cagan.

Code Pink Women for Peace endorsed the action at their national level.

A wide range of groups was reflected in

the affiliations of the signers, who included Nieves Ayres, Mujeres de la Rebeldía, La Peña del Bronx; Nellie Hester Bailey, executive director of the Harlem

Tenants Council; Mara Bard, School of Americas Watch-Long Island; Heather Cottin, Troops Out Now-Long Island; LeiLani Dowell, FIST (Fight Imperialism, Stand Together); Leslie Feinberg, co-chair, national LGBT caucus, National Writers Union/UAW; Sara Flounders, co-director International Action Center; Joan Gibbs, esq., Harriet's Daughters; Nada Khader, executive director, WESPAC Foundation; Dorothea Peacock and Maureen Skehan, Women's Fightback Network-Boston; and Ruth Vela, Gente Unida: Border Coalition for Human Rights-San Diego and Monica Moorehead, a coordinator of Millions for Mumia.

The breadth of international support for the Five was indicated by signers such as Don Mee Choi of Women for Genuine Security, a member group of the East Asia-U.S.-Puerto Rico Women's Network Against Militarism; Samia A. Halaby of Al-Awda and the New York Committee to Defend Palestine; Esperanza Martell of ProLibertad, an organization fighting for Puerto Rican independence; Eva Golinger, Venezuelan-American author; Zenaida Mendez, president, National Dominican Women's Caucus; Luz Ortiz, Association of Colombian Unionists; and Lourdes Vela of the Alberto Lovera Bolivarian Circle.

For more information about how you can help free the Cuban Five, contact the National Committee to Free the Cuban Five at www.freethefive.org. □

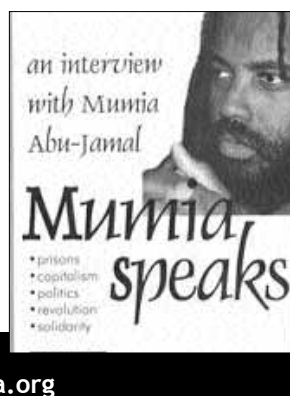
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To hear Monica Moorehead's recent interview with Mumia Abu-Jamal go to www.millions4mumia.org



Capitalist economy after Katrina

Stagnation plus inflation spells big trouble

By Milt Neidenberg

Bye, bye Goldilocks economy!

Katrina's hurricane winds and floods in the Gulf region have swept away Wall Street's fairy tale that the economy was just right—not too hot, not too cold. Now looming over the economic landscape are storm clouds of stagnation and inflation and the possibility of a recession.

Following the breaks in the levees, the Sept. 1 New York Times described New Orleans and the surrounding area in an article entitled "A Distribution System Brought to Its Knees."

The article stated that the area "is a major hub supplying energy products to other parts of the country. It also serves as a transportation center handling farm products and other commodities delivered on the Mississippi River ... almost half of the country's oil refinery capacity is concentrated on the Gulf Coast. Katrina idled 90 percent."

The damage and destruction caused by Katrina will create widespread pockets of stagnation and by recent estimates will cost over \$200 billion—adding more debt to the \$400 billion budget deficit. This will ratchet up the cost of borrowing. Interest rates will rise along with price inflation.

Oil, which remains over \$60 a barrel, is based on monopoly pricing and profits set by four giant U.S. corporations. The spike in prices has already had a widespread inflationary effect on many commodities and industries.

Oil fuels the engine of the global empire. From Europe to Asia, sticker shock has begun to shrink the Gross Domestic Product—the value of all goods and services produced.

In the U.S., industries impacted by spiraling oil prices—steel, aluminum, glass, rubber, plastics and chemicals, among others—are either raising prices, laying off workers, or both.

Two major airlines, Northwest and Delta, have petitioned for bankruptcy. Giant auto corporations Ford, General Motors and Chrysler are saddled with trying to sell gas guzzlers and are deep in debt. The rush to buy gold—a store of value during tempestuous times—has pushed the

price to more than \$450 an ounce.

Consumer confidence in September was the lowest since 1992, plunging 14 percent from August. The index is down 20 percent since July, the largest decline in points over a two-month period since comparable records began in 1978. Consumer spending constitutes two-thirds of the GDP.

Inflation, from the gas pumps to the supermarket, has taken its toll on the income of workers, especially from the oppressed nationalities.

Poverty is on the rise. The number of workers without jobs for more than six months has more than doubled over the last three years and now comprises more than 20 percent of those unemployed. Not since the 1930s has the rate been so high for so long. Black workers and other people of color, women, youth and immigrants have borne the greatest hardships of this crisis. Many are so discouraged they no longer look for work. Stagflation will create more unemployment and misery.

Hocus-pocus monetary policy

The Federal Reserve Board (FRB) met on Sept. 20 to apply monetary machinations to grapple with the intractable issue of stagflation.

Wall Street analysts were buzzing over two questions. Would the FRB raise interest rates and, most important, what would be the Fed's message concerning inflation despite the downturn in economic growth?

The FRB did announce a rise in interest rates, by a quarter-point, for the 11th consecutive time since June 2004. This increase in borrowing costs to 3.75 percent will further shrink the growth rate of the GDP.

Although Federal Reserve head Alan Greenspan, the master of manipulation, usually can come up with language to soothe Wall Street, the FRB finds itself between a rock and a hard place.

Following the end of the 2001 recession, the FRB kept interest rates at a low 1 percent for almost three years to stimulate the economy. It unleashed a monetary policy that led to an unprecedented increase in cheap and accessible paper money.

The housing boom took off like a rocket shot into space. Thirty-year mortgage rates were so low that millions of home buyers were drawn into the market. The overall result was a nationwide binge of borrowing and spending—speculation.

Now it's payback time.

The capitalist cycle of expansion is over. The housing boom has reached its peak and consumer/buyers are buried in debt, having spent more than they earn. When the housing bubble breaks, the precipitous decline in spending on construction and on all products that accompany home buying could send this economy reeling towards an economic crisis.

The current trade deficit and government/consumer debt have reached all-time highs. On Sept. 16, the National Debt Clock was racing upward at a rate of \$1.66 billion a day, to a total just short of \$8 TRILLION.

That's minus the cost of Katrina.

The day Bush was inaugurated in 2000, the national debt was \$5.7 trillion and there was a federal government budget surplus.

When Katrina exposed the government's criminal negligence, there was a national outburst of outrage against the Bush administration, which is on the

defensive for the moment. An economy that is riddled with stagflation, compounded by imperialist wars going badly in Iraq and Afghanistan, has weakened the empire of high finance.

It is certain that Wall Street and "Corporate America" will counter with further attacks on workers and the oppressed nationalities.

In "Hurricane Katrina: The Black Nation's 9/11," Saladin Muhammad, chairperson of Black Workers for Justice and a co-convenor of the Million Worker March Movement, said the Katrina catastrophe "is directly the result of a profit-driven system of capitalist exploitation reinforced by national oppression of African-American people ..."

He called for "a representative body that acts as a kind of provisional government to deal with questions regarding the future of their communities."

As a step in that direction, he stated that it would "require the organization, politics, and leadership of the African-American liberation movement ... to help unite a broad, multi-national, multi racial and international campaign for social justice and reconstruction."

The class struggle is heating up. □

Nat'l conference demands

Feed the cities, starve the Pentagon

By Cheryl LaBash
Detroit

Hurricane Katrina tore off more than roofs when it slashed through the U.S. Gulf Coast. The cover-up denying the depth of racism and poverty across the land was shattered, too. Long before the billions of dollars authorized by Congress to fund the occupation of Iraq became starkly linked to unrepaired levees, unavailable trucks, generators and emergency equipment, Detroiters issued a call for a National Conference to Reclaim Our Cities—Money for Our Cities. Not for War.

On Nov. 11, 12 and 13 at Wayne State University, representatives from across the U.S. will plan actions. The Call to Feed the Cities—Starve the Pentagon says, "It is time to launch a struggle to win our right to health care, quality education, decent housing, food, utilities and a job. The money is there to guarantee everyone a decent life. This is the richest country in the world."

In the U.S. Census report on Poverty published on Aug. 30, 2005, New Orleans tied with Cleveland for the 12th poorest major city. Detroit was first - with more than one-third of its residents struggling to survive below the federal poverty level. In between are El Paso, Miami, Newark, Atlanta, Long Beach, Milwaukee, Buffalo, Philadelphia, Memphis and Baltimore. (www.cleveland.com/poverty/plaindealer/index.ssf?/base/news)

The conference is supported by Detroit City Council President Maryann Mahaffey; Councilmember JoAnn Watson; Million Worker March leader Clarence Thomas; Marian Kramer, Co-President of National



Welfare Rights Union; Millie Hall, President of the Metro-Detroit Coalition of Labor Union Women; Leslie Feinberg, co-chair, LGBT caucus, National Writers Union/UAW, the Michigan Emergency Committee Against War and Injustice (MECAWI) and more.

On Labor Day, Sept. 5, in Detroit, anti-war activists lining the parade route felt a new mood and unity with the union marchers. Although no union contingent carried official signs to bring the troops home, the "No War," "Money for Our Cities—Not for War/Bring the Troops Home, Now!" signs were snapped up, mounted on trucks and carried throughout the rest of the parade. Anti-war chants like "Not the War Machine, We remember New Orleans!" echoed from the union marchers' sound systems. The National Conference to Reclaim Our Cities can help bring together, focus and organize that new mood. What more graphically describes the Reclaiming of Our Cities than the right of evacuees to return to their homes and control the rebuilding of New Orleans?

For more information contact: national_conference_of_cities@earthlink.net or call 313 680-5508. The preliminary agenda and registration information can be found at: home.earthlink.net.

Bay Area workers aiding Katrina survivors

San Francisco Bay Area working people are gathering aid to ship to survivors of Hurricane Katrina in the Louisiana, Mississippi and Alabama. Initiated by U.S. Congresswoman Barbara Lee, International Longshore & Warehouse Union (ILWU) Local 10 President Trent Willis and fellow Co-Chair of the Million Worker March Movement, Clarence Thomas—all African-American leaders—10 shipping containers are being filled with all types of material aid, including water, toys, clothing, linens and toiletries. The shipping companies, including Matson Navigation, American President Lines and Mersk-Sealand, supplied the containers at the request of Local 10. The first container was filled within three hours by enthusiastic local workers and union members hearing about it. Soon all ten will be trucked to the Gulf states by Teamster union drivers.

Kimberlyn Cotton, Steward Council

Chair of ILWU Local 10, commented that one Local 10 member went out right away and bought 300 blankets to donate. She said, "The solidarity of Local 10 rank-and-file membership has been outstanding." And retired Black ILWU member Leo Robinson added, "It is not unusual for Local 10 to take positions in support of people suffering, anywhere in the world." He cited previous examples of the union practicing what it preaches including sending ambulances to young revolutionary Nicaragua in the 1980s, providing medical supplies and clothing to African refugees in camps in several countries, and stopping arms shipments to the reactionary Pinochet government of Chile after the CIA-instigated overthrow of the Salvador Allende government in 1973. He said, "These actions were initiated by the rank-and-file ILWU members, and taken up by the rest of the local." —J. Marquardt

Millions More Movement takes up police brutality

By John Parker
Los Angeles

"From all of the reports that we are receiving from local communities that are now actively organizing and mobilizing for the Millions More Movement, there is a definite acceleration in the momentum at the grassroots level. The local organizing committees, in particular, are growing and the number of persons registering to show their support of the Millions More Movement (MMM) is increasing in each region and state," reported Minister Benjamin F. Muhammad, national mobilization director of the Millions More Movement, at a Sept. 3 National Mobilization Meeting in Washington, D.C.

In Los Angeles, over two weeks later, the trend towards growing participation continues and, due to increasing incidents of racist police brutality since early this year, MMM meetings continue to grow.

At the Bethel AME Church, located in

South Los Angeles, the Community Call to Action and Accountability group meets every Tuesday to discuss community issues and plan strategies. It is also mobilizing local participation in the MMM.

On Aug. 30, this group's meeting was partly dedicated to fighting for justice for Devin Brown, an unarmed 13-year-old boy shot to death by an LAPD cop last February. In an announcement about the meeting and a demand to fire the cop who killed Devin, the organizers stated: "The Community Call to Action and Accountability (CCAA) is demanding that Los Angeles Police Chief William J. Bratton immediately fire Officer Steven Garcia, and that the newly appointed Police Commission uphold this firing. The Community Call to Action and Accountability (CCAA) is demanding that Los Angeles District Attorney Steve Cooley immediately file criminal murder charges against Officer Steven Garcia. We want justice in this matter, and we want it now ... No Justice ... No Peace!"



WW PHOTO: JULIA LARIVA

South Los Angeles march protesting police killing of Devin Brown this past February.

The mayor, police chief, city and state government continued to drag their feet regarding the Brown killing. This past July another atrocity occurred when an LAPD

SWAT team refused to negotiate a supposed hostage situation in Watts and instead chose to shoot down a father hold-

Continued on page 6

Muslim groups, supporters denounce racist governor's attacks

By Bryan G. Pfeifer
Boston

Massachusetts Governor Mitt Romney, speaking at the right-wing Heritage Foundation's national office in Washington D.C. declared on Sept. 14, "How many individuals are coming to our state and going to those institutions who have come from terrorist-sponsored states?" He was referring to international students who attend the 120 colleges and universities in Massachusetts. "Do we know where they are? Are we tracking them?"

He added, "How about people who are in settings, mosques for instance, that may be teaching doctrines of hate and terror. Are we monitoring that? Are we wiretapping? Are we following what's going on?" He also called for the "monitoring" and "tracking" of immigrants. (www.boston.com)

Romney called for even more wholesale repression than current provisions in the Patriot Act, which already allows for the monitoring of international students and the violation of scores of civil liberties.

Furious over Romney's racist, chauvinist and terrorist attacks, the Muslim American Society immediately issued a press release denouncing Romney and called for a press conference at the governor's office Sept. 16. The Boston chapter of the Muslim American Society Freedom Foundation sponsored the action with the Islamic Society of Boston, the American Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee, the Massachusetts Immigration Refugee Advocacy Coalition, the American Civil Liberties Union and the American Friends Service Committee. (www.masnet.org)

A Romney spokesperson accepted a letter of protest from the delegation but told them the governor refuses to retract his comments. Romney himself repeated this throughout the Sept. 16 weekend at various press conferences and other events. He even appeared on Fox's "The O'Reilly Factor" Sept. 16.

This most recent declaration of war by Romney follows on the heels of scores of attacks against progressive and revolutionary individuals and organizations during his term and before.

Romney supports the death penalty, mandatory and so-called "three strikes" sentencing, school vouchers, welfare 'reform,' and deregulation. He is anti-abortion and viciously anti-union.

Romney, in his zeal to abolish same-sex marriage in Massachusetts—the only state to legalize this legal and human right—works closely with organizations such as "Focus on the Family" and the "Family Research Council".

He has worked closely with the Department of Homeland Security and other repressive agencies to build a "fusion center," in Framingham, Mass. where a high percentage of Afro-Brazilians reside. This "center" is a clearinghouse where all forms of local, state and national repressive agencies work in tandem to terrorize the working class and oppressed through eavesdropping, wiretapping, video monitoring and the like. A similar command

center was built before the 2004 Democratic National Convention in downtown Boston at the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority with the full complicity of the Democratic Party.

Countering racist reaction with a people's movement!

It is no coincidence that Romney and other Heritage Foundation protégés like Edwin Meese III are now increasingly whipping up racist and chauvinist hysteria at a time of increasing unity between the working class and nationally oppressed in the wake of Hurricane Katrina and the building of a movement against the U.S. wars abroad and at home.

Heritage is the most well-funded right-wing think tank receiving most of its capital from the pro-John Birch Society, Milwaukee-based Bradley Foundation and is the most politically connected to the

White House and Congress. The Foundation's blueprint for the "reconstruction" of New Orleans and the Gulf Coast area reads like a capitalist vulture's wildest dreams. (www.mediatransparency.org) (www.heritage.org) They are the real terrorists.

In order for these parasites to profit off the misery, death and destruction of millions of working class and oppressed people in this country and internationally they must sell fear, sow division and fracture any unity and solidarity that exists for an independent multinational class-wide people's movement to arise and consistently move forward.

Romney, as well as scores of Republicans and Democrats alike, despite their various orientations, are fast scrambling to forestall this type of movement especially after the hurricane nakedly exposed before the whole world the utter failure of the capitalist system. □

White House attempts to cover up racism and corruption

By LeiLani Dowell

On Sept. 15, President Bush had to finally admit something he's been trying to avoid since the day he came into office. Speaking of the Gulf region in his nationwide address, he said, "As all of us saw on television, there's also some deep, persistent poverty in this region That poverty has roots in a history of racial discrimination."

This acquiescence by the Bush administration was an attempt to quell the outrage being expressed around the world to the government's handling of the hurricane crisis. Bush, however, still did not address the racist treatment of the survivors of Hurricane Katrina.

Just four days before, he responded to accusations that the slow response to the hurricane was tinged with racism by saying, "The storm didn't discriminate and neither will the recovery effort. The rescue efforts were comprehensive."

That the Bush administration would pretend that racism doesn't exist is no surprise. Last month, the Bush administration urged Lawrence Greenfield, head of the Bureau of Justice Statistics, to resign after he refused to delete information on a press release that confirmed that Blacks and Latin@s faced racist profiling at the hands of the police.

The bureau had completed a study, based on 80,000 interviews, which deduced that when Black, Latin@ and white drivers were pulled over by the cops, white drivers were searched 3.5 percent of the time, Black drivers 10.2 percent of the time and Latin@s 11.4 percent of the time. In addition, the report found that police were more likely to issue tickets to Latin@ drivers and arrest, search and use force against Black drivers.

Greenfield refused to comply when his supervisors crossed out this information on the draft of a press release about the report. After being threatened with termi-

nation—six months before his scheduled retirement—he accepted a demotion under his right as a senior federal official. No press release was ever issued on the report, and it was quietly posted to the bureau's website.

Yet racism isn't the only thing the Bush administration has tried to cover up through the firing of officials. Bunnatine Greenhouse, the top contract procurement officer for the Army Corps of Engineers, was forced out of her job on Aug. 27 after denouncing the signing of a no-bid contract with a Halliburton subsidiary for oil field repair work in Iraq this past June. Greenhouse told Congress that the oil contract "was the most blatant and improper contract abuse I have witnessed during the course of my professional career."

It is more than ironic that in the immediate days following Hurricane Katrina, Halliburton subsidiary Kellogg, Brown & Root was awarded a no-bid contract for reconstruction in the Gulf area. □

Same-sex marriage battles loom across the country

By David Hoskins

The demand by the lesbian, gay, bi and trans movement to end state discrimination against same-sex marriages has been vocal, loud and persistent. Proponents of same-sex marriage rights are now facing intense battles in a number of states.

While Vermont became the first state to grant many of the rights of marriage to same-sex couples in 2000, the struggle for lesbian, gay, bi and trans (LGBT) equality under marriage law has rapidly advanced since that time.

The historic fight in Massachusetts continues. Equal marriage rights recently came under attack by a small but well-funded right-wing movement determined to set back the clock in Massachusetts where same-sex marriage was legalized after a 2004 order from the state supreme court.

Regressive forces in the state recently pushed for a failed constitutional amendment that would have banned marriage for same-sex couples.

Lawmakers reaffirmed the right of all couples to marry in a joint session of the House and Senate where the proposed constitutional amendment was defeated 157 to 39. Openly gay legislator Sen. Jarret Barrios summarized what many of those voting against the amendment felt when he reminded voters that before same-sex marriage passed, "there were great divisions, and dire predictions about what would happen if gay marriage came to Massachusetts. Sixty-five hundred married couples later, the sun still shines in Massachusetts."

Sensing that a defeat was on the horizon, right-wing opponents started to push a ballot measure aimed at rescinding same-sex marriage rights. The so-called Massachusetts Family Institute has threatened to wage a fierce attack on lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans families to ensure its passage.

The state attorney general has approved the measure that, unlike the recently defeated amendment, precludes the for-

mation of civil unions as an alternative to same-sex marriage. The proposed ban requires 65,582 signatures by Dec. 7 and the support of 25 percent of the state legislature in order to go before voters in 2008.

The Gay and Lesbian Advocates and Defenders, a Massachusetts equal rights group that successfully opposed the most recent amendment, is gearing up for a tough fight this fall.

The 'terminator'

California took a big step toward becoming the second state to recognize same-sex marriage when the State Assembly passed AB 849 granting full marriage rights to same-sex couples. The passage of AB 849 also makes California the first state in the country to legalize same-sex marriage through the legislature, and not the courts.

The legislature has delayed passage of the bill until Sept. 23, following Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger's promise to veto the legislation.

The delay was granted to allow the LGBT communities and their supporters time to lobby the governor to change his mind and allow the bill to pass into law.

Schwarzenegger is using Proposition 22—which passed in 2000 and bans same-sex marriage in the state of California—as a pretext to veto equal marriage rights. The governor and other conservatives insist that the voters made their voice heard when Proposition 22—which is currently being challenged in the state courts as unconstitutional—was passed during the primary election.

A closer look at what happened in that election reveals that Proposition 22 does not reflect the will of the people.

On its face the 2000 primary election gives the appearance that 61 percent of Californians supported the ban on same-sex marriages. However, when the fact that millions of voting-age Californians were unfairly denied eligibility due to their immigration or incarceration status is combined with the difference between the number of eligible voters and the number



of voters who bothered to show up for the 2000 electoral farce, the truth emerges that less than 19 percent of the voting-age population

supported Proposition 22.

Schwarzenegger and the anti-marriage forces have failed to give a reason why the expansion of equal marriage rights to all Californians should be held hostage by an extreme right wing that accounts for less than one-fifth of the population.

The fight back spreads

The fight to beat back attacks on same-sex families is not confined to states where progressive forces are positioned to wrest a little piece of equality from the hands of state government.

Jewish, Catholic, Methodist and Lutheran religious leaders in Texas have recently joined hands to form the "No Nonsense in November" coalition. The coalition's aim is to defeat the proposed constitutional amendment banning same-sex marriage which has the support of Texas's homophobic governor, Rick Perry.

The LGBT communities can expect the struggle for equal rights to intensify in the wake of President George W. Bush's failed campaign for the amendment. That campaign—an election-year gimmick designed to deflect attention from the war in Iraq and growing poverty in the U.S.—emboldened reactionary forces on the right.

Democratic candidate John F. Kerry didn't even offer a mild defense of same-sex marriage rights during that presidential election. As the senator from the only state that had won same-sex marriage rights, Kerry campaigned to defeat same-sex marriage on a state-by-state basis.

People of progress in Massachusetts, California, Texas and all over this country must continue to fight back to get rid of injustice in all its forms.

Hoskins is an organizer in Washington, D.C., for FIST—Fight Imperialism, Stand Together.

1953 Mattachine convention: Left wing speaks, opposition unites



By Leslie Feinberg

Faced with louder red-baiting both outside and inside the Mattachine movement, the left-wing founders called for a delegated convention in April 1953.

The convention was unprecedented. It drew together the first large-scale political assembly of those who identified as homosexual to address movement building. The conference also allowed the founding members to speak

to the membership directly, for the first time.

But the convention also brought into the same room, for the first time, right-wing members of Mattachine. This gathering allowed them to fuse as an opposition hell-bent on purging the left-wing leadership.

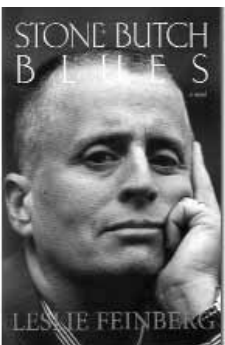
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New release coming in February 2006 autographed copies of Leslie Feinberg's *Drag King Dreams*.

Millions More Movement takes up police brutality

Continued from page 5

ing his 19-month-old baby in his arms. The volley of bullets killed him and the baby, Susie Peña.

Most recently, adding insult to injury against the oppressed communities here, the police attacked a prominent leader in the Black community. Tony Muhammad, Western Regional Minister of the Nation of Islam, was beaten and kicked in the head by the LAPD at a peace vigil on Aug. 25.

That incident outraged the Black community. Over 600 people came to the next Tuesday night meeting of the CCAA, where actions were discussed to protest this and the Peña and Brown killings. A special portion of the meeting was dedicated to the Peña family and money was raised on their behalf.

A big theme that night at the CCAA meeting was unity. In fact, the meeting began with Native-American dancers performing a spiritual ceremony and ended with Black Muslim and Christian ministers, community activists and labor lead-

ers pledging a tireless fight against injustice and racism. This spirit of unity was echoed at the following meetings and will further be expressed at the Sept. 24 anti-war rally here in Los Angeles.

It was decided that Sept. 24 would be the day to bring out thousands against police brutality at the LAPD headquarters in downtown Los Angeles, just blocks away from the ending march site of the anti-war rally. Plans are currently being made to integrate the two actions by members of the CCAA, who voted last week to expand the theme of their demonstration to include ending the war in Iraq now.

This theme of unity is a major component of the MMM nationally. "For the first time in our history, those of us of different ideologies, philosophies, methodologies, denominations, sects and religions, political and fraternal affiliations have come together to create the Millions More Movement," states the Honorable Minister Louis Farrakhan in the September issue of *The Final Call*.

To strengthen that unity and the movement, Minister Farrakhan extended an open invitation to the National Black Justice Coalition, a lesbian, gay, bi and trans organization, to be co-conveners of the MMM in Washington, D.C., on Oct. 15.

The NBJC recently announced D.C. activities Oct. 14-16 in conjunction with the MMM titled "We are Family Unity Weekend."

The CCAA also responded immediately to help survivors of Hurricane Katrina, which has been cited nationally by the MMM as another example of U.S. racism. At the Sept. 3 Washington meeting of the MMM, Minister Akbar Muhammad, international representative of Minister Farrakhan, stated the importance of the MMM "to speak out about this great tragedy and to take immediate steps to offer our assistance to the thousands in need."

The writer is an organizer with the International Action Center and Million Worker March Committee, which are both members of the CCAA.

Senate hearings expose Roberts but

Democrats set to let right-winger head Supreme Court

By Fred Goldstein

The widely hailed “brilliance” of John Roberts, President George W. Bush’s nominee for Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, has been shown during Senate confirmation hearings to consist mainly of his ability to evade embarrassing questions and to manipulate the law for right-wing results.

For example, Sen. Joseph Biden asked him point-blank for his opinion of this statement by Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg: “Abortion prohibition by a state controls women and denies them full autonomy and full equality with men. It is unconstitutional.”

Roberts replied: “Well, that is an area where I think I should not respond.”

Roberts when working for the Reagan administration had declared Section 2 of the Voting Rights Act to be “constitutionally suspect and contrary to the most fundamental tenets of the legislative process,” adding that “There is no evidence of voting abuses nationwide supporting the need for such a change.”

Sen. Edward Kennedy asked him about this “heated opposition” to a move that would prohibit voting practices having a discriminatory impact.

Roberts replied that at that time he had been a staff lawyer in the Justice Department—thus pushing responsibility onto the Reagan administration.

But later in the hearings, Sen. Russell Feingold confronted Roberts on this issue: “African Americans from Mobile, Alabama, had been unable to elect any candidates to the position of city commissioner for every election cycle for seven decades. They challenged the method of electing city commissioners all the time in at-large elections, and the evidence was clear that as a practical matter, although African Americans could register and vote, they couldn’t elect anyone.”

The people of Mobile “had to go to enormous effort and financial expense to prove discriminatory intent, including hiring a historian who could piece together the motivations of city officials who had designed the electoral system almost 100 years ago. ... So why at this point did you want to make Section 2 cases so hard to prove?”

Roberts answered again, “I was a 26-year-old staff lawyer,” and refused to concede that African Americans were better off after his position was overturned.

Democratic members of the Senate Judiciary Committee felt compelled to

expose Roberts publicly because of the firm opposition of the entire progressive community, including women, the African American and Latino communities, environmentalists and labor.

As the hearings wore on, however, the Democrats were digging themselves a hole. Their questioning showed not only that Roberts was an ideologue of the right, a title he has vigorously denied, but that he was even to the right of the Reagan administration. It laid down a clear justification for making a mighty effort to block Roberts.

But the Democratic leadership, as loyal members of the capitalist establishment, has no intention of doing that.

Roberts more right wing than Reagan

Biden pointed out that Reagan’s right-wing attorney general, Bradford Reynolds, “decided that the federal government should take action against the state of Kentucky” because “there’s a very strong record that the Kentucky prison system discriminates against female prisoners.” The senator continued: “And you wrote to the attorney general that I recommend you do not approve intervention in this case.”

Roberts gave his usual answer about being a 26-year-old staff lawyer just following orders. Biden rejoined: “Your memo contradicted his recommendation to intervene. Why would that be if you just follow the policy of the office?”

Sen. Richard Durbin of Illinois told Roberts: “You have the distinction of being opposed by LULAC. This, of course,

is the first time this Hispanic organization has ever opposed a Supreme Court nominee ... I personally think that their feelings go beyond the comment, illegal amigogs, that you talked about yesterday.” That racist slur by Roberts had been brought up by Sen. Dianne Feinstein.

The Supreme Court in 1982 struck down as unconstitutional a Texas law permitting schools to forbid entrance to the children of undocumented workers. Durbin told Roberts: “[Y]ou co-authored a memo that criticizes the solicitor general’s office for failing to file a brief supporting the Texas law. ... Your memo disagreed with the administration’s position on the case, so it isn’t as if you were arguing the Reagan administration’s position.”

Roberts again said he was just trying to make the administration’s position consistent—meaning Reagan should be racist 100 percent of the time instead of 95 percent. And he refused to say that he now disagrees with his old position. “It’s not an area I focus on,” he replied.

All this shows that Roberts was actually to the right of Reagan’s Justice Department and was fighting to overrule any Reagan administration concession to anti-racism.

In case after case, Roberts “brilliantly” exhibited his reactionary nature. Senator Leahy questioned him about a case involving the rape of a student. “She’d been taken out of class by this teacher, brought to another room, basically raped. And Justice White made it very clear, contrary to what you and Kenneth Starr had said, that she had a right for [legal] actions because of that abuse.”

Black ministers, activists hit Bush for Katrina response

Ministers for Racial, Social and Economic Justice have joined a broad coalition of activists calling on Congress to bring charges against George W. Bush for his racist handling of the Hurricane Katrina disaster.

In a Washington, D.C., press conference on Sept. 14, the coalition issued a statement saying: “Bush’s incompetent and inept leadership resulted in hundreds of deaths and unbelievable human suffering of United States’ citizens.” The coalition of ministers and social justice activists said that Congress should further reprimand and censure the president.

The national president of the group, Rev. Graylan S. Hagler, stated, “More and more lives are being lost in the aftermath of Katrina.

“This is, to say the least, criminal negligence to the highest degree. ...

“We are spending more than \$5 billion a month on an illegal and immoral war in Iraq, which we are being told will make us safer. Yet, Americans continue to die by the thousands over there and hundreds of Americans died here at home because our resources were in the wrong place at the wrong time. This is incompetence and criminal.”

Roberts replied: “It concerned an issue of statutory interpretation because it was unclear whether Congress had intended a particular remedy to be available or not.” Therein lies the so-called “brilliance” of this arch reactionary. He was able to find some legal excuse to prevent a girl from seeking justice for being raped.

The transcripts, taken from the Congressional Quarterly and published in the New York Times, repeatedly show Roberts being allowed to evade answering questions that would clearly reveal him to be a cruel and vicious right-winger.

He refused to disavow the president’s right to torture. He defended his removal of a line from a Reagan administration memo to the effect that AIDS cannot be caused by casual contact, even though the Centers for Disease Control had made that position public. He showed not one ounce of regret for defending an HMO that refused to pay for needed shoulder surgery for a patient in Illinois, even though Illinois law required the payment.

The Democratic Party leaders, their posturing notwithstanding, have already bowed to the opinion of the capitalist establishment and accepted Roberts’ nomination as a *fait accompli*. If they were to carry out any action commensurate with what Roberts deserves, they would not merely filibuster until hell froze over—they would call a mass demonstration in Washington, D.C., to protest until the Bush administration was forced to withdraw the nomination of this racist, anti-woman, anti-environment, anti-labor stooge of big business. □

—Monica Moorehead

New bankruptcy laws will hurt hurricane survivors

By Larry Hales

New bankruptcy laws go into effect on Oct. 13 and for those who will be hurt the most—the poor and middle class saddled with debt—it will now become virtually impossible to file for Chapter 7 and have that debt wiped away.

Most of the estimated 150,000 people who were left in New Orleans to face the brunt of the Category 4 hurricane alone, and were abandoned for five days after the hurricane ravaged the area, will have nothing to return to.

Most of these people lived in old, run-down tenements and homes and didn’t have flood insurance, private transporta-

tion, and many had no bank accounts. Now, they will have no jobs to return to and no way to make a living. The changes in the bankruptcy law will be a further inundation for them and thousands more along the coast.

Of the hundreds of thousands of people who were able to evacuate themselves, a great number had nowhere to go and were forced to live off credit cards to stay in hotels, rent automobiles and buy food.

The disaster was not that the hurricane brooded in the Gulf and hit shore with 150 mile-per-hour winds, but the criminal negligence of the local, state and federal authorities and their disregard for the basic rights and needs of people in the

path of the storm.

The misery will only deepen with the new bankruptcy bill. Under the amended law, it will be extremely difficult, if not impossible, for families to petition for bankruptcy. The bill seeks to establish a means test for Chapter 7 filing; the median household income would be the bar, and if the household income is above the state’s annual median, then the household would be ineligible for filing under Chapter 7 and would be relegated to Chapter 13 repayment over a five-year program.

This is no option, as the ruling class and its government’s disdain for the poor and people of color has been uncovered by the devastating winds of Hurricane Katrina.

Relief for airlines, not the people

The obviousness of the government’s scorn for workers and the poor can be seen in the protection offered corporations in filing Chapter 11, which will not be affected by the new bill.

Northwest Airlines and Delta Airlines Inc. both recently declared bankruptcy on Sept. 14. The airlines, the fourth- and third-largest airlines in the United States, cited the skyrocketing oil prices and increased competition as reasons for entering into Chapter 11 bankruptcy protection.

The airlines are following United Airlines and US Airways into bankruptcy and will be ultimately seeking to slash

Continued on page 11

Union leaders see hurricane survivors' conditions as '21st century slave ship'

By Clarence Thomas and Chris Silvera
Houston

Sept. 11—We were invited by the Millions More Movement, by Nation of Islam Minister Louis Farrakhan, as Million Worker March Movement representatives to be part of a delegation that went to Houston. First, there was a visit to the George R. Brown Convention Center and then we took part in a Town Hall meeting. Texas has become the “home” to over 250,000 displaced victims of Hurricane Katrina.

The delegation also included Minister Farrakhan along with his Chief of Staff Leonard Farrakhan Muhammad; Minister Robert Muhammad, Southwest regional representative of the Nation of Islam; Ben Chavis, CEO of the Hip-Hop Summit Action Network; Willie F. Wilson, executive director of the Millions More March; economist and syndicated columnist Julianne Malveaux and Dr. Barbara Williamson-Skinner, national MMM conveners; Malik Zulu Shabazz, New Black Panther Party leader and MMM convener; Bob Law from the New York local organizing committee and Jim Jones, Hip-Hop artist.

We visited the George R. Brown Convention Center in Houston where thousands of Gulf Coast evacuees, survivors and victims and internally displaced people were being warehoused.

The first thought that struck us was how much security there was at this facility that really prevents the public from being able to interact with those individuals who have been displaced. It would make sense for people in the community to be able to have access to those individuals around issues of providing them with housing, job prospects, to help contact individuals for them and bring them things they need.

But instead, the evacuees are locked down.

Although they can leave to go outside, it's not that easy. Security was really, really heavy.

Our delegation was confronted by someone who called himself the head of the security force. He had no badge and no uniform. He didn't even seem to know what the Nation of Islam was and he wasn't ever aware of the discussions that went on between his superiors and the NOI,

which is what he should have done first. There was no mistaking that we were an official group.

He was acting like a cowboy with an “I'm in charge here! You have to leave!” attitude.

The important thing was that his demeanor exemplified a hostile attitude which was inappropriate relative to those individuals placed in that facility.

The predominant group in the convention were Black folks. The whites were a very minute minority. And there was not a commensurate number of Blacks that were part of the support group, either. So we had the feeling that Black folks were being treated as though they were foreigners in their own country.

'21st-century slave ship'

We did not visit the Astrodome, but we were told that it's like Motel 6 and the convention center is like the Hilton Hotel in terms of the quality of life there. If they're saying it's a better situation at the convention center then that convention center is nothing more than a slave ship for the 21st century on land.

People have no privacy. They're not being treated with dignity. People can't come in and out of there without going through security measures like you were going through a prison. But with all that security, there are reports of people being abused.

One of the things that people were trying to do is to carry on their lives with some degree of normalcy. One woman was braiding the hair of another woman and of a child so that they could keep their appearance up.

We actually spoke to people who had missing children. One woman had lost two small children, 5 years and 4 years old. For people going through such deep-seated trauma, you want to put them in the best situation.

Everyone we talked to was from New Orleans and 70% of the New Orleans population was Black. What happened to the other 30 percent? We asked, “Where is the white population from New Orleans?” The Black people answered, “They're in the hotels.”

We met people, talked to them about what they're feeling; we exchanged phone numbers and took pictures. One guy, Elwyn P. Hunter, said, “I am a union carpenter”. Not just a carpenter, a union carpenter. So he recognizes that associating with a union gives him a level of stature.

People were very excited and very happy that Minister Farrakhan was there. He was hugging people. Men, women and children embraced him. They were inspired by him

being there.

People were very critical of FEMA. Mosque 45 is running a clinic in Houston a couple of days a week that doesn't cost anything. So part of the problem that we saw there as we looked around was that below the radar, Black-led charity organizations are not being given adequate access to large resources. All the monies are going to the Red Cross. And all the people who have access to the inner cities are not receiving any help from all those millions of dollars that have been received.

'A wake-up call for Black America'

A national town hall meeting at the Power Center in Houston followed the visit to the convention center. About 700 to 1,000 people came. Erykah Badu, the hip-hop artist, was there and spoke. Evacuees from the convention center were taken to the meeting by bus, too.

The town hall meeting was dedicated to the hurricane victims who spoke, without anyone telling them how much time they could talk during the first 2 hours

and 45 minutes. Town hall gatherings are usually forums where talking heads come to pontificate. This particular town hall gathering departed from the typical format where for the first time people had the chance to collectively share their experiences and ordeals before the world.

People stepped up to the microphone to tell their stories; some shouted in anger about how they were neglected by authorities as they tried to escape to safety. Others cried as they described their fear and frustration about having lost everything, going days without food and water and some even contemplating suicide.

Annette Addison, an evacuee quoted in the Houston Chronicle, said, “I feel a release just to be heard.” She described how after the hurricane she and her sister waved and hollered for helicopters to rescue them but they “went on about their business.” The Coast Guard wasn't rescuing them. Neighbors were. Another victim stated, “How can Bush take my tax dollars, send them to Iraq and not help us in New Orleans?”

Addison was struggling to get assistance to feed and clothe her four children and two nieces. She said she received a debit card from the Red Cross about five days ago, but the money has yet to show up in her account.

She's staying with her aunt, Maxine Jackson, a Houston resident who has taken 48 evacuees, some of them relatives, into her home.

Another highlight was the testimony from people describing the help that they received from a New Black Panther Party member who waded in the toxic waters and rescued them.

There was also a sense of hope expressed by some of the speakers including Farrakhan that despite the neglect from governmental agencies, material things are replaceable and that this experience can be used to come together to

build a movement to deal with racism, class divisions and poverty in the U.S.

As a matter of fact, there is a sentiment among the Millions More March leadership that the devastation and catastrophe will create an environment to bring various organizations together in building a national movement.

The bridges are going to be built among people who didn't connect before, out of necessity, out of opportunity. In all crises like this there's always opportunity to build.

Minister Farrakhan rose to speak prior to his departure. One of the things that struck us was how humble he was in deferring to the survivors' need to speak first.

He described the response by the federal government, state and local officials as “a severe crime.” After survivors across the board openly criticized the role of the Red Cross, Minister Farrakhan called for the accounting of funds to the Red Cross. He's said that Black leaders must demand that they open the books to show us where the money is going regarding the Gulf Coast survivors.

The Red Cross is not about to go into the 'hood—you need people who have been working in the 'hood since the so-called “good times” because that's who has the credibility. They are not receiving any help from the federal government, Red Cross, or FEMA.

If \$10 billion was sent to the region, then why is everyone not in a hotel? That money should also be going to families who have adopted families made homeless by the hurricane and government neglect. These are people from the working class and can hardly make ends meet with their own existing families.

There is certainly a sentiment of how the Black community is going to have to be able to step forward and address many of these issues. We can't expect the Red Cross or FEMA to do that because not only are they corporatized, they are controlled by the government and are not sensitive to African-American culture, traditions and customs.

After his presentation, Farrakhan asked for permission to leave early in order to meet with survivors in other parts of the Gulf Coast region.

We've got a plan!

One of the most important accomplishments of our visit was that the Million Worker March Movement came up with a list of demands for the Gulf Coast survivors along with Saladin Muhammad's Sept. 5 statement on “Hurricane Katrina: The Black Nation's 9/11!” (see www.workers.org/2005/us/hurricane-0922/).

Some of the demands being proposed by the MWMM include:

- An immediate freeze and moratorium on awarding of all contracts until survivors of the Gulf Coast have input in those decisions.
- All people especially those from New Orleans have the right to return to the Gulf Coast Region.
- Extended unemployment and emergency financial relief based on a living wage until people are returned to their homes and jobs.
- Employ the survivors at a living wage as required by the Davis-Bacon Act (1931) to work on clean-up and reconstruction of New Orleans and the Gulf Coast, with the right to organize unions.
- Issue a massive bankruptcy executive order for Gulf Coast survivors forgiving all debts of property lost or destroyed

Continued to page 17



Katrina survivors at Convention Center, Sept. 11.

PHOTO: CHRIS SILVERA

Hurricane Katrina & the war:

A perspective for the movement

By Larry Holmes

The struggle to rebuild New Orleans is an anti-war struggle. There's no getting around it. It's not a stretch of the imagination. That is a political reality.

And therefore there is hardly anything more important just now than for the anti-war movement and all progressive forces to find meaningful ways of solidarizing themselves with the struggle of the hundreds of thousands of people who have been displaced by Hurricane Katrina—primarily Black and poor people from New Orleans and up and down the Gulf Coast.

The solidarity of the anti-war movement needs to go beyond slogans and symbolic gestures, both for political and strategic reasons.

The political reason is the necessity as a long-term perspective to not only make the anti-war movement more anti-racist and more class-conscious but to understand that the concrete merging of the struggle for Black people and all people of color in this country—along with the entire working class and the anti-war and progressive forces—is essential to resisting imperialist war.

We have got to unify the movements.

The strategic reason is that now more than ever, as a consequence of what the Katrina catastrophe exposed, people everywhere have made the connection between the war and the needs of poor and working people at home in the strongest way: Is the money produced by the working class and the oppressed going to be spent on building cities or funding war?

That understanding—which has existed, but which is sharper now—is what creates the natural link between the anti-war movement and the people of New Orleans.

The popular expression of that consciousness is the demand to end the war, bring the troops home now, take all that money that's been wasted on this imperialist war and rebuild New Orleans and every other city decimated by hurricanes—either the kind that originate in nature or those produced by capitalist exploitation, oppression and racism.

Hurricane Katrina: The Black Nation's 9/11

In his article entitled, "Hurricane Katrina: The Black Nation's 9/11!" Saladin Muhammad also puts forward a valuable list of demands. (www.workers.org/2005/us/hurricane-0922/)

Muhammad is chairperson of Black Workers for Justice and a co-convenor of the Million Workers March Movement in the South.

In his article, Muhammad calls for building a Gulf Coast Survivors Justice and Reconstruction Movement.

He wrote, "The movement in the Gulf Coast region has major concerns that require the organization, politics and leadership of the African American liberation struggle as a central component to help unite a broad, multi-national, multi-racial and international campaign for social justice and reconstruction."

Such a network could unite the relief and reconstruction efforts into a regional coalition, form councils among the evacuees in various cities that could elect representatives to an assembly, organize and reconnect the dispersed masses from the region into a representative body "that acts somewhat as their provisional government," and create a network to connect supporters, technical resources, fund-



Chris Silvera, Clarence Thomas, Louis Farrakhan, Brenda Stokely, Larry Holmes and Bashiri Silvera holding MWM t-shirt Aug. 27.

raising and allies throughout the country and internationally.

Community-Labor United

Activists from the Gulf states, as well as the most militant and politically conscious forces in the Black workers' movement and the anti-war movement, have already put forth programs and demands address the Katrina crisis.

Consistent with Saladin Muhammad's proposal, the Community-Labor United (CLU) coalition has announced the formation of a Peoples Hurricane Relief Fund and Reconstruction Project.

The CLU, a coalition which emerged in the wake of Katrina and is representative of activists in the Gulf States. It is demanding that all of the government funds earmarked for Katrina relief and reconstruction be placed in a Katrina Survivors' Fund, administered by survivors.

CLU is also demanding that funds be made available immediately for reuniting families, and that community representatives be involved in all decisions regarding the reconstruction and future of New Orleans and the Gulf Coast.

The Million Worker March Movement has drafted proposed initiatives to meet this catastrophe.

These include a call to ensure the right of return to all who have been displaced, freeze reconstruction contracts until the community has control of this process, and cancel all outstanding debts of Katrina survivors.

The demands include a call for a People's Referendum on all decisions affecting the political and residential issues of Gulf Coast survivors and the needs for prioritizing hospitals, schools and other public-service-oriented infrastructure for reconstruction.

The MWMM program also demands the establishment of a program to provide jobs at union wages for Katrina survivors, and that the U.S. accept Katrina aid offered by other countries.

Troops Out Now Coalition demands

The Troops Out Now Coalition (TONC) has formulated a number of demands based on direction from activists in the Gulf region, as well as close allies in the Million Worker March Movement.

TONC has issued a call for the formation of an International Network In Solidarity With Katrina Survivors and their communities.

The perspective of the Katrina Solidarity Network is to embrace the demands and priorities of the people in the Gulf Coast and organize the widest solidarity possible behind their struggle.

TONC supports the demand issued by the MWMM that the money needed for rebuilding New Orleans and the Gulf Coast region must not come from more cuts in food stamps, Medicaid and Medicare, public housing and public education.

These vitally needed funds must come from the war budget—and the only way that can be done is to end the war immediately and bring the troops home from Iraq and Afghanistan now.

A struggle for power

The TONC proposal on Katrina Solidarity also endorses the call for an immediate freeze on awarding Katrina contracts.

Who is going to control the money and who is the money really for?

The essence of this struggle in the Gulf Coast is a struggle for power between the Black working class on the one hand on the other the government, Pentagon and capitalist corporations.

Who will get contracts? Who will get jobs? What wages and workers' rights will they be entitled to? It is the people who must control all of the funds that will go towards the rebuilding, and who must make the decisions.

The hundreds of billions of dollars that will be coming in to the Gulf Coast must not be handed over to corporate looters like Halliburton and all the rest of Bush's rich friends who are lining up at the trough to steal the money.

TONC supports the call for Congress and Bush to rescind the waiver of the Davis-Bacon Act and pay prevailing wages for workers who rebuild New Orleans; extend unemployment benefits and back pay; and guarantee jobs for all workers... And TONC demands that the U.S. government immediately accept the 1,100 medical doctors offered by Cuba and the resources Venezuela has offered.

Other demands that TONC has put forward include:

- The thousands of people of New Orleans who are in living in shelters in Texas, Louisiana, Alabama and Mississippi have the right to make their

demands heard. They have a right to communicate with residents in the other shelters and to coordinate with progressive forces. Activists, who are not in the shelters, who are in a position to help in this process, must have full access.

- Military occupation of the Gulf must end. The thousands of National Guard troops and soldiers are not in New Orleans or the area to help. They are there, fundamentally, to maintain the political control of the government and to suppress the right of people to organize and to protest.
- TONC, along with the MWMM, calls for the establishment of an international commission of inquiry, which needs to reflect not only people from across the United States but from around the world because this struggle is international in dimension and scope.

The struggle in response to Katrina is really just beginning. It is bound to affect the Sept. 24 anti-war march in Washington, D.C., the Millions More March and every other struggle hence forth.

Mass anger over imperialist war, combined with fresh outrage over racism and national oppression as well as growing class consciousness amongst the workers, born out of a deepening worldwide capitalist crisis, has set the stage for a rejuvenation of the class struggle.

The task at hand is for the most advanced, serious, experienced and principled forces in the political movement to forge a united front around Katrina and the war.

Accomplishing this task is absolutely essential to the preparation for mounting larger and larger struggles against capitalism, which are necessary, inevitable and on the horizon.

For more information about getting involved with the International Katrina Solidarity Network, contact TONC at www.troopsoutnow.org.

Holmes is a leader of Workers World Party and one of the national leaders of the Troops Out Now Coalition.



Hurricane Katrina survivors at Convention Center, Sept. 11.

PHOTO: CHRIS SILVERA

Asian hurricane evacuees in U.S. neglected

By Betsey Piette
Philadelphia

On the other side of Houston from the Astrodome, far from the official "shelter" there, nearly 15,000 Southeast Asian evacuees have congregated at the Hong Kong V Shopping Mall. Makeshift "camps" have been set up to assist survivors of Hurricane Katrina who have been largely ignored by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and the American Red Cross.

Most of the evacuees at the mall were forced to flee the devastation and floods from Hurricane Katrina on their own, without help from government agencies. No evacuation orders were translated for them. No buses were sent to pick them up.

The pattern of government neglect has not stopped; most are still stuck in Houston with no money and no place to go. An estimated 4,000 Vietnamese are still in Biloxi, Miss., crowded three families to a

boat, their homes and cars washed away.

Workers World spoke with Au Huynh, a professional Vietnamese translator from Philadelphia. She and Temple University Law graduate Bao Nguyen paid their own way to Houston to volunteer with Boat People SOS, a national organization helping Vietnamese immigrants.

Huynh described the efforts of the local Houston Southeast Asian communities to provide food, clothing and volunteers to assist the many non-English-speaking evacuees applying for FEMA and Red Cross assistance.

"We are serving the same amount of people held at the Astrodome but with no services," Huynh said. "We offered our services to FEMA and the Red Cross to assist as translators, but were turned down."

"We never saw workers from FEMA or the Red Cross at the shopping mall to aid the South Asian evacuees," she noted, "and when we went to a Baptist church where Red Cross workers were helping

evacuees, the supervisor in charge refused to speak with us."

Huynh sought help from a friend who works at the Philadelphia Daily News and who placed calls to the Red Cross in Houston on behalf of the newspaper. They assured him that workers would come to the mall. Over a week later, the promised aid had not materialized.

Nguyen described the overwhelming problem of trying to reach FEMA by phone, which the Southeast Asian evacuees were forced to do because no FEMA workers would come to them with applications. "Volunteers took turns dialing the numbers. When we could get through we were put on hold. One time we forgot we were on hold, went to bed and came back to discover we were still on hold—19 hours later!"

Huynh and Nguyen expressed concern that evacuees were not hired to staff the phones. They learned that applications were handled by a private contractor from

Bakersfield, Calif., using 900 phone operators who were paid \$20 per hour after just two days of training. Meanwhile, evacuees sat in shelters with nothing to do and little means of support.

"The Red Cross has received millions of dollars in donations," Huynh observed, "yet evacuees are given only \$365 per person, capped at five people per household."

When more than one family lived in a household, they had problems completing FEMA applications, which contained no provision for this. Nguyen noted that many of the people in the mall received letters from FEMA denying aid with no explanation. "There seemed to be a trend that those who lacked legal permanent residency status were turned down."

"We never saw any federal assistance for these evacuees," Huynh noted. "It was the people coming together and looking out for each other that made the difference. After everything they've gone through, they are still fighting." □

Survivors demand people's control

Continued from page 1

lated mostly by dragonflies and National Guardsmen.... The haves are beginning to pick up the pieces of their former lives, while many have-nots may be forced to simply pick up and leave."

The article expresses the concern of local officials that although the French Quarter, central to New Orleans's tourism industry, may reopen soon, "it remains unclear where the ... low-wage workers necessary to operate it will come from."

In addition, the article suggests that the new construction jobs that will be created by reconstruction efforts may not go to the poorest residents, supposedly because they either "dropped out of the labor force

well before the storm or lack the skills for many specialized construction jobs."

The Associated Press reported on Sept. 16 that "the nearly 20,000 residents returning to some of New Orleans' neighborhoods beginning next week will face military checkpoints ... and a dusk-to-dawn curfew."

An article in the *Virginian Pilot* discusses the continued presence of 200

Blackwater mercenaries in New Orleans, 164 of whom were hired by a division of the Department of Homeland Security to guard government facilities. A spokesperson for Blackwater interviewed by the newspaper admitted that assertions made by its employees on the ground of being "deputized" to arrest and use lethal force were unfounded—yet they were authorized to carry loaded M-16 rifles.

Meanwhile, the most oppressed in the region continue to be either criminalized or ignored. On Sept. 4, two young trans women were arrested for "criminal trespass" after taking showers in the shower facility at a Texas A&M University-run shelter. The two cousins, 20 and 16 years

old, were separated from each other and from the rest of their family, and the older woman was held in isolation in the Brazos County Jail for five days. The woman was released only after the trans community and allies pressured the university to drop the charges.

The National Coalition for Transgender Equality, along with the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force and Lambda Legal, has issued a guide on making evacuation shelters safe for transgender evacuees.

On Sept. 16, a 73-year-old woman was released after spending 16 days in prison on charges of looting. Merlene Maten, a Black, diabetic grandmother and church deacon, was arrested the day after the hurricane struck for charges that she stole \$63.50 in goods from a delicatessen. Although she had never been previously arrested, the court set her bail at \$50,000 and sent her to a state penitentiary. Witnesses and family members attest that she was going to her car to get sausage to bring back to her hotel room when police arrested her.

According to the Associated Press, "Despite intervention from the nation's largest senior lobby, volunteer lawyers from the Federal Emergency Agency and even a private attorney, the family fought a futile battle for 16 days to get her freed."

"Then, hours after her plight was featured in an Associated Press story, a local judge on Thursday ordered Maten freed on her own recognizance."

Others who have been marginalized, once again, in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina are Indigenous nations in the region. The National Congress of American Indians estimates that several thousand Native people live in the Gulf area.

The Houma Nation, located in South Louisiana, suffered terrible devastation. An email sent to the Hawaii Solidarity Committee reads, "The hardest hit of the Nations were the Houma Tribe.... 3,500 members were displaced and would need everything in the long run. Most were living in the poorest places in New Orleans area."

Rather than wait for relief efforts by governmental officials that may never come, the Native community is raising relief funds through its own organizations to help native peoples in the region. □

**A WORKERS WORLD
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In Cooperation with
the New School Student
Human Rights Group

KATRINA: A Challenge to the Movement Forging A United Front between the BLACK LIBERATION, WORKERS' AND ANTI-IMPERIALIST STRUGGLES



ASSESSING THE MILLIONS MORE MOVEMENT

Hurricane Katrina, which the Million Worker March Movement has labeled the Black Nation's 9/11, has exposed the true nature of capitalism. The people of the world have more to fear from a decaying imperialist system and the war, poverty, national oppression and racism that it produces, than they do from nature. Katrina has also opened a new opportunity to forge unity between the Black liberation struggle, the workers struggle, and the anti-imperialist struggle, unity that will prove decisive in the world struggle against imperialism that is like a storm gathering more force each day. We invite you to join Workers World Newspaper and its friends in a public discussion of the issues.

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- ▶ **SALADIN MUHAMMAD** Chairperson, Black Workers for Justice and Southern Region Coordinator of the Million Worker March Movement
- ▶ **LARRY HOLMES** Workers World Party, Troops Out Now Coalition

Popular organization vs. capitalist greed

Who can stop Bush's giveaway plan

By Fred Goldstein

President George W. Bush's speech from New Orleans on Sept. 15 was supposed to be about the city's recovery, but it really was aimed at achieving a Bush recovery.

The monumental task of reconstructing the devastated Gulf region and of bringing immediate and long-term aid to the 250,000 affected families, the vast majority of them African American, was not the real concern of Bush and his handlers. It was a panic speech completely inadequate to the task. It was not thought out.

Bush put forward proposals aimed first and foremost at aiding capitalist businesses interests, primarily in real estate and construction. To the extent that he outlined any plan, it was based on capitalist anarchy.

But a high degree of social and economic organization is needed for a genuine recovery—and such an effort must rest first and foremost on the interests and concerns of the workers, taking all the people and nationalities of the region into consideration, particularly the African American population.

Bush's urgent concern was to try to wipe away the image of racist indifference generated in the first five days of the crisis, as Washington sat on its hands while tens of thousands of African Americans in New Orleans were trapped without food, water or medicine.

His goal was to project a massive effort at reconstruction, show "leadership," and avoid the ugly issues of why Washington spends more than \$5 billion a month for the occupation of Iraq and Afghanistan, but could not spend the money to reinforce the levees in New Orleans—after urgent warnings from all quarters.

Bush was forced to refer in his speech to persistent poverty that "has its roots in racial discrimination." But this reference, feigning sympathy with Black people suffering in the Gulf region, will ring hollow for its hypocrisy.

It is the Bush administration, with its cuts in everything from food stamps to Medicaid to Section 8 housing, that has accelerated poverty in this country. And every cut in social services has a profoundly racist effect because African Americans, Latinos and other oppressed peoples are the ones most desperately in need of those social services—due to centuries of racism and national oppression.

Bush's racist record cannot be wiped away by a phrase. The Bush administration, it should be remembered, joined a private lawsuit attempting to undo affirmative action at the University of Michigan. And more Black people were executed in Texas when Bush was governor than in any other state in U.S. history.

The leadership of the world's imperialist super-power has been humiliated by its failure to subdue Iraq. Now that has been compounded by the disorganization, confusion and rebellion in New Orleans.

In a speech hastily devised for political damage control, concealment of blame, and a show of leadership, Bush proposed to "confront" poverty with "bold action."

He proposed a Gulf Opportunity Zone to provide immediate tax relief for small business, "incentives to companies that create jobs" and "loans and loan guarantees for small businesses, including minority businesses. It is entrepreneurship that helps break the cycle of poverty, and we will take the side of entrepreneurs as they lead the economic revival of the Gulf region," he said.

This proposal amounts to \$2 billion out of the \$60 billion already appropriated. (Wall Street Journal, Sept. 17) It will be given as early tax write-offs for businesses. So this part is a recovery for capitalists. To help them, Bush has suspended the Davis-Bacon Act, which requires any business getting government funding to pay the prevailing wage.

The success of this process relies on the success of small businesses, assuming that they do invest. But that success relies on an already precarious capitalist economy, in which there is an enormous failure rate for startup small businesses. Can these "entrepreneurs," a prettified term for capitalist exploiters, big and small, absorb the 400,000 workers said by the government to have lost jobs in the region?

How will the workers get these jobs? How will they and their families live until they get them?

Bush proposes worker recovery accounts

of \$5,000 for job training and education "to get a good job." Suppose there is no "good job," or no job at all?

Bush proposed an Urban Home-steading Act under which government land would be deeded over to people who would get help with a mortgage if they promise to build on it and work with a charitable organization. What does such a proposal mean to a poor family from the Lower Ninth Ward of New Orleans, or from Biloxi, Miss., who lived from paycheck to paycheck before Katrina?

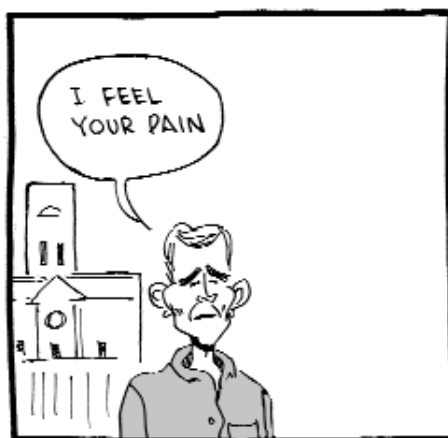
Bush wants to promote "homeownership over renting" as the way to rebuild. What is needed is a massive government program to build affordable housing for the survivors of the hurricane. But no public housing has been built in the U.S. for decades. On the contrary, public housing has been left to rot and decay.

The people of the region should be in charge of the process. They should have

access to the billions being talked about. They can decide what kind of housing they want to live in. They can also plan to rebuild the public health system and the infrastructure, instead of turning such tasks over to corporations like Bechtel, Fluor and Halliburton, or to the real estate interests lined up to squeeze profits out of the business of rebuilding.

Capitalist greed made the death and suffering from Katrina a thousand times worse than it had to be. Instead of sending troops to Iraq to seize that country's oil, the money should have been spent on sea gates, land reclamation and levee building in New Orleans.

Capitalist greed threatens to make the "recovery" chaotic and traumatic for the workers and the poor of the Gulf region. But this can be avoided if the survivors come together through self-organization and make a political struggle to gain control of the process. □



BALTIMORE

Community holds anti-war, anti-racist meeting

By Sharon Black
Baltimore

Unity United Methodist Church, a historic African-American church on Baltimore's west side was the venue for an important discussion on the Iraq war Sept. 14. It also addressed the outrage over the racist neglect of people in New Orleans and the Delta and the horrific execution of Frances Newton in Texas that took place that very evening.

This event brought together mothers who have had children killed in Iraq; families like the Smoots whose uncle was beaten to death in Baltimore's City Jail, along with longtime political activists and those new to struggle. It brought young and old, Black and white together to map

out plans for fighting back in a city whose poverty rate is the 5th highest in the U.S. The church was filled.

Speakers included: Larry Holmes, a national leader of the Troops Out Now Coalition; Fred Mason, President of the Maryland and D.C. AFL-CIO; Tia Steele, coordinator for the Eyes-wide Open Exhibit /American Friends Service Committee, whose son was killed in Iraq; Reverend Kwame O. Abayomi; Doc Cheatham, President of the Baltimore NAACP, and other key community organizers.

Denise Lowery from the All Peoples Congress stated, "We are outraged and in grief over Frances Newton's execution and about Katrina but we are going to do something about it."

Lowery was referring to plans to sup-

port the 50th anniversary of the day that Rosa Parks sparked the modern civil rights movement with a nationwide strike against poverty, racism and war. The first part of the campaign is a protest scheduled for Sept. 27 at the school board to demand that the board inform every parent and student of his or her right to "opt out" of being recruited along with declaring Dec. 1, 2005, an "honor Rosa Parks day—no school".

A growing coalition is developing that plans to distribute information at every city high school, community center, and work place to develop creative tactics.

The first protest will be Sept. 27, 4:30 p.m. at North Ave. and Calvert Streets. The group will then attend the School Board meeting to volunteer for this campaign. Call (410) 235-7040 for more information.

Bankruptcy laws hurt hurricane survivors

Continued from page 7

workers' benefits, wages and pensions in the process.

Already, 4,400 Northwest mechanics and cleaners were forced out on strike when the airline demanded huge concessions of the workers, including a huge reduction in jobs, 75 percent fewer than four years ago, and concessions from the workers in benefits and wages.

Both companies will be looking to unload billions of dollars of workers pen-

sions and benefits, as well as to eliminate a substantial base of workers, to demand more of a smaller workforce at lower wages, with scant benefits, all to increase profits.

This comes on the heels of the devastation of the Gulf Coast and the lives of thousands of poor, mainly people of color who lived along the coast. Nearly one-third of the oil consumed in the United States comes from the Gulf.

Oil prices have been soaring, with the

imperialist war in Iraq sinking deeper into a mucky quagmire. The prices went up further after the hurricane, supposedly as a result of huge oil spills and damage to the oil companies' operations in the Gulf.

The oil industry, heavily responsible for the erosion of the coastal marsh and barrier islands, used the hurricane as an excuse to ratchet up prices at the pump. Of course, the real cause is the brutal war in Iraq, which is not going well for the imperialists. □

Iraqi resistance earns world's respect

By John Catalinotto

In the more than two years since they began an armed struggle against the illegal U.S. occupation of their country, the Iraqi resistance has earned the respect of the world's people.

Not only throughout Arab and Muslim lands, but at gatherings like the World Social Forum in India and Brazil, references to the Iraqi resistance were cheered. Spokespeople for the anti-globalization movement like Arundhati Roy as well as Marxists openly call for solidarity with the Iraqi resistance.

It is easy to understand why the Iraqi fighters have earned this solidarity. And it is time to extend the same solidarity from the anti-war movement here.

In April and May of 2003, Donald Rumsfeld's strategy of "shock and awe" appeared to have worked. Overwhelming U.S. military technology, with its modern "blitzkrieg," was supposed to destroy the Iraq state and force the people to submit. Washington would then rule a docile Iraq and intimidate the world into following U.S. dictates.

Any defiant nations, which Bush called the "axis of evil," could expect the same "shock and awe." Iran and Syria were nearby targets. North Korea, Cuba and Venezuela were on the list. Zimbabwe came under pressure, too. Even China was threatened with being surrounded by U.S. military bases.

It was a grandiose plan. Once underway, it would mean the death of millions

of people, including tens of thousands of GIs.

Fortunately for the world, the Iraqis refused to be a subject people and never let the plan get underway. The collective sacrifice of the Iraqi people has changed the balance of power in the world. It has weakened U.S. imperialism, especially its most aggressive elements, and encouraged defiance to U.S. dictates on every continent.

Now the Pentagon has problems recruiting enough soldiers to occupy Iraq, let alone conquer the world. U.S. threats to bomb Iran or Korea must still be taken seriously, as should threats to assassinate popular leaders like Hugo Chávez of Venezuela. But where will the Pentagon find willing troops for new invasions?

Washington strengthens the regime here for equality, for workers' rights and to end the war. The population here and the Iraqis there have the same enemy: the regime in Washington.

Washington has no right to run Iraq

Washington lied to justify the war. It committed war crimes while smashing the Iraqi state and replacing it with an occupation regime and a puppet regime. International law recognizes the right of an occupied nation to fight for self-determination. Those who defend self-determination and the right to fight for it know the choice of methods and means must be left to the people carrying out that fight.

The Iraqi resistance is made up of many different organizations, with different political programs and goals and ideologies. There is armed struggle, union organizing, community organizing and other forms of struggle. As of yet there is no national front. The many Iraqi forces that want to end the U.S. occupation differ over tactics.

For example, the Iraqi National Foundation Congress on Sept. 15 issued a statement critical of the targeting of civilians a few days earlier in Baghdad, when 150 people were killed by a car bomb, but put the onus for the killing on the aggressive U.S. tactics in the north of Iraq.

Some people have argued that should U.S. troops leave, a civil war would occur, or that the Iraqis would choose a religion-based regime, or put Saddam Hussein back in power. Whatever the new Iraq looks like, this is a decision that only the Iraqis can make, and they can only make it when the Pentagon leaves.

If Washington can't help the people of New Orleans, it certainly can't help those of Baghdad.

The duty of the movement here is to join the struggle to make the continued U.S. occupation of Iraq impossible and to do this in solidarity with the Iraqi sisters and brothers who have stopped the empire in its tracks. □

Basra residents attack British troops

Even in the "calm" southern part of Iraq, it is clear the U.S.-British occupation of the country is in trouble.

After two British soldiers disguised as Arabs reportedly got in a firefight Sept. 19 with Iraqi police, killing two of them, hundreds of people in Basra flocked to the police station where they were supposedly being held.

When British troops surrounded the station, Iraqi demonstrators, some of them young boys, started pelting them with stones and gasoline bombs until the troops withdrew. Photographs and video footage showed British soldiers jumping from their burning vehicles, one with his uniform ablaze.

After the police defied orders by the puppet Baghdad government to hand the prisoners over to the British, Britain moved in troops and armor. Evidently fearing the undercover soldiers might tell what their mission was, they smashed down the walls of the prison. The two

weren't there, but were later found by the British.

Basra has had a number of bombings recently, and Iraqi police said the two soldiers were armed with explosives and rocket launchers.

The Sept. 21 Christian Science Monitor reported that a top official of Shiite cleric Moqtada al-Sadr's movement, Abbas Rubaie, "has charged the two undercover British officers with planting roadside bombs in order to justify a longer military presence in the country. ...

"A statement from the Sadr movement claimed that the two British undercover officers had also been firing into a crowd of pilgrims Monday going to a local shrine to mark the birth of the Imam Mehdi, the 12th and last Imam, or Shiite saint."

Meanwhile, in Iraq's north, a series of resistance attacks killed a total of nine U.S. troops and mercenaries.

—John Catalinotto

The same enemy

It is appropriate, too, that the U.S. anti-war movement, especially the serious opponents of imperialism, think of the Iraqi resistance as an important ally. Recent events, including the Camp Casey struggles and Hurricane Katrina, have shown that some anti-war forces have already moved toward this position.

A dynamic sector of the anti-war movement now consists of "gold star" parents. It is a remarkable gain in political consciousness that the mother of a fallen GI from Baltimore, in the midst of grieving over her loss, can speak publicly of her understanding of why the Iraqis would fight to drive out the occupier.

Then there was Hurricane Katrina. The Bush regime was caught. It had stolen funds from levee repair to pay for the war. It criminally neglected to rescue those caught in the disaster. Millions now see that the government in Washington neither represents nor cares for the poorest sections of the U.S. working class, which are predominately African American and other people of color. It is a racist regime that sends its troops to kill people, not to save them.

The blows the Iraqi resistance strikes against the occupation are not blows against the U.S. population. On the con-

Haj Ali, the hooded prisoner: 'Abu Ghraib is training camp for resistance'

Following is a shortened version of an article by Lars Akerhaug, board member of the Committee for a Free Iraq in Norway, that has been published in Europe in several languages. It is based on an interview with former Abu Ghraib prisoner Haj Ali al-Qaysi. Not many people would know this Iraqi man by his name, but millions would recognize his photograph, his head in a hood, wearing a black robe, his arms straight out, with electric wires attached.

Before U.S. occupation forces imprisoned him, Haj Ali worked as a mukhtar or village chief in the Abu Ghraib district. He lectured in mosques; harvested dates and ran a parking lot next to the local mosque. Haj Ali clashed with the U.S. forces when they tried to dump chemicals, body parts and pornography on some empty land he had converted into a playground for Iraqi children.

He was arrested on Oct. 30, 2003. He met with a Captain Phillips, who said, "I don't know which agency has asked for your arrest, but you'll be held here."

On the morning of the third day of his detention, he was transported with a bag over his head to the infamous Abu Ghraib prison. "Of course, at that time, I did not know where I was," Haj Ali says. "Before entering the prison I was inspected in a very humiliating procedure" involving fingerprints, eye scans and tissue samples.

Haj Ali describes the tortures he and the other prisoners were subjected to, including sexual humiliations, deprivation of food and light, lack of sleep, being held in horribly painful positions and constant threats. For example, once he was put against a wall and his hands tied to a door-frame in upright position. "Of course, again they beat me, poured urine and dirty water on me, wrote on me, pulled an empty gun at me, used a loudspeaker to

swear in my ear and clicked the handcuffs in my ear. I stayed like this until the call for morning prayer."

The female prisoners were hostages for brothers or fathers or sons. "We could hear their screams and do nothing but shout Allahu Akbar! (God is great!)." One of his friends asked one of the female U.S.

soldiers, "Why do you humiliate us?" She answered, "These were the orders, to humiliate the prisoners in this situation."

Haj Ali says that these prison camps are in fact training camps for the Iraqi Resistance. "Ninety percent of those



PHOTO: LARS AKERHAUG

Haj Ali

Continued on page 15

After celebration in Gaza

Palestinians vow to liberate West Bank

By Sara Flounders

More than 10,000 armed members of Hamas marched in Gaza City on Sept. 18. Carrying assault rifles, Qassam rockets and anti-tank missiles, the marchers were cheered by hundreds of thousands of supporters.

This action was a political challenge to Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon, who has demanded that all militias be disarmed and says Israel will not allow elections to happen if Hamas takes part without disarming. Elections for the Palestinian legislature are scheduled for Jan. 25, 2006.

The demonstration was the largest armed Palestinian protest ever held. It was also the first time that commanders of Hamas's armed wing have made a public appearance. For years Israeli forces using high-tech surveillance, drones and helicopter gunships have hunted down and assassinated many hundreds of Palestinian militants and leaders.

The demonstration came one week after Israel completed the evacuation of its forces from the Gaza Strip, ending 38 years of military rule in the impoverished territory. Twenty-one Israeli militarized settlements were evacuated. The Sept. 12 departure of Israeli forces was followed by a salvo of Palestinian rockets aimed at southern Israel.

The Israeli pullout from the Gaza Strip and its removal of the settlements is seen as a victory for the armed and steadfast resistance of the nearly five-year Intifada, or uprising. Consciously omitted from the U.S. corporate media's celebration of Israel's "disengagement," however, is the reality that all of Gaza's borders, the sea, and even the airspace above the Gaza Strip remain under Israeli occupation, leaving the Palestinian people still under daily siege.

The Gaza Strip is desperately poor and densely populated. Over 1.3 million Palestinian people were packed into a thin strip of land 5 miles wide by 25 miles long. More than half the population are refugees of past Israeli expropriations.

Under a policy initiated by Ariel Sharon and supported by every Israeli administration for the past 23 years, militarized settlements were placed on the most desirable land of Gaza. Industries, farms, food-processing facilities, schools and shops were built, along with elaborate homes and gardens. These settlements are financed by billions of dollars of U.S. aid and political support.

Although only 8,000 Zionist settlers actually resided in Gaza, more than 30 percent of this densely populated strip of land was seized to build specialized roads, checkpoints, security perimeters, military bases and guard towers. Over a million Palestinians lived in prison lock-down conditions to accommodate the few settlers. An ever-widening swath of land and homes was constantly bulldozed in efforts to break Palestinian resistance.

Nevertheless, the militarized enclaves could not be secured and Israel was finally forced to withdraw.

Since the Israelis' departure the border between southern Gaza and Egypt, much of it a formidable wall, has finally been opened after being under Israeli control for decades. Palestinians celebrated by tearing down sections of the wall. Thousands moved back and forth across the border visiting and shopping.

In the confusion, new arms were quickly smuggled in to aid in rearming and further developing the defense capabilities of the Palestinian militias that had organized years of resistance.

Israel demanded that Egypt secure the buffer zone. But the 750 Egyptian officers

who were deployed there did not stop the many thousands of Palestinians and Egyptians from crossing through holes, some blasted by militants.

Resistance in West Bank

Israel's withdrawal from Gaza is an effort to further intensify its hold on the West Bank, also seized in 1967. About 210,000 Israelis live in settlements on the West Bank; a quarter million live in areas of Jerusalem and environs annexed by Israel in 1967.

As in Gaza, these Palestinians can at any time face the bulldozing of their homes, destruction of olive groves and expropriation of precious water resources so Israel can expand its system of exclusive roads, settlements and security parameters that has already stolen 47 percent of the land in the West Bank. The settlements in the West Bank are designed to surround and isolate Palestinian towns and cities and deny any contiguous land area.

On Aug. 18, Hamas leader Mahmud al-Zahhar said, "The Palestinian people are well aware that the aim of the Zionist 'disengagement' is to weaken our resistance and to strengthen their grip over our land. The resistance must move to the West Bank."

Similarly, Jamal Abu Samhadaneh, commander of a cluster of militias in Gaza known as the Popular Resistance Committees, declared, "We will transfer all our fighting methods and capabilities to the West Bank."

As Ariel Sharon was speaking at the United Nations on Sept. 15, protests were held in front of the UN offices all over the West Bank. The protests were led by representatives of all national political parties.

The main demonstration took place in Ramallah. A delegation representing all Palestinian political parties, the grassroots

Anti-Apartheid Wall Campaign and civil society organizations headed to the UN head office there to hand in a statement of protest. Other protests were staged in Jerusalem, Jenin, Tulkarem, Hebron, Salfit, Jericho and Bethlehem.

In New York, a demonstration took place outside UN headquarters while Sharon was making his speech.

The coordinated protests targeted Sharon's criminal record and the implementation of the Apartheid Wall that extends hundreds of miles through the West Bank and turns Palestinian villages and towns into walled ghettos. The actions also reminded the world that Sharon and the Israeli military had surrounded the Palestinian refugee camps of Sabra and Shatilla in Lebanon in September 1982, allowing right-wing Lebanese forces to massacre over 2,000 civilians.

The Israeli withdrawal from Gaza, although carried out to reinforce the West Bank settlements, also shows the limits of the most highly armed and technically equipped military force in the world. Despite massive infusions of U.S. economic and military aid every year for 57 years, the determination of the whole Palestinian population proved to be a more formidable factor.

During this entire period the wholly justified demands of the Palestinian people to return to their homes and exercise the right to their own state, with Jerusalem as the capital, have motivated continuing waves of resistance. This heroic steadfastness has given inspiration to resistance movements around the world.

Solidarity with and support for the demands put forth by the Palestinian movement provides a powerful political perspective for all activists in every struggle against imperialist war and occupation. □

Imperialist powers demand monopoly on technology

Iranian president denounces 'nuclear apartheid'

By Fred Goldstein

The imperialist nuclear military powers have denounced proposals advanced at the United Nations by the president of Iran for the peaceful use of nuclear energy. Instead, they are moving to escalate international tensions by drafting a proposal to bring Iran before the UN Security Council so as to pressure it into ending its processing of nuclear fuel.

Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, speaking at the UN's 60th anniversary summit on Sept. 17, once again reiterated that his country was seeking the peaceful use of nuclear energy and proposed that "as a further confidence building measure and in order to provide the greatest degree of transparency, the Islamic Republic of Iran is prepared to engage in serious partnership with private and public sectors of other countries in the implementation of uranium enrichment program in Iran. This represents the most far-reaching step, outside all requirements of the NPT" (Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty).

The full text of his speech can be found at www.iribnews.ir.

He pledged once again "continued interaction and technical and legal cooperation with the IAEA [International Atomic Energy Agency] will be the center-

piece of our nuclear policy."

But Britain, France and Germany, the so-called EU3, backed and prodded by Washington, have drafted a punitive resolution to be presented at the IAEA meeting in Vienna. The resolution demands that Iran be taken before the Security Council for alleged "breaches of atomic safeguards."

The IAEA has never produced an iota of credible evidence that Iran was working on nuclear weapons. But the imperialist powers, seeking to keep all independent nations disarmed and vulnerable to attack, have brought relentless pressure, including threats of military attack by Washington and Israel, to intimidate and terrorize the Iranian government into abandoning its nuclear energy program.

President Ahmadinejad referred to the hypocrisy of Washington, Britain, France and Germany in calling Iran a nuclear threat even as "thousands of nuclear warheads that are stockpiled in various locations coupled with programs to further develop these inhuman weapons have created a new atmosphere of repression and the rule of the machines of war, threatening the international community and even the citizens of the countries that possess them."

In fact, it is these very nuclear imperi-

alist powers that are in the greatest violation of the NPT, written and signed over 30 years ago, which mandated the process of nuclear disarmament.

He denounced "nuclear apartheid" and the fact that "the culprits are arrogating to themselves the role of the prosecutor" and "portray themselves as defenders of freedom and human rights."

"How can one talk about human rights," Ahmadinejad declared, "and at the same time blatantly deny many the inalienable right to have access to science and technology with applications in medicine, industry and energy and through force and intimidation hinder their progress and development? Can nations be deprived of scientific and technological progress through the threat of the use of force and based on mere allegations of possibility of military diversion?"

"We must not," he declared, "at the beginning of the 21st century, revert to logic of the dark ages."

President Ahmadinejad proposed that the General Assembly, "as the most inclusive UN organ," create a committee to investigate mechanisms for enforcing the NPT and "to investigate how—contrary to the NPT—material, technology and equipment for nuclear weapons were transferred to the Zionist regime, and to propose

practical measures for the establishment of a nuclear-free zone in the Middle East."

Washington and the EU3 are trying to bury their own aggressive attempts at world nuclear domination beneath a pile of false charges and slanders against Iran, which has submitted to hundreds of inspections. Teheran has invited the IAEA to monitor its enrichment processes. It is a clear case of a bunch of thieves crying "thief."

Iran, like all nations oppressed or formerly oppressed by imperialism, has the right to self-determination. The ruling classes of Britain and the U.S., the former colonizers of Iran, are attempting to destroy its independence as a nation by preventing it from developing nuclear energy, whether for power or for self-defense. They are aided by the German and French imperialists.

Beneath all the diplomacy in Vienna, New York and Washington is the threat of aggression by the Pentagon or its Middle East outpost in Tel Aviv. It is a matter of urgency for the anti-war movement to stand in solidarity with the Iranian people and to demand that the U.S. and the EU3 keep their hands off Iran and cease obstructing its program of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes and national development. □

Venezuela's Chávez shines in New York City

By Rebeca Toledo
New York

President Hugo Chávez of Venezuela arrived here Sept. 15 on an historic trip to attend the United Nations General Assembly session.

The U.S. government tried to deny Chávez and his delegation visas to attend the UN meeting, which is a violation of UN charter rules. Even after Chávez arrived, he informed the press that U.S. officials refused to allow his medical team and some of his security people to disembark the plane.

In his UN speech, President Chávez lambasted the world body for setting goals that it never met. "We said we would reduce by half the 842 million hungry people by the year 2015. At the current rate the goal will be achieved by the year 2215. Who will be there to celebrate?"

He continued, "The 21st century demands deep changes that will only be possible if a new organization is founded. This UN does not work."

He reserved some of his wrath for the United States government. "The UN should be moved out of the U.S. if the U.S. continues to violate international law. Today we know that there never were any weapons of mass destruction in Iraq ... however, Iraq was bombed, occupied and is still occupied."

Referring to Hurricane Katrina, Chávez said, "We send our deepest condolences to the people of the United States. Their people are brothers and sisters of all of us in the Americas and the rest of the world."

Throughout his trip, President Chávez repeatedly criticized the U.S. government's lack of response to Hurricane Katrina victims and held up Cuba as an example of a government that knows how to protect its people during natural disasters. He repeatedly offered his country's assistance.

He went on to attack the U.S. policy for the developing world: "Neoliberalism is precisely the fundamental cause of misery, inequality and infinite tragedy for all the peoples on this continent."

Chávez also denounced a UN document that was under consideration as null, void and illegitimate. "This document was handed out five minutes before to our delegation and only in English. We need to be able to have discussions and not be dictated to by a handful of countries."

In this document, the doctrine of the "Responsibility to Protect" is expounded. Chávez said, "We need to ask ourselves, 'Who is going to protect us? How are they going to protect us?'"

"I believe one of the countries that requires protection is precisely the United States. That was shown painfully with the tragedy caused by Hurricane Katrina. The people do not have a government that protects them from an announced natural disaster."

"This doctrine is a very dangerous concept that shapes imperialism's attempts to try to legalize the violation of national sovereignty."

Venezuela's achievements

President Chávez went over some of the achievements of the Bolivarian government. "Venezuela will be declared an illiteracy-free territory in a matter of days. Venezuela has 25 million people. Almost 70 percent of these people are receiving universal health care for the first time. More than a million tons of food is channeled to over 12 million people at a subsidized price. More than 700,000 new jobs have been created, reducing unemployment to 9 percent."

At a press conference after the UN session, Chávez accused the U.S. of being a terrorist state. He used as evidence its actions in Iraq, its allowing Pat Robertson to call for his own assassination, and its harboring of Luis Posada Carriles, who has admitted acts of terror against Cuba and is wanted in Venezuela. He also said any nation, such as Iraq, has every right to defend itself against attacks.

On ABC's "Nightline" on Sept. 16, Chávez easily dispelled all media attacks as a U.S. campaign of lies against his government. He acknowledged the special relationship between Cuba and Venezuela

built on cooperation and respect.

He warned the U.S. government that, if it ever tried to invade Venezuela, the people and he would fight to the end and never surrender.

On Sept. 17, President Chávez spent the day in the Bronx meeting with different communities. He was accompanied by Congressperson Jose Serrano and Rev. Jesse Jackson, among others. The Bronx has recently been rated the poorest urban county in the U.S., where one out of every three children suffers from respiratory illnesses due to environmental damage.

The Venezuelan president drew a large crowd to a community meeting that evening at the Church of St. Paul and St. Andrew on Manhattan's West Side. Among the invited guests were Cuban Foreign Minister Felipe Pérez Roque and National Assembly President Ricardo Alarcón, both also in town for the UN General Assembly session, plus the people who had accompanied Chávez to the Bronx, actor and activist Danny Glover, Transport Workers Union President Roger Toussaint and others.

The church was filled to capacity, with a long line of people waiting outside. The crowd roared with applause as President Chávez walked in. Chants for Venezuela and Cuba rang out.

Rev. Jesse Jackson spoke about Venezuela and Hurricane Katrina: "Venezuela offered 18 generators, 18 water purifiers, one million dollars, two mobile hospital units, 50 tons of food. The planes were loaded up but are still awaiting U.S. government approval in Venezuela."

Venezuela owns the major part of Citgo Corp., which has 14,000 gas stations and eight oil refineries in the U.S. Chávez outlined several plans throughout his trip that involve using Citgo's revenues to benefit the people of the U.S. Already Citgo's gas prices are lower than most others.

"We want to sell oil directly to the peo-



Venezuelan President Hugo Chávez speaks at the UN

ple so we can cut out the middleman and

save up to 40 percent per gallon," Chávez said. "We will start a pilot program in Chicago on October 14 in a Mexican-American community and we will expand this program to New York and Boston in November."

A high point of the event was when Chávez thanked the Cubans for all their help and the crowd roared with chants for Cuba. Chávez recounted how he had seen the conditions that some of the 20,000 Cuban doctors live under in the Venezuelan countryside.

"I saw one of them sleeping on the floor and I immediately wanted to order proper beds for all of them. The doctor said to me, 'With all due respect, how can we come here and sleep in better conditions than the peasants we work for? It wouldn't be right.'"

'Hunger is violence'

Chávez said, "Hunger is violence. It is silent but it is like a thousand Katrinas. About 45 million people die of hunger every year. Instead of a war in Iraq there should be a war against poverty and misery."

President Chávez was leaving that night for Havana to meet with President Fidel Castro. He said, "Yes, Fidel and I are conspiring. We are conspiring to get rid of poverty and misery." He gave as an example "Mission Miracle," a project already underway to detect early signs of cataracts and prevent eye problems that may lead to blindness.

Chávez outlined plans for a medical school to train both Venezuelan and international doctors, including youth from the U.S. □

Festival participants talk about Venezuela's revolution

By Eric Struch
Chicago

Delegates to the 16th World Youth Festival in Caracas held a report-back meeting Aug. 31 in Rogers Park on Chicago's far north side.

The Campaign to End the National Endowment for Democracy (NED) and representatives of the Venezuelan consulate organized the event.

Christina Obregon, a grassroots activist with the Mexico Solidarity Network, chaired the meeting, which featured reports on the Festival by several delegates.

Martin Sanchez of the Venezuelan consulate said that they are currently in discussions with local authorities in Barquisimeto, Lara State, to begin, in his words, "an exchange program that will provide the opportunity to witness the social changes from an experience of learning and participating."

Sanchez spoke about several ways the

exchange program could deepen people's understanding of the Bolivarian revolutionary process, including a stay in Carora, "where the community is discussing the implementation of the first socialist municipality in the country."

Speakers and audience agreed that creating a permanent network of friends of the Bolivarian revolution in the U.S. would be a step forward in forging solidarity between U.S. activists and the revolutionary Venezuelan people.

Obregon told Workers World that she found it overwhelming to meet people from the other delegations in Caracas. "Many times I felt like my head was turning all over the place just shaking hands with over a hundred people a day, smiles, kisses on the cheek and greetings in all these different languages. I must have met over 30 delegations, and each and every one of them made me feel welcomed and a part of their celebration or movement even if it was just for a brief moment," she said.

"The Venezuelan people have this pride that is so passionate," said Obregon, "it fills one with inspiration. It's evident that they're supportive of the Bolivarian revolution. The best experience that I had was that of LOVE. Love for one's country, comrades and revolution."

The Venezuelans had different responses to the festival, she continued, but even those few who weren't sure what it was about, "gave me an opportunity to open a discussion with individuals and talk about the current situation in Venezuela. Almost everyone I met that knew about the festival was pleased to be hosting the event, and felt honored that Venezuela was participating in an historic moment."

Asked her own opinion of the Bolivarian revolution, Obregon answered: "I feel that as long as the people of Venezuela believe in that idea and continue to nurture the movement with themselves, there will continue to be many great achievements."

Susannah J. Kim, a festival delegate and community organizer, said, "I think that the festival will play a valuable role in preventing U.S. intervention in Venezuela. Chavez and the Venezuelan people want to protect their country, and through the WYF and also the upcoming World Social Forum they can educate people from all over the world and show their gains."

"Some opposition groups," Kim continued, "have accused Chavez of using the festival for opportunistic purposes. I think that it will be very difficult for the opposition in Venezuela and abroad if people worldwide are able to see with their own eyes the changes that are occurring and the hope and hard work of the Venezuelan people."

Obregon said, "I feel that global solidarity with the people's movement and grassroots organizing will play an important role in keeping the U.S. from intervening in Venezuelan affairs." □

Another union leader slain in Colombia

By Berta Joubert-Ceci

While one U.S. ally, Colombian President Álvaro Uribe, was preparing to visit the United States to promote his "Justice and Peace" Law, another Colombian union leader, the most recent in the long list of murdered unionists, was savagely and cowardly assassinated. His murder exposed to the world the gruesome reality behind this law.

On Sept. 11, people found the body of Luciano Enrique Romero Molina. He was bound, stabbed 40 times and showed signs of having been tortured. Romero Molina, 47, was a respected and loved leader of SINALTRAINAL, the union representing Coca-Cola and Nestlé workers in Colombia.

Romero Molina was the secretary of the union's Human Rights department and an active member of the Committee in Solidarity with Political Prisoners. His and his union's concern for human rights was illustrated by his unflinching Sunday visits to the prisoners in Valledupar jails, where he monitored their situation while bringing them support and solidarity.

To discourage visits and communication with prisoners, the government makes a visit to political prisoners in Colombia extremely difficult and time-consuming. [Joubert-Ceci recently visited women political prisoners at the Buen Pastor jail in Bogotá—ed.]

Romero Molina worked 20 years in a Nestlé company in Valledupar, a department in the north of Colombia bordering Venezuela, until Oct. 22, 2002, when he was fired for participating in a strike against the company. In a show of the Colombian government's disregard for labor rights, the Ministry of Social Protection had declared the strike illegal.

Romero Molina then filed a suit in the First Labor Court of Valledupar Circuit against the companies involved: Nestlé de Colombia S.A., Cicolac Ltd. and the Dairy Partners Americas Manufacturing Colombia Ltd. He demanded his reinstatement.

As a result of his labor and human rights activities he was a target of the paramilitaries who support the interests of corporations like Nestlé and Coca-Cola.

The death threats he had received from paramilitaries made him leave Valledupar in several occasions. Since the end of 2004, he had been staying in Girón, Spain, under a special protection program and

had just returned to Colombia in the beginning of this year.

When he was assassinated, he was under the "security" of the Organization of American States' Human Rights Interamerican Commission program of Protective Measures. He is survived by his compañera, Ledys Mendoza, and his four children.

His body was found in Las Palmas, a sector of the La Nevada neighborhood known to be under the paramilitaries' control. A statement released Sept. 11 by the Foundation Committee in Solidarity with Political Prisoners of Valledupar (FCSPP) states, "As a consequence of the death threats against Romero Molina's life, the FCSPP had asked the Colombian government that he be included in the protection program for union leaders and human rights advocates; the only protection given was supplying two units of mobile phones."

This is in sharp contrast to Uribe's process of "demobilization" of paramilitaries that offers protection and special programs to paramilitaries who "promise" to leave the notorious death-squad grouping.

The Law of Justice and Peace simply furthers the legalization and protection of these groups that have caused countless murders, massacres, threats, and other numerous despicable crimes against the Colombian people, especially Afrodescendants, Indigenous, human rights advocates, labor leaders, and anybody else who opposes Uribe/United States policies.

Many Colombian and international groups, even those in the U.S., have denounced and criticized this law. In a letter to Uribe, Leo W. Gerard, the international president of the Steelworkers' union (USW) writes: "I am writing to express my grave concern with the recent, so-called 'Law of Justice and Peace' which you initiated and recently signed into law.

"This law has been roundly condemned by the International Metalworkers Federation, of which we are a member, and by all human rights groups reporting on Colombia, including Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch and the Inter-American Commission of Human Rights. As these groups report, this new law gives almost absolute impunity to the paramilitaries in Colombia—groups which have been engaged in gross human rights abuses, including the murder of hundreds of



trade union leaders - while asking for little in return."

Romero Molina's union SINALTRAINAL denounced the murder and asks the international community to send protest messages. Edgar Paez, from the National Board of the union, wrote, "We repudiate this horrendous crime that is part of the endless list of trade unionists assassinated in Colombia,

under the strategy of state terrorism and of the persecution by the companies to exterminate the union movement.

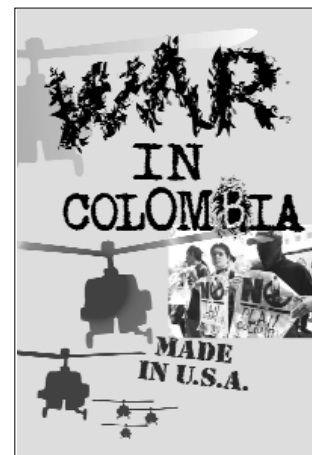
"Once more we condemn the government of Álvaro Uribe Vélez and his false 'peace process' with the paramilitary groups that, as we have seen, continue massacring the unarmed population, and their crimes will remain in total impunity thanks to the Law of Justice and Peace".

Readers can write protest letters to: President Álvaro Uribe Vélez (auribe@presidencia.gov.co; dh@presidencia.gov.co); Vice President Francisco Santos (fsantos@presidencia.gov.co); Human Rights Department Director Dr. Carlos Franco (cefranco@presidencia.gov.co); General Prosecutor Dr. Mario Iguarán Arana (contacto@fiscalia.gov.co; denuncie@fiscalia.gov.co); Interamerican Commission for Human Rights (cidhoea@oas.org) with a copy to: SINALTRAINAL at sinaltrainal@sinaltrainal.org. □

WAR IN COLOMBIA MADE IN U.S.A.

A book from the International Action Center covers the struggle in Colombia from the perspective of trade unionists, human rights activists, and the FARC and ELN insurgencies. Authors include: Fidel Castro, Ramsey Clark, Javier Correa, Rep. Cynthia McKinney, Mumia Abu-Jamal, Gloria Gaitan, Raul Reyes, Manuel Marulanda, Stan Goff, Teresa Gutierrez, James Petras, Sen. Paul Wellstone, Roy Bourgeois, Garry Leech and others.

200 pages, indexed and referenced.



Haj Ali, the hooded prisoner:

'Abu Ghraib is training camp for resistance'

Continued from 12

arrested were usually innocent, but once they get out they are fully ready to start armed resistance against the occupiers. Anyone being treated like this or who sees his brother or sister being treated like this would be ready."

Cell-phone cameras and torture

Once he was taken to the interrogation room, where there were 10 people inside, some in military and some in civilian clothes. They had telephones with cameras. "At that time I did not think this was possible, and thought they used the phones for recording sound or something," says Ali. In this room the incident took place that later was screened around the world as an example of the torture practiced by the U.S. regime.

"They made me stand on a box with a robe on my head and arms straight out in the air. They told me they would give me electric shocks. I did not believe them. Then they took two wires and stuck them into my body. I felt like my eyeballs were falling out. Then I fell to the ground."

During this torture he bit

his tongue. The doctor came and with his shoe pushed Haj Ali's head cover away and put water on it. "He saw no cut on the tongue" says Haj Ali, "so he told them to continue." "Usually," says Ali, "the doctors were part of the torture process. They would say if prisoners faked or exaggerated pains, telling the interrogators to go ahead."

Three times they took him to this room and administered electric shocks to him five times. They tied his hands and head to a tube in the ceiling and stuffed some dry bread in his mouth. They took some photographs of him, and then continued with more interrogation. During the questioning they would ask him, "What would you think of more torture?" Haj Ali would answer that "The more you torture us, the greater that God will reward us."

"What I later understood," says Haj Ali, "was that what I was going through was part of an operation called 'Iron Horse,' aimed at collecting influential people, tribal leaders etc. to work for the occupation." Haj Ali refused to go along with this, telling his interrogators, "If you define yourself as occupiers, then resisting the occupation force is preserved in Islamic as well as international law."

Haj Ali al-Qaysi, now trained by the United Nations to work on human rights issues, will tell his story at an international conference in Rome on Oct. 2. The full article is posted at www.iacenter.org. □

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

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HAITI

After kidnapping president, U.S. orchestrates 'elections'

By G. Dunkel

For the last 20 months, since U.S. Marines kidnapped Haitian President Jean-Bertrand Aristide to Central Africa and imposed a new government on Haiti, popular organizations all over Haiti have been demonstrating, demanding his return.

Though the Haitian National Police (PNH) have frequently killed protesters and raided the strongest pro-Aristide communities, thousands of people have heroically taken to the streets month after month, ready to risk death to get back the president they elected. They want the constitution respected and justice and hope restored.

The PNH announced early in September that no demonstrations could take place from Sept. 9 to Sept. 16, the first week of school, including a major demonstration scheduled for Sept. 13.

The United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH), set up by the Security Council, replaced a joint U.S./France operation that ran Haiti after the Marines "coup-napped" Aristide. MINUSTAH is keeping an illegitimate regime in place there with 8,000 troops.

In response to the police ban on demonstrations, it said it would follow PNH orders, even though the UN resolution authorizing MINUSTAH puts the police under UN command.

MINUSTAH also announced that a new contingent of 850 Jordanian troops was coming to occupy Cité Soleil, the community where the resistance to the current illegitimate government and MINUSTAH is the strongest.

Both Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice and UN Secretary General Kofi Annan held separate meetings in New York on Haiti during the UN's special session.

Washington and the UN appear to have decided that, for Haiti's de facto government to gain any legitimacy, it needs to hold elections. But the only political party in Haiti with any real mass support is Aristide's Fanmi Lavalas. Furthermore, many of the progressive Haitian organizations have denounced "elections" under occupation as nothing more than ratifying the "selections" made by the occupiers.

For the past few months the Provisional Electoral Council (CEP) has been conducting voter registration. Haitians say it is using bribes and threats to get people to sign up. The CEP announced at the close of registration Sept. 15 that 2 million voters out of a possible 4.4 million had signed up. Even that weak total may be exaggerated.

Some 54 political parties registered with the CEP on Sept. 15, with 45 presenting their candidates for president.

Aristide's conditions

President Aristide released a statement from Pretoria, South Africa, where he is in

exile, saying, "In Haiti, in order to have elections and not a 'selection,' the following steps must be taken: 1) The thousands of Lavalas who are in jail and in exile must be free to return home; 2) The repression that has already killed over 10,000 people must end immediately; 3) Then, there must be national dialog."

Despite Aristide's conditions, three of the Fanmi Lavalas leaders registered their party, first proposing the imprisoned Fr. Gérard Jean-Juste as its candidate. When the CEP refused to allow Jean-Juste to run, the three proposed Marc Bazin.

Bazin, a former World Bank official, is unpopular with the Lavalas rank-and-file. He ran against Aristide in 1990 with the full support of the United States. He also was prime minister in the government the Haitian military installed after its first coup against Aristide.

Multimillionaire television evangelist Pat Robertson, who recently called for the assassination of Venezuela's Hugo Chávez, backs the National Unity Party for the Reconstruction of Haiti, headed by Pastor Chavannes Jeune. In the Sept. 14-20 edition of Haiti-Progres, Castro Desroches exposes and attacks both imperialist meddling and the reactionary ideas of this party's leader.

The de facto government recently announced a 10-percent price hike for fuel, the third this year. When Aristide was in power, he had to raise fuel costs but did

it in steps and subsidized the poorer layers of the people. His government also kept the price of basic necessities like flour and oil affordable. The current de facto government talks in neoliberal terms about the "immutable" laws of supply and demand and does nothing concrete to help the hunger of the Haitian people.

One safety net for Haitian workers has been to migrate to the Dominican Republic, where jobs paid four to five times more than they did in Haiti. Currently, the Dominican police and government are leading a major campaign to expel all Haitians to Haiti. They have even expelled some Dominicans who "look like Haitians."

Except for Lavalas, none of the 53 other parties has offered a program to relieve the conditions of Haiti's workers and peasants.

Given the 200-year history of U.S. oppression, repression and occupation of Haiti, which began with U.S. aid to the French colonial slaveholders during the Haitian Revolution and continued with hostility to the first Black republic in the Americas, progressives in the United States have an extra responsibility to show solidarity with Haiti.

As small and impoverished as it is today, Haiti remains, in the words of the great abolitionist leader Frederick Douglass, a "beacon of hope for the oppressed of the world." □

Faced with famine

Africa needs reparations, not occupation and sanctions

By Deirdre Griswold

The people of large parts of Africa are suffering from a famine that is just as "unexpected" as was the hurricane disaster in Louisiana.

Since a drought, followed by a plague of locusts last November, destroyed most of the food crops in a broad swath of sub-Saharan lands, it was known by many international agencies tasked with providing humanitarian aid that there would be mass hunger and even starvation this summer in countries like Niger, Chad, Mali, Mauritania and others.

These agencies said they sounded the alarm but, just as in the case of the warnings about what a severe storm would do to New Orleans, the authorities who control the resources that could make the difference between life and death did virtually nothing.

The result has been heart-breaking images of babies and small children reduced to skeletons, dying at feeding stations that were set up too late to make a difference. The cameras of BBC have been in Niger, but the story is the same in several other countries.

Adding to the anguish of the people is the fact that, while food aid came too little and too late, it is now about to end. The policy of the donor agencies is to pull out when there is a new harvest. The problem is that many of the farmers are deeply in debt because there was no harvest last

year, so whatever they earn this fall at the market will go to pay that debt. They will have nothing left, and will be just as vulnerable to starvation as they were last year.

Just as in New Orleans, a natural disaster was involved in Africa, but it is by no means the whole story. The poverty in Africa is the real culprit. And this poverty, in a continent rich in natural resources, comes from its history of plunder by Europe and the U.S., where the ruling classes have amassed vast fortunes from their colonial and imperialist conquests.

The U.S. and Britain are now threatening Zimbabwe, a country in southeastern Africa once ruled over by Britain, with eco-

omic sanctions. Zimbabwe is on their hit list because it has been turning land titles over to African families, many of them veterans of its war for independence. That land was formerly owned by white settlers, who at one time had control over most of Zimbabwe's most productive land.

Zimbabwe paid the white farmers compensation for the land, but that didn't appease them. Many are descendants of the soldier-settlers who first stole the land from the African people living there when Britain took the area for its colony.

Zimbabwe is another country suffering from drought at present. It needs help from the world, not sanctions meant to bring its leaders to their knees. Most of all,

it and the rest of Africa need reparations for the terrible damage done by the slave trade, colonialism and now the intrigues and exploitation of imperialist corporations.

The pictures of African children dying of famine don't have to be. A small amount of money could end the famine and help the people be more self-sufficient. Just recently, Washington launched a military expansion in Africa called the Trans-Sahara Counter Terrorism Initiative that will cost \$500 million over the next five years.

Africa, like New Orleans, needs relief and the development of its infrastructure, not Pentagon military occupation. □

HAITI A SLAVE REVOLUTION

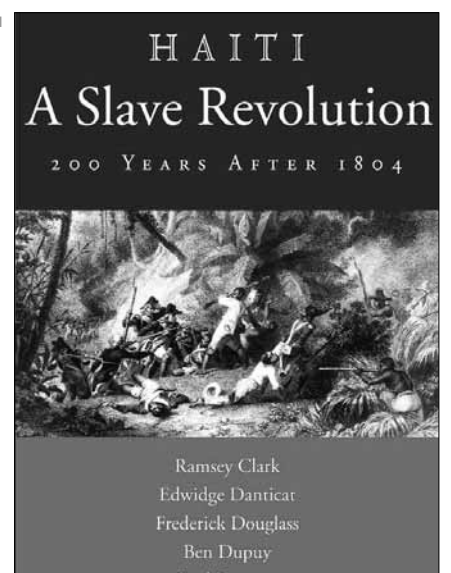
The Haitian Revolution is a singular event in history. Never before or since has an enslaved people risen up, broken their chains, and established a new state. Haiti was a beacon of hope and inspiration to the enslaved Africans of the United States.

Drawing from a wide range of authors, experts, and historical texts, this book reveals the intertwined relationship between the U.S. and Haiti, and the untold stories of the Haitian people's resistance to the U.S. aggressions and occupations.

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U.S. signs accord with DPRK

Back from the brink, but barely

By Deirdre Griswold

The Bush administration has backed away from its wildest rhetoric against the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and signed an agreement with Pyongyang on the denuclearization of the Korean peninsula. But it is already disputing what is in the agreement.

It is no longer personally insulting DRPK leader Kim Jong Il or using terms like "axis of evil" to describe the governments of North Korea, Iraq and Iran. Bush coined that belligerent phrase in his 2002 State of the Union address, back in the days when Washington neocons thought they were on a roll and would soon be able to subjugate the DPRK after successfully imposing their will on oil-rich Iraq and Iran.

The DPRK did not buckle before this attempted intimidation. It soon announced to the world that it possessed nuclear weapons and would not yield to Washington's threats.

Then came the resistance in Iraq and worldwide condemnation of the U.S. war and occupation there. And now the Bush administration's problems over its racist handling of the disaster after Hurricane Katrina.

Their hands full for the moment, the beleaguered but still aggressive imperialist strategists in Washington undoubtedly wish that Korea would go away for a while. They may have signed the agreement as a stop-gap measure, and are already backing off from some of their commitments.

The document comes out of six-party talks in which China, Japan, Russia and South Korea have also taken part. The two imperialist countries—the U.S. and Japan—have been putting heavy pressure on the DPRK to not only abandon its nuclear weapons program but to end all efforts at developing its own nuclear power, which is badly needed in this energy-starved far-northern country.

When the talks began, Washington hoped it could line up the other countries against the DPRK. It hasn't achieved that.

Sentiment in South Korea grows more hostile to the U.S. all the time. On Sept. 11, thousands of demonstrators tried to pull down a statue of Gen. Douglas MacArthur at Inchon, the spot where U.S. forces first landed in Korea at the end of World War II. The statue is a symbol of the continuing U.S. military occupation of the south that has divided the country ever since.

The division is a deeply emotional issue in Korea, where millions of families were torn apart by the U.S. occupation and the 1950-53 war that followed. An overwhelming majority of the people in north and south support reunification, and the two governments have begun a process of allowing some family visits and developing economic cooperation.

Washington is doing everything it can to thwart this process. Since a cease-fire in 1953, it has refused to negotiate a formal end to the Korean War. It then uses the lack of a peace treaty as justification for keeping 32,000 troops in the south.

Statement of DPRK Foreign Ministry

A statement by the DPRK's Foreign Ministry on Sept. 20 explains its position with regard to the agreement:

"The joint statement reflects our consistent stand on the settlement of the nuclear issue between the DPRK and the U.S. and, at the same time, the commitments of the U.S. and south Korea responsible for denuclearizing the whole of the peninsula.

"As already known, the issue over which the DPRK and the U.S. have had most serious differences in the 'verbal commitments' to denuclearize the peninsula so far was the issue of the former's right to nuclear activity for a peaceful purpose, to be specific, the issue of the U.S. provision of light water reactors (LWR) to the former. ...

"The present U.S. administration, denying in principle the DPRK the right to nuclear activity for a peaceful purpose which pertains to an independent right of a sovereign state, insisted that it could not provide LWRs in any case under the pre-



South Korean protest in Inchon

text that the DPRK pulled out of the NPT [non-proliferation treaty] and is no longer member of the IAEA [International Atomic Energy Agency].

"Opposing this wrong stand of the U.S., we made it clear that the basis of finding a solution to the nuclear issue between the DPRK and the U.S. is to wipe out the distrust historically created between the two countries and a physical groundwork for building bilateral confidence is none other than the U.S. provision of LWRs to the DPRK. We strongly demanded that the U.S. remove the very cause that compelled the DPRK to withdraw from the NPT by providing LWRs to it.

"At the talks, all the parties concerned except the U.S. supported the discussion of the issue of respecting the DPRK's right to nuclear activity for a peaceful purpose and providing LWRs to it.

"This time the U.S. delegation got in touch with Washington several times under the pressure of the trend of the situation and had no option but to withdraw its assertion. The six-parties agreed to take harmonious measures to implement phase by phase the points agreed on in the joint statement in accordance with the principle of 'action for action' in the days ahead.

"As clarified in the joint statement, we will return to the NPT and sign the Safeguards Agreement with the IAEA and

comply with it immediately upon the U.S. provision of LWRs, a basis of confidence-building, to us.

"As already clarified more than once, we will feel no need to keep even a single nuclear weapon if the DPRK-U.S. relations are normalized, bilateral confidence is built and we are not exposed to the U.S. nuclear threat any longer."

U.S. reneged before

A similar agreement was reached in 1994, during the Clinton administration, but the promised power plant was never built, leading the DPRK to withdraw from the NPT and go ahead with its nuclear program. Korea has been under the threat of U.S. nuclear weapons for 60 years now.

Washington is now saying that the DPRK has to dismantle everything before new discussions begin, even though the agreement just reached says it will provide security guarantees and economic incentives according to the principle of "commitment for commitment, action for action."

The Sept. 21 New York Times reported that "The Bush administration on Tuesday brushed off a demand from North Korea for a light-water nuclear reactor, saying that the accord announced Monday in Beijing left it clear that the North must abandon its nuclear weapons program before such a matter can be discussed."

The DPRK says Washington "should not even dream" that it would dismantle its nuclear program before it receives a new nuclear plant.

Some die-hards in the Bush administration are already criticizing the agreement as giving "too much" to the DPRK. Democrats will undoubtedly claim they could have served imperialism's interests in Korea more effectively by not concentrating so heavily on Iraq.

One thing is for sure: The struggle will go on to get the U.S. troops out of Korea and end the Pentagon's threats so the Korean people can build a sovereign, united country. □

Union leaders see hurricane survivors' conditions as

'21st century slave ship'

Continued from page 8

by the disaster.

- Immediately allow other countries to provide aid to the survivors where needed.

The MWMM has presented this list of priorities to Congressional Black Caucus member Barbara Lee at her Northern California office on Sept. 14.

This disaster must not be turned into an excuse for urban removal. We demand that there be affordable housing commensurate with the loss, of equal value. People should be paying whatever rent they were paying before.

Hurricane Katrina forces us to deal with the whole question of self-determination and how national oppression pertains to the whole question of the class struggle. Because it's very clear from the images of what was seen on television in the aftermath that Black people are economically exploited and politically oppressed, that we lack access to organizations to be able to care for us because

we're dependent on the government to do every damn thing.

Labor must be at the table!

Organized labor has been silent on all of this. They have not been saying "This is an outrage!" They're not calling on their elected officials that they've endorsed to say, "This is an attack on labor!"

Once again it is absolutely clear from the manner in which labor has responded, in terms of the officialdom of labor, that they're primarily concerned with business unionism and not with how trade unions should be fighting for economic and social justice on behalf of the entire working class. That's the failure.

There were discussions today involving the NOI leadership and MWMM leadership regarding having Gulf Coast survivors speak at the Oct. 15 MMM rally and making it an event that launches a united front movement dealing with the hurricane crisis and beyond.

The Million Worker March calls for labor to be at the table with the commu-

nity, with the survivors. As African-American trade unionists who organized the MWM we understand that labor needs to be part of the struggle of that legacy of fighting for economic and social justice for the working class.

Clarence Thomas is an executive board member of the International Longshore Workers Union Local 10, co-chair of the Million Worker March Movement, and executive committee member of the Alameda County Central Labor Council. Chris Silvera is secretary-treasurer of Teamster Local 808, chairman of the Teamster National Black Caucus, and a Million Worker March Movement Eastern Regional co-convenor.



TROOPS OUT NOW Build a united front *Stop the war at home*

Continued from page 1

empire has turned into the humiliation of quagmire.

The Iraqi people refused to play their assigned part in the Bush administration's scenario. That scenario was clearly drawn before the war. It called for the Pentagon to march in and secure the vast oil reserves for U.S. oil companies; set up permanent military bases from which to dominate the region; privatize the country and turn it over to the transnational corporations.

But the Iraqi people had experienced that scenario before—under the Ottoman Empire and under British colonialism. They put an end to it with the revolution of 1958 and developed their country. They have decided they won't go back. They tore up Washington's criminal plans and created their own scenario instead—the scenario of resistance to occupation and colonial conquest.

The war at home

The \$5 billion-plus spent each month for the occupation produces war crimes in Iraq and Afghanistan. But it also produces crimes right here in the U.S.: cut-backs in social services, the intensification of poverty, the decline in the health and wellbeing of tens of millions of people in order to pay for the occupation.

This is part of another war—a war at home. A war that includes tax cuts for the rich; giveaways to oil companies; wage cuts; layoffs; destruction of the environment to preserve profit. In short, a class war of the capitalists against the workers. In this war, as the crisis in New Orleans demonstrated, those who suffer the most are the tens of millions of African Americans, Latinos, especially immigrant workers, and other peoples who are enduring the same fate that Washington is trying to impose on Iraq.

New Orleans is 70 percent African American. One third of the families in New Orleans did not have cars. The city has a 40 percent illiteracy rate. Over 50 percent of Black ninth graders will not graduate in four years. Many Black men wind up in a former slave plantation—brutal Angola prison—where over 90 percent of the inmates die in jail. The New Orleans police are among the most brutal in the country.

But this is not an exception. This is the rule in the U.S., from the south side of Chicago to Watts and South Central Los Angeles, from East Cleveland and Harlem to Houston. Oppressed communities are flooded with drugs; youth are under-educated and over-incarcerated; brutal police forces are like armies of occupation, ready to "shoot to kill," as Governor Blanco of Louisiana was so quick to demand during the Katrina crisis.

While racism is the ideological poison used to justify and perpetuate these conditions of super-exploitation that the African American and Latino people have to endure, it goes beyond racism. This is a question of national oppression.

The UN Human Development Report of 2005 revealed that African Americans in Washington, D.C., have an infant mor-

tality rate the same as that of cities in Kerala, India. India remains underdeveloped as a result of centuries of British colonialism. The report showed that health care in the U.S. was at "third world" levels for African Americans and Latinos.

Health care is an indicator of the general condition of the population. These statistics can be extended to all areas of economic life. They demonstrate that there are oppressed nations imprisoned right here in the U.S. who are facing a war every day just to survive under the oppressive system of U.S. capitalism.

The only way to create a united struggle in this country against Washington's wars and occupations abroad is to confront racism and national oppression and to defend the right of self-determination. This is the cutting edge of the struggle at home.

The anti-war movement must move quickly and deliberately to build united fronts with movements such as the Community Labor Unity Coalition in New Orleans, which is struggling on behalf of the survivors, the Million Worker March Movement, the Oct. 15 Millions More March, the call for a Dec. 1 strike against the war on the 50th anniversary of the Montgomery bus boycott, and others.

Only concrete support in the struggle against national oppression can bring about a united, anti-war, anti-racist, working-class wide struggle, which is indispensable to pushing back the war makers in Washington. □

Stay grounded—every day

The racist, anti-worker, imperialist policies of the Bush administration are yielding their poison fruit: wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, the collapse of the infrastructure in the Gulf area, growing disasters linked to global warming, and a looming capitalist economic crisis.

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FIST book review: Tactics for counter-recruiting

By Almahdi

"We Won't Go! The Truth on Military Recruiters & the Draft, A Guide to Resistance" published by the International Action Center, New York, 2005, 90 pages, index. \$14.95 Available at Leftbooks.com

Since the beginning of the illegal war on Iraq in 2003, almost 2,000 U.S. soldiers have given their lives for the lies of the Bush administration. More than 100,000 Iraqi civilians have also lost their lives as a result of the "precise" and "accurate" weapons that are being used. And up to this day, the war is costing more than \$200 billion, which could have been spent on jobs, education and health care.

So the question arises: How can people here end this war? The answer to this question is found in the book, "We Won't Go!, A Guide to Resistance," published by the International Action Center.

As the bloody war continues, joining the Armed forces grows less popular every day. In response, military recruiters have launched massive campaigns targeting and encouraging high school and college students to join up.

"The Guide to Resistance" documents how recruiters specifically target people of color and working class youth who have few other economic options. The lack of jobs and the racist criminal justice system conspire to make the army seem a good option for many youth. This results in a very real poverty draft, but even these severe conditions are not enough to force the needed numbers to enlist.

As the recruiters fail to meet their quotas, they increase the bonuses offered and false promises of money for college education, on-the-job training and other benefits most recruits never get. In return, the



young recruits are asked to be war criminals and tools for corporations like Chevron and Halliburton.

"We Won't Go!" describes, in detail, the different lies and conscious omissions military recruiters routinely make. It also shows how anti-war activists, parents and others can expose the recruiters' lies and mobilize to bar them from our high schools and college campuses.

The book also shows how it is possible to get out of the military, even for those who have already signed up and then realized the war is not about liberation and nothing but a brutal occupation.

As of last March 31, the Selective Service reported to President Bush that it is ready to reinstate the draft. Military conscription is another major threat to youth. The book states that the draft needs to be stopped before it starts and explains how to start organizing to stop it.

"We Won't Go!" also reflects on the experiences of war resisters, uncovers the brutal and dehumanizing treatment of lesbian/gay/bi/trans people in the military, and exposes the experiments of internationally banned weapons such as depleted uranium and the anthrax vaccine on soldiers. Publishing "We Won't Go!" is an important step in stopping the destruction of another generation of youth, whether through poisoning, mental health crises, sexual abuse or as casualties of war.

The book is not simply an academic presentation of facts, but recognizes that only the youth who have already enlisted and those being recruited have the power to end this war. The tools and strategies suggested in this book can give youth activists the strength to kick the recruiters out of their neighborhoods and campuses and help mobilize support for GI resisters.

Without soldiers, the Pentagon can't fight its wars. □

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Cindy Sheehan takes anti-war message across U.S.

By LeiLani Dowell

Cindy Sheehan, who camped outside the president's vacation home in August to protest her son's death in Iraq, electrifying the anti-war movement, has taken the demand of "Bring the troops home" on the road, stopping in over 51 cities in the past 21 days. She will be a speaker at the Sept. 24 anti-war rally in Washington, D.C.

In New York on Sept. 19, police forcibly broke up the rally organized for her arrival—despite the fact that organizers had a valid permit. They arrested Paul "Zool" Zulkowski, the event's organizer and one of the organizers of Camp Casey NYC in Union Square. Sheehan reported being shoved around in the scuffle.

Eyewitnesses report that several hundred people, including members of Military Families Speak Out, Gold Star Families for Peace, the Troops Out Now Coalition, the No Police State Coalition and the Green Party, were present for what had been a peaceful rally until cops moved in on the stage without warning and broke it up.

A woman on the caravan told those gathered that they had attended over 100 events so far, and nothing like this had occurred until now. Police have attacked Camp Casey NYC—which has had a steady presence at Union Square since Aug. 15—on at least two other occasions, confiscating materials, harassing organizers and making arrests.

In Baltimore, over 500 people jammed into the Shriver Hall at Johns Hopkins University Sept. 20 to hear Sheehan and others who have lost loved ones in the war. Each told of the horror of dealing with the death of a family member. The crowd also heard from veterans from the war who spoke, among other things, about signing up for the



Sheehan leads march to the White House September 21

military under false pretenses given them by recruiters.

Sheehan spoke to a crowd of over 600 Sept. 17 at the Boston University School of Law auditorium. She received a hero's welcome with a standing ovation and thunderous applause. Speakers also included Iraq Veterans Against the War, Military Families Speak Out, Gold Star Families For Peace and Veterans for Peace.

Earlier in the same day, Sheehan spoke to over 200 supporters at the Cambridge Common, where she received a key to the city from the vice mayor. About the "Bring Them Home Now" tour, Sheehan said, "George Bush wouldn't meet with me. But I went over his head. I went to the people of America."

Other Northeast tour stops included Albany, N.Y., Amherst, Mass., New Haven, Conn., and Providence, R.I.

Eddie Boyd, Dustin Langley and Bryan Pfeifer contributed to this report.



Raleigh FIST organizer, Peter Gilbert, with Cindy Sheehan at North Carolina State University, Sept. 15.

PHOTO: NCSU TECHNICIAN

M★NDO OBRERO

'Nueva Orleans es una cuestión antiguerra'

Continued from page 20

salir de las ciudades y pueblos. Katrina no puede ser utilizado como un pretexto para un limpiamiento étnico y sustitución de l@s pobres, blanc@s y no blanc@s por comunidades ricas.

- Que se acepten l@s más de 1100 médicos ofrecidos por Cuba al igual que los recursos ofrecidos por el gobierno de Venezuela.
- Que paguen los salarios prevalecientes. El Congreso y el presidente tienen que revocar la renuncia de la Ley Davis-Bacon.
- Que se extiendan los beneficios de desempleo, los pagos atrasados y un empleo garantizado para tod@s l@s trabajador@s desplazad@s por Katrina.

- El establecimiento de una Comisión Internacional de Investigación sobre la respuesta del gobierno de los EEUU a Katrina.

- Dinero para la recuperación después de Katrina y para las necesidades humanas—no para la guerra. ¡Qué regresen las tropas a casa ya!

Holmes enfatizó que la TONC seguirá consultando con las organizaciones de la región del Golfo mientras siguen desarrollando sus demandas. La TONC está urgiendo a otras coaliciones que también están organizando para la manifestación del 24 de septiembre en Washington a que apoyen estas demandas e incluyan a líderes de Nueva Orleans en el programa.

□



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L@s inmigrantes y la atrocidad de la Costa del Golfo

Por Teresa Gutiérrez

Es posible que nunca se sepa exactamente cuánt@s inmigrantes murieron por causa del Huracán Katrina.

Debido a que tant@s inmigrantes en la región de la Costa del Golfo están indocumentad@s, es una tarea imposible bajo el sistema capitalista localizarles, contarles o ayudarles.

El gobierno mexicano dijo el 3 de septiembre que hasta 100,000 mexican@s, la mayoría indocumentad@s, fueron afectados por el huracán. Los consulados de Honduras y El Salvador estiman que otros 200,000 inmigrantes de Centroamérica estaban en la región.

También había inmigrantes de Jamaica, otras partes del Caribe, Vietnam y varios países africanos.

El Departamento de Estado no permitió que entraran oficiales consulares en la zona, aduciendo cuestiones de seguridad, lo cuál hizo más difícil documentar o ayudar a l@s inmigrantes. Esto fue parte del ambiente de represión y ocupación, en vez de compasión y socorro, que la administración de Bush estaba promulgando.

L@s inmigrantes no han estado yendo a los refugios ni a los centros de la Cruz Roja por miedo a la deportación o el arresto. A causa de que l@s inmigrantes viven en un estado de terror, la catástrofe servirá solo para conducirles a vivir más clandestinamente.

Las noticias dicen que algun@s trabajador@s latin@s indocumentad@s están entrando a escondidas a los refugios por noche y luego saliendo secretamente por la mañana para que nadie se fije en ell@s.

El consulado salvadoreño reporta que de l@s 9,600 salvadoreñ@s que vivían en la región, sólo 40 se presentaron en los refugios.

Es sabido que cuatro inmigrantes murieron. Los tres mexicanos y un hondureño que vivían juntos decidieron quedarse en su casa de remolque por la duración de la tempestad. Se asfixiaron por un generador dañado después que había pasado la tormenta.

Se ha reportado que otr@s se están quedando en casas y apartamentos inundados porque no quieren dejar sus pertenencias, sabiendo que no son elegibles para auxilio federal. La mayoría tenía sueldos bajos y

van a encontrar extremadamente difícil el empezar de nuevo con su vida.

En Mississippi, much@s inmigrantes han trabajado en la industria avícola en la cuál las condiciones son atroces y el pago es mínimo. La mayoría de ést@s trabajador@s está ahora sin empleo; 10 de los 14 centros para preparar las aves en Mississippi se han cerrado. Se estima que alrededor de 50,000 latin@s viven en el estado, pero ésta es una cifra conservadora del gobierno.

Inmigrantes de habla española le han contado a los medios que los avisos sobre el huracán inminente fueron hechos solo en inglés. Una señora dijo, "Cuando por fin nos dimos cuenta de lo que estaba pasando, no tuvimos tiempo para comprar más alimentos ni salir para ninguna otra parte." Ella añadió que después de que golpeó la tormenta, ni ella ni otr@s podían entender lo que los avisos por radio decían sobre adónde ir para conseguir agua, generadores o hielo.

L@s inmigrantes que viven en la Costa del Golfo y alrededor del país necesitan de la solidaridad del movimiento progresista y antiguerra, de defensor@s de los dere-

chos humanos y de sindicalistas ahora más que nunca. Much@s de l@s que se han perdido desde el 29 de agosto quizá se quedarán para siempre sin saber sus nombres ni sus caras.

Los crímenes de los oficiales gubernamentales que condujeron a este desastre inigualado, especialmente para gente afroamericana y latina, deben ser completamente expuestos y hay que hacer responsable a estos culpables.

Un inmigrante de Guatemala que había sido evacuado de Louisiana se encontró con una delegación de la Coalición Fuera las Tropas Ya en una parada de camionetas entre Houston y Nueva Orleans el 7 de septiembre. Él abrazó a esta escritora, una latina, y a Johnny Stevens, un afroamericano, y nos dijo, "Africano-americano@s y latin@s, ahora más que nunca debemos estar unid@s. Bush dejó caer ese dique para matar a gente como nosotr@s. Tenemos que estar unid@s como nunca."

Seguro que sólo la solidaridad de la clase trabajadora multinacional luchando por nuestros propios intereses puede llevar a cabo la justicia a la gente de la Costa del Golfo. □

La Coalición 'Tropas Fuera Ya' dice: 'Nueva Orleans es una cuestión antiguerra'

Por Deirdre Griswold
Nueva York

Cuando el huracán Katrina golpeó, los grupos opuestos a la guerra estaban preparándose para una importante manifestación nacional en Washington. A los pocos días quedó claro que l@s habitantes de la región del Golfo de México se habían convertido en las últimas víctimas de un gobierno que gasta cientos de miles de millones para una guerra imperialista mientras recorta drásticamente los fondos para los servicios básicos en casa.

La Coalición "Tropas Fuera Ya", (TONC por las siglas en inglés) que había programado una conferencia para el 10 de septiembre para dar un impulso final a la protesta que tendría lugar dos semanas después, inmediatamente amplió el enfoque de la reunión. La guerra había llegado a casa, y esta coalición, que abarca a muchas organizaciones afroamericanas y latinas al igual que a activistas del movimiento sindical y antiguerra, estuvo profundamente involucrada en comunicar las demandas de los asediados habitantes de Nueva Orleans al movimiento antiguerra en general.

Hubo momentos destacados en la conferencia tales como un reporte por Teresa Gutiérrez, que había regresado esa misma mañana de Luisiana; un resumen por Nellie Bailey del Consejo de Inquilinos de Harlem sobre los problemas apocalípticos que enfrentarían l@s habitantes de Nueva York si ocurriera un

desastre similar; y la presentación de un programa popular por Larry Holmes resultado de uno de los talleres de la conferencia, que reiteró las demandas preparadas por grupos independientes de las comunidades de Nueva Orleans.

Gutiérrez y Johnnie Stevens de TONC, habían entrevistado a much@s de l@s sobrevivientes del huracán en Houston y Luisiana. Gutiérrez denunció que, basado en lo que había escuchado la delegación, el gobierno había hecho la decisión de "dejar ocurrir la tragedia", y desafió al movimiento antiguerra y a todas las fuerzas progresistas a que extendieran el mayor grado de solidaridad a la gente desplazada de la región.

Bailey presentó a la audiencia un reporte detallado preparado por Trabajadores Negros por la Revitalización de la Infraestructura sobre el deterioro de los sistemas de luz, agua y alcantarillado de la Ciudad de Nueva York que la convierte en "otra potencial Nueva Orleans".

A pesar de que los expertos han dicho que se precisan unos \$90 mil millones en inversiones en la infraestructura para asegurarla, las autoridades están haciendo poco. Mientras tanto, la mitad de los hombres en Harlem no puede encontrar un empleo y las Fuerzas Armadas están intentando atraer a la juventud con promesas falsas de empleos y educación.

¿Qué puede hacer el movimiento para

bregar con esta situación crítica?

Larry Holmes, de la TONC, llevó a la conferencia un programa de acción basado en las demandas concebidas en reuniones de líderes de base de la región del Golfo. Estas incluyen:

- Alto a los verdaderos saqueadores; que se congele el otorgamiento de contratos por parte de FEMA (la organización federal responsable de manejar la respuesta a desastres) hasta que las organizaciones comunitarias locales, líderes, activistas y jefes sindicales hayan publicado sus ideas y planes.
- La gente de la región debe controlar el fondo de \$52 mil millones para la reconstrucción de Nueva Orleans y la

Costa del Golfo –y no Haliburton y los amigos ricos del Presidente Bush.

- Alto a la ejecución de Frances Newton. Si el Estado de Texas ejecuta a Frances Newton (haciéndola la primera mujer negra en ser ejecutada en Texas desde 1853) en la estela de Katrina, tal linchamiento sería una continuación de la guerra brutal de represión racista en contra de la población afroamericana de Texas, Luisiana, Mississippi, y Alabama.
- Fin a la ocupación militar de Nueva Orleans –no a las evacuaciones forzadas.
- Que se dejen entrar a observadores de derechos humanos a Nueva Orleans.
- El derecho de toda la gente a regresar, aquell@s forzad@s a

Continúa a página 19

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

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