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WORKERS WORLD NEWSPAPER
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Another cruel blow to New Orleans Mayor announces flood of layoffs

Profiteering corporations feast as city starves

By Monica Moorehead

Mayor Ray Nagin of New Orleans announced at an Oct. 4 press conference that 3,000 city workers will permanently lose their jobs as part of the continuing economic fallout from the Hurricane Katrina disaster. This amounts to about half the city's workforce. These workers will receive their last paychecks between Oct. 14 and Oct. 21.

Nagin stated that "no revenue stream" was the main cause for the massive firings, which will not include firefighters, police, sewage and water workers or emergency medical personnel. The usual \$13 million in monthly sales tax revenues for the city has been non-existent since the hurricane hit New Orleans on Aug. 31.

Nagin also said that these layoffs could be just the beginning of others to come, and that no one should be surprised if he announces another round of layoffs within the next few months. The layoffs will most assuredly lead to the loss of even more homes on top of the ones destroyed by the hurricane, along with other forms of deepening suffering.

Nagin stated that he could not get any assistance from the state or federal governments in the form of loans to help pay these workers, and that \$50 million the city has sought in credit from private lenders remains "sketchy."

Where are the billions of dollars that Bush and Congress

promised—just last month—would go to help rebuild New Orleans and assist the Katrina survivors? Why are huge sums going to Halliburton and other companies but not to New Orleans?

Why isn't the federal government using every resource at its disposal to bring relief to this beleaguered city and its residents—the way it did in the past when it bailed out the executives and stockholders of the Chrysler Corporation?

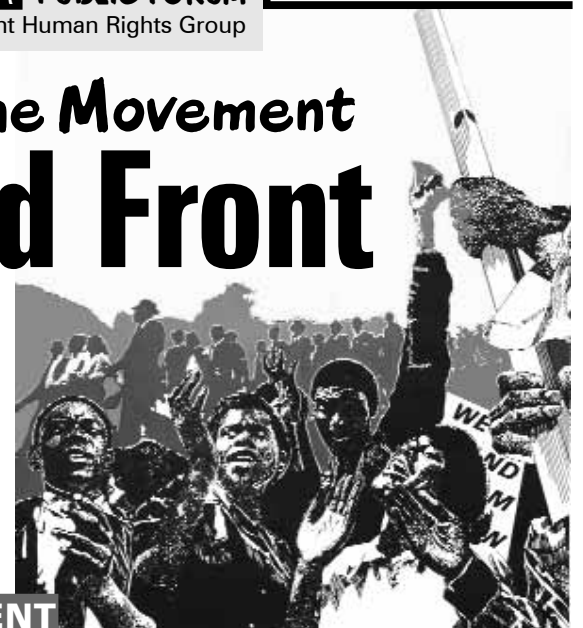
Why is the cost of the economic devastation caused by this hurricane being put on the backs of the workers and the poor, who are overwhelmingly African-American?

It has become more and more apparent that the capitalist class, both locally and nationally, along with the Louisiana governor and the White House, are exploiting this situation to attempt to change the economic and social landscape of New Orleans to meet the demands of wealthy whites. This means that African-American, Latin@, and other people of color and poor whites will not be welcomed back to New Orleans. In fact, it has also been reported that landlords in New Orleans are doing everything they can to evict tenants who were forced to evacuate to other areas to escape the hurricane.

A march on New Orleans has been called for Dec. 10, International Human Rights Day, to once again demand real justice, including the right to return, for the Katrina survivors. □

A WORKERS WORLD NEWSPAPER PUBLIC FORUM
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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Students stand up to military recruiters

By Bryan G. Pfeifer
Boston

Youth and students participating in the anti-war movement are responding decisively to unprovoked police attacks at two campuses Sept. 29, part of an increasingly brutal response by school administrators and the state to counter-recruitment protest actions. But students aren't intimidated.

Pakistani student brutalized

Tariq Khan, a Pakistani student at George Mason University in Virginia and former U.S. Air Force member, was assaulted by police and an ROTC member while protesting Marine recruiters on campus. An ROTC member ripped off a "Recruiters lie, don't be deceived" sign Tariq was wearing, and police were seen choking the peaceful protester and dragging his handcuffed body to a police car after he refused to move from the recruiter's table area (www.campusantiwar.net).

Khan was taken to a Fairfax County jail, charged with disorderly conduct, trespassing at his own university and resisting arrest. He said that as he was being assaulted, a cop said to him, "I didn't know who you were, and what with the 9/11 and everything, there's no telling what you would do." He then told Khan to obey his directives or he would "hang you from the ceiling by your feet." Another cop said, "You people are the most violent in the world."

A protest was held Oct. 3 to denounce this terrorism against Khan and to demand all charges be dropped. To add your voice, contact Alan G. Merten, George Mason President, at (703) 993-8700 or mail letters to: Office of the President, George Mason University, 4400 University Dr. MSN 3A1, Fairfax, VA 22030.

Holyoke Community College

On the same day as the attack against Khan, over 30 multinational lesbian, gay, bi and trans students and allies protested Army National Guard recruiting at Holyoke Community College (HCC). Another focus was the Pentagon's bigoted "don't ask, don't tell" policy that essentially bars LGBT persons from enlisting - in violation of the college's and the state's non-discrimination laws.

According to protest sponsors—the HCC Anti-War Coalition—during the action a campus cop ripped a "Cops are hypocrites" placard away from a protester. As the student attempted to retrieve his sign he was assaulted by four officers. One made a homophobic comment. When other students attempted to intervene, one was maced.

At least 20 local and state police in riot gear and gas masks arrived with boxes labeled "gas masks." One student claimed a group of state police pointed guns at him.

After menacing the students, the police dispersed them. The next day Charles Peterson, a student assaulted by police at the protest, was visited by two state police who told him he was banned from campus and would be arrested for trespassing if he entered public HCC property. Peterson is vice president for academic affairs on the Student Senate and is employed at HCC.

Holyoke students demand the immediate lifting of the ban on Peterson, an immediate, unconditional public apology from the college; a pledge of non-retaliation against activists; a thorough and impartial investigation; and that military recruiters be banned from campus. The Anti-War Coalition held a press conference Oct. 3 and will march and rally at HCC Oct. 6.

Students are asking supporters to call HCC President William Messner at (413) 552-2222; and/or to send letters

by faxing (413) 534-8975 or emailing wmessner@hcc.edu. Over 1,000 people have already contacted Messner.

Other actions

For the first time in over 30 years, military recruiters returned to Harvard for an undergraduate career fair Sept. 30. The Army, Marines, CIA, Department of Homeland Security and the Pentagon's Defense Intelligence Agency were present.

In response, the Harvard Initiative for Peace and Justice (HIPJ) held an anti-war and counter-recruitment rally. The Bisexual, Gay, Lesbian, Transgender, and Supporters Alliance (BGLTSA) distributed dozens of leaflets protesting the Pentagon's bigoted policies (hcs.harvard.edu/~queer/).

Over 50 Radical Youth Alliance members and allies protested the "Armed Forces Career Center" near the Boston Common Oct. 1. Alliance members are mostly high school youth and students from schools in the Greater Boston area.

A student from the Cambridge School of Weston concluded, "We have power, we have a voice and we can make an impact." The alliance is working with a broad cross-section of organizations to build "a constant campaign of counter-recruitment."

At the University of Wisconsin-Madison Sept. 28 over 25 students from the campus Stop the War Coalition were verbally assaulted by campus cops and threatened with arrest if they didn't stop their protest at a career fair where the Air Force, CIA and Marines were recruiting.

Where are the Democrats?

Amid the widespread resistance to the U.S. war on Iraq, Massachusetts Sen. John Kerry Sept. 26 declared, "There is some schedule... to get [the Iraqis that are] standing up and defending themselves which is now suddenly beginning to happen, so there are some signs of progress."

Nor have leading Democrats protested the Sept. 15 FBI announcement regarding the formation of a National Security Higher Education Advisory Board.

The board will work with university presidents to "establish lines of communication on national priorities pertaining to terrorism, counterintelligence, and homeland security. We also want to foster exchanges between academia and the FBI in order to develop curricula which will aid in attracting the best and brightest students to careers in the law enforcement and intelligence communities" (www.fbi.gov).

As the bold, courageous actions of students across the country are showing, an independent multinational class-wide movement to bring the troops home now is the way forward. □

As the bloody colonial occupation of Iraq drags on into its third year, the Army continues to miss its recruiting quotas—falling short by a staggering 42% in April of 2005. This book is aimed at increasing recruiting problems by helping young people and their parents counter the lies of the recruiters. You will find practical tools for challenging recruiters, exposing their falsehoods, and getting them out of our schools.

This Guide to Resistance is \$12 at Leftbooks.com



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Fri., Oct. 21
Eyewitness Report from Haiti. John Parker will report from the delegation, led by Ramsey Clark, that went to Haiti in early Oct. Video footage from Haiti. 7:30 p.m. At IAC, 5274 W Pico Blvd #203. For info (323) 936-7266.

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

NEW YORK

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

Every Friday
Workers World Party meeting. Come hear Marxist analyses and lively discussion of world events and working class struggles. 7 pm. (Dinner at 6:30) At 55 W. 17 St., 5th Fl., Manhattan. For info (212) 627-2994.

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Congress weighs huge cuts in student aid

By David Hoskins

As the Higher Education Act of 1965 comes up for reauthorization, a bipartisan attack on federal student aid has surfaced that attempts to pit students against Hurricane Katrina survivors.

Congress has until the end of the year to vote to reauthorize the Act, which provides loans, grants and college preparatory programs for low-income students.

In a move intended to stifle debate about proposed cuts, reauthorization cannot move forward until at least Oct. 24, when Congress takes up the budget reconciliation process.

Bill seeks to slash billions

The House version of the reauthorization bill calls for cuts in excess of \$11 billion.

And while senators Michael Enzi (R-Wyo.) and Ted Kennedy (D-Mass.) claim that the Senate version would cut “only” \$7 billion in spending over five years, the Congressional Budget Office estimates that the actual figure could be almost twice that amount.

The federal budget is already strained by tax cuts for the wealthy along with the occupations of Iraq and Afghanistan. Now Congress is using the need to finance disaster relief as a further excuse for cutting student aid.

Enzi and Kennedy have proposed to move almost \$37 billion from student loan

programs over 10 years to, they claim, provide aid to those affected by the hurricane.

What the proposal does not do is just as striking as what it does.

It does not provide a plan for transparency to ensure that the \$37 billion earmarked for disaster relief will actually make it to the victims and not to corporations like Bechtel and Halliburton, which are scooping up choice contracts for reconstruction.

The National Education Association has described the proposed cuts as incongruous with the act’s original purpose of making college affordable.

Attacks on academic freedom

The reauthorization bill has also been criticized on grounds unrelated to the spending cuts.

In separate letters to Congress, the American Federation of Teachers and the American Association of University Professors have criticized provisions in the bill that mirror portions of right-winger David Horowitz’s proposal to prohibit the dissemination of progressive ideas on college campuses.

The AFT described that portion of the bill as a violation of “longstanding principles of academic autonomy by delineating a set of government guidelines for curriculum, teaching and grading policies on college campuses across the country.”

In addition to the cuts in student aid



WW PHOTO: G. DUNKEL

On Sept. 24 in Washington, DC.

and attempts at academic censorship, the proposed reauthorization bill mandates the creation of an International Higher Education Board under Title VI of the act. Title VI provides for international education and language training.

The proposed board is an attempt to replace academic discretion with political control. According to the AFT, it is meant to “highlight, question and ultimately curb academic activities under Title VI that some board members oppose politically.”

Racist slap at orphans of Katrina

The federal government’s most recent campaign against low-income students and students of color extends beyond the affordability and academic standards addressed in current versions of the reauthorization bill.



The U.S. Department of Education is currently waging a racist assault on poor children of color left homeless by Hurricane Katrina.

In a September press release, the NEA lambasted an underreported proposal by the U.S. DoE to waive requirements of the McKinney-Vento Act that prohibit the segregation of homeless children from public schools. The act requires schools to accept homeless children regardless of residency or documentation.

The federal government’s response to the tragedy wreaked upon the poor children of Louisiana and Mississippi is to segregate the Black students whose parents died as a result of government inaction.

Recent events such as the cuts in education funding and the government’s response to the education needs of children suffering in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina have once again demonstrated capitalism’s disregard for human life.

Only resistance on the part of young people and students can stop the government’s attacks on the poor and oppressed.

The Troops Out Now Coalition is calling upon young people everywhere to organize for a Dec. 1 nationwide strike against poverty, racism, and war. In honor of Rosa Parks on the anniversary of her courageous act that started the Montgomery Bus Boycott, boycott school, boycott work and shut the war down! □

Interview with disabled activist

Sit-in opposes Medicaid cuts

Hundreds of activists with the disability rights group American Disabled for Attendant Programs Today [ADAPT] descended on Washington, D.C., Sept. 17-21 to protest Medicaid cuts and demand housing and personal care for disabled people. WW reporter Lou Paulsen interviewed Ed Hoffmans, 67, of Chicago, the elected coordinator of Chicago ADAPT and a long-time member of Workers World Party, about these activities.

WW: What were the main issues in the protest?

EH: We were mainly protesting the planned cuts in Medicaid. In April, Congress passed a budget resolution that would cut \$10 billion over five years. It’s not a binding resolution, but it shows what they intend.

Between 500 and 600 of us were there, 12 from Chicago. The largest delegation was from Kansas—they had 47. Most of us were wheelchair users.

On Sunday, Sept. 18, we marched 5 miles from the hotel to Sen. [Bill] Frist’s house and held a two-hour rally outside the fence. This was a record-setting longest march for ADAPT.

What kind of house is it?

It’s a big mansion! Then on Monday, the 19th, we committed civil disobedience, which was really the focus for the trip. We held sit-ins in the offices of the Senate and House leadership of both parties.

Which office were you in?

Senator Grassley’s [Charles Grassley, R-Iowa]. He was the only one who didn’t have people arrested, so we sat until the

building closed and were arrested by Capitol Police on the charge of unlawful assembly. Just before we were arrested, we were chanting my favorite chant, which was, “I would rather go to jail than die in a nursing home.”

We were processed in a Senate hearing room—in fact, it was the room where Judge [John] Roberts had his confirmation hearing. The police didn’t treat us badly like they do with anti-war and anti-globalization protesters. But it took them 11 hours to process us. They started at 7:30 p.m. and we were done at 6:30 in the morning. But I enjoyed the experience of being there and our spirits were very high.

Was there much publicity?

We were on the front page of the Washington Post. One headline we saw read, “ADAPT storms Congress.”

On Tuesday, we went to the Department of Health and Human Services for a rally in the morning. In the afternoon, some went to Virginia to speak with the director of housing about affordable and accessible housing for people coming out of nursing homes. We were ready to sit in his office if he didn’t talk to us, but he actually did.

On Wednesday we had a rally against the National Governors’ Association and they sent a spokesperson out to talk to us, though he wasn’t supplying us with very satisfactory results. That was on the issue of Medicaid, block grants to the states, and the cutbacks in services on the state level.

For example, in Tennessee [Frist’s home state—ed.] the state cut off a program that helped people on ventilators stay in their own homes. They have forced them into nursing homes, and one person



PHOTO: TOM OLIN, ADAPT.ORG

Police move in to arrest disabled activists.

has already died from this. ADAPT in Nashville held a month-long sit-in, and we will have a national action there in the spring of 2006.

In the afternoon some of us from Chicago met with staff people for Illinois Congress members. We are supporting MICASSA, an act which promotes community care rather than nursing homes, and “money follow the person” legislation—which puts a disabled person’s money under his or her own control, not the nursing home or institution that he or she is in.

How did the issue of Katrina tie in with your actions?

People with disabilities were being treated very badly in the evacuation. We raised this in all our actions. A lot of people who had been living in their own houses or apartments were taken out of state and placed in nursing homes, and their wheelchairs were taken away and they were given junky chairs by the airlines.

How did that happen?

Well, when you use a wheelchair and you travel by plane, the airlines won’t send your own wheelchair on the plane. They confiscate your wheelchair and keep it at your point of origin, and at your destination they give you cheap wheelchairs of their own.

So the evacuees’ own wheelchairs are still impounded at the airport in New Orleans?

We think so. This also happened to us when we flew out from Chicago for the protest, and when we got back, two of us had had their chairs damaged by the airline when they were supposed to be storing them. One had a panel removed and another had a wire cut.

More information on the demonstration, including pictures and press releases, and on our demands and the legislation we support are at the website www.adapt.org. □

Change to Win holds founding convention

By Sharon Black
St. Louis

Close to 900 delegates, alternates and observers crowded into a hotel convention floor in downtown St. Louis on Sept. 27 for the founding convention of Change to Win. This newly formed federation of unions represents 5.4 million workers who have broken with the AFL-CIO. The move was initiated primarily by the Service Employees, led by Andrew Stern. The Teamsters, United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW), UNITE-HERE, Carpenters, Laborers and the United Farm Workers have joined the new federation.

The apparent core issue behind this split in the labor movement has been its failure to organize millions of low-paid and exploited workers while existing union jobs were disappearing. Unfortunately, very little of this debate has trickled down to the union members, who could provide the energy and initiative needed to develop new strategies.

The newly formed federation announced that 75 percent of its \$16 million budget will be earmarked for union organizing, along with the development of "Sector Coordinating Committees" targeting specific industries and "Strategic Organizing Centers."

The conference took place in one day. Delegates from each of the seven unions were carefully picked. Resolutions were presented without the usual debate common to union conventions and were interspersed between presentations by rank-and-file workers from organizing campaigns.

All seven heads of the represented unions gave prepared remarks. Each delegation was in proportion to its union size. For instance, the Service Employees had 117 voting delegates and the Teamsters 108. Altogether there were 460 voting delegates.

Cintas laundry workers, Wal-Mart employees, DHL delivery drivers, First Student school bus drivers, Tyson poultry workers and workers from various hotel chains spoke about the exploitation that drove them to campaign for a union. Their energy was felt at the convention as they described their hardships and sacrifice.

War issue is conspicuously absent

Conspicuously absent from discussion at the convention was the Iraq War. Just three days earlier close to half a million people had marched in the streets, from Washington, D.C., to Los Angeles. It is workers and poor communities who most feel the devastation of the war—particularly Iraqi workers who have suffered under U.S. imperialist occupation.

International solidarity cannot be an empty platitude. The union movement cannot develop a successful strategy without taking into account the imperialist war. What good is it for workers to achieve a needed wage increase if it is taken away by the high cost of oil? What about the youth who are maimed or killed in the war or the rampant racism so viciously unmasked in the Katrina crisis—aren't these issues for the union movement? What about the budget cuts that have devastated whole communities because the money is going to the Pentagon?

If the working class is to fight effectively it will need a movement that can take on the capitalist system both politically and economically. Unity is one important

part of this strategy. How can it be helpful to separate janitors, hotel and hospital workers, now in the new federation, from steel workers and public employees, who remain in the AFL-CIO?

Woman, African American in top posts

A new 10-member Leadership Council was made up of the heads of the seven represented unions, who are male and white with the exception of the United Farm Workers, plus three seats set aside to strengthen race and gender diversity. The council elected Anna Burger, secretary treasurer of SEIU, as chair of Change to Win and Edgar Romney, African American executive vice president of UNITE-HERE, as its secretary treasurer. Geraldyn Luty, international vice president of the UFCW, will hold the third seat.

This marks a first for a labor federation of this size. The three choices were enthusiastically endorsed at the convention. Many women's and civil rights groups will certainly see this as a step in the right direction.

It is critical to note that this is a response to protracted protests by the leadership of the Million Worker March, the Coalition of Black Trade Unionists, Black Workers for Justice, the Coalition of Labor Union Women and many others in the immigrant rights and women's movement who continue to fight for more representation.

It is also a reflection of the aspirations of the rank and file, who are primarily people of color, women and immigrant workers. Much more needs to be done to address the issue of racism and national oppression at all levels in workers' organizations if the union movement is to succeed.

Response to Katrina crisis

The Teamsters announced plans to respond to the Katrina disaster. IBT president James Hoffa, who spoke first and received a standing ovation, proclaimed, "Who got the first no-bid contract? That's right—Halliburton. What was George Bush's first action in the devastated region? To repeal Davis-Bacon. That means Halliburton won't have to pay construction workers 13 bucks an hour. \$27,000 a year is too much for Cheney's cronies."

Hoffa also exclaimed, "We are reaching out to new worker communities: African-American waste workers in the South; Latino port drivers on both coasts; and Hispanic construction workers across the country."

Change to Win announced plans to develop worker training centers in the Gulf Coast region to rebuild the devastated communities. Before the convention on Monday morning, the federation held a press conference with the Rev. Jesse Jackson of the PUSH organization on the Katrina crisis.

How can we organize without addressing the issue of national oppression? The African American community and all those who are oppressed and poor need aid, yes, and the right to return to New Orleans and the region. But labor should also take on the issue of who will control the reconstruction—the people or the corporations? This would do more than any one organizing campaign to advance labor's cause.

These are just a few of the questions that the union movement will have to answer in the coming months. □

ON THE PICKETLINE

by Sue Davis

How solidarity led to UFW

In September 1965, Filipino farm workers in Delano, Calif., voted to strike after they discovered they were being paid \$1.10 an hour while temporary workers from Mexico were paid \$1.40.

When the growers called in more Mexican workers to replace them, Filipino leader Larry Itliong went to Cesar Chavez, head of the mostly Mexican National Farm Workers Association, to ask for help. Initially Chavez had misgivings.

"Our worry was that the Filipinos would abandon the strike [after the growers intimidated and beat them up]," explained NFWA co-founder Dolores Huerta. In the past growers had used Filipinos to break Mexican-led strikes and vice versa.

But just eight days after the Filipino strike vote, the Mexican NFWA workers voted unanimously to join them. That eventually led to the historic merger of the two groups and to the founding of the United Farm Workers of America, with Chavez as executive director and Itliong as second in command.

The UFW then mobilized a nationwide boycott of Delano grapes, which in 1970 forced the growers to give in. "We got wage increases [and] a medical plan; we set up five clinics, a day care center and a school," said Huerta, who was UFW First Vice President.

Though Chavez's role in the movement for farm workers' rights is legendary, Itliong's is not. "I'd like to see the name Larry Itliong mentioned in the same breath as Cesar Chavez. His impact on the Filipino American experience is unsurpassed," said Fred Cordova, past president of the Filipino American National Historical Society.

'Virtual strike' for child care

During the week of Sept. 26 unionized child care providers and families all over New York State held "virtual strikes," "stand for children rallies" and meetings to raise public awareness about the need for affordable, accessible, high-quality child care. This critical service that allows parents to work is under increasing attack from budget cuts.

In New York, 54 percent of children under the age of six need child care because their parents are working, often at low-paying jobs. Study after study confirms that high-quality early care and education programs prepare children for later success in school and in life. More quality child care, not less!

'Give them a real job'

Union members walking a picket line outside California Pacific Medical Center in San Francisco were horrified to find out the hospital had temporarily hired evacuees from Hurricane Katrina to fill their jobs.

"It's not a real job, it's a temporary job," said Beverly Griffith, a member of the California Street hospital's housekeeping staff. "Give them a real job. Hire them full-time. Give them a real sense of hope. They're using them because it's convenient. My heart goes out to them. They're suffering. We're suffering."

Striking janitors, nursing assistants and housekeepers walked out at three campuses of CPMC on Sept. 13 after management from CPMC's parent company, Sutter Health, failed to meet the union's demands about staffing, training and benefits.

"It's such an extraordinary irony," said Sal Rosselli, president of SEIU United Health Care Workers West. "SEIU is sending nurses and psych techs to New Orleans to care for people there. We're [demanding] the government establish training programs there for workers who are unemployed."

Demand fair pay for Gulf construction workers

On Sept. 8 President Bush issued an executive order removing Davis-Bacon Act community wage standards from construction workers hired to rebuild the Gulf Coast.

These community wage standards were modest to begin with, averaging about \$9.50 an hour—which adds up to less than \$20,000 a year—in the hurricane-stricken Gulf states.

The AFL-CIO has set up an online petition to Bush and members of Congress to protest this pay cut for workers who desperately need decent-paying jobs to rebuild their communities and their lives. Go to www.unionvoice.org/campaign/fairpaynow to sign the Petition for Decent Pay in the Gulf Coast. □

S.F. march for LGBT equal rights

Over 200 adults, their children and other supporters rallied and marched in the Castro district of San Francisco on the evening of Sept. 30. Led by children carrying a banner reading, "Equal love, equal rights," the lesbian, gay, bi and trans community was protesting Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger's veto the day before of a California Assembly bill protecting the right of same-sex couples to marry.

Called together by Equality California, the demonstrators carried signs saying, "Schwarzenegger the discriminator," "We all deserve marriage equality," "We need a governor who leads for all children" and "Governor, you can't veto this family."

"All families deserve to be treated equal, and should have the same protections the governor's own children and family have," said one woman. The governor's failure to sign the legislation signals to conserva-



tive religious bigots that further erosion of LGBT benefits and rights in California, like domestic partnership, can also be possible. The demonstrators, however, made it clear that the struggle is NOT over and the community will continue to fight for full equality under the law.

—Story and photo by J. Marquardt

CUNY workers talk strike

Special to Workers World
New York

More than 1,200 members of the Professional Staff Congress met here Sept. 29 to hear a report on the state of contract negotiations. The PSC, a local of the American Federation of Teachers representing some 20,000 faculty members and staff at the City University of New York, has been without a contract since 2002 and without a raise since 2001.

Under New York State's Taylor Law, which forbids strikes by public employees, the provisions of the expired contract remain in force.

Barbara Bowen, the PSC president, explained to rousing cheers and applause from the overflow crowd how patiently and carefully the union had presented its position to management, how it had made clear that it could not accept a concessionary contract, especially when the City has a \$3.5 billion surplus and the State has settled a contract with the State University faculty union containing a 15 percent

raise over four years.

But university management does not want to go above the 4.17 percent raise over 37 months that the City set in earlier contracts. Any raise over that must be funded by "productivity" increases—union members working harder. It especially wants to continue relying on 9,600 adjunct teachers, who teach a majority of CUNY's courses for substandard wages and benefits.

The overwhelming majority of the students in CUNY are the daughters, sons or members of the working class of New York, predominantly people of color. This city's establishment, run by bankers and business owners like the billionaire mayor, Michael Bloomberg, doesn't consider it a political priority to provide them with a quality higher education. The PSC sees its struggle for a decent contract as part of the students' struggle for a decent education.

President Bowen announced that—after a month of intense negotiations with management, a month of discussion



WW PHOTO: G. DUNKEL

among union members, two days of lunchtime picketing at the 20 campuses that make up the CUNY system, and reaching out to CUNY students and their communities—the union's executive board will decide Nov. 3 whether or not to hold a strike referendum among all the union's members.

Randi Weingarten, president of the UFT, an AFT division representing primary and high school teachers in New York City, said at the rally that if New York City does not substantially increase its offer, she would recommend to her membership that they also vote, sometime in the latter part of October, to authorize a strike.

Immigrant workers organize in Michigan

By Cheryl LaBash
Detroit

It was July 17 of this year. Armed men knocked on the doors early that Sunday morning.

Sleepy women, sometimes with children, opened them and were thrown to the floor. Men woke up to guns in their faces. They were dragged outside in their underwear.

It may sound like U.S.-occupied Iraq, but it happened in Southwest Detroit, the heart of the Latino community here. "Homeland Security" and the FBI staged raids throughout the area. Some of the victims are still in jail, nearly three months later, awaiting trial.

At its first public meeting here, held on Oct. 1, a new organization, Latinos United/Unidos of Michigan, exposed this and other examples of heightened attacks on immigrant workers.

The featured speaker, Juan Jose Gutierrez, a Los Angeles attorney and immigrant rights leader, reviewed the rich history of struggle in the Latino communities, particularly in California, ranging from the ballot box to the streets. Gutierrez highlighted the new, illegal and unconstitutional policy instituted by Greyhound Bus Lines. It is refusing to sell bus tickets to people who "appear" to be "illegal" and barring them from boarding buses. The policy extends to forcibly



Juan Jose Gutierrez, third from left standing, with immigrant community leaders.

WW PHOTO: CHERYL LABASH

detaining people in order to turn them over to immigration authorities.

In Los Angeles and other cities, demonstrators are challenging Greyhound's racist policy.

Latinos United/Unidos of Michigan grew out of a campaign against racist anti-Mexican and anti-Arab immigrant car-

toons in local newspapers. The announcement for the meeting said, "The U.S. media and right-wing politicians have been intensifying the attacks against undocumented workers by supporting groups like the Minutemen, KKK, neo-Nazis who, with the pretext of protecting the U.S./Mexican border, are able to

harass and violate civil and human rights and foment violence against the entire Latino Community."

In addition to continued support for detainees, the group plans to open an Immigrant Workers Center in early 2006. For more information, contact laborexchange@aol.com. □

Detroit invites Venezuela to discuss energy aid

By Cheryl LaBash

With winter's chill edging into Michigan, Detroit City Council members have sent a letter inviting the Consul General of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela to meet with them and the community at large "to discuss more fully President Chávez's proposal and possible ways of implementing it" in this city. All eight current Council members signed the Sept. 19 letter.

President Hugo Chávez of Venezuela, when visiting the United States during the opening of the United Nations General Assembly, offered to help poor communities get oil and gas cheap during this period of high world oil prices. Venezuela is the largest oil producer in the Western Hemisphere.

The Council's letter made the need clear: "Detroit, the 11th largest city in the United States, was just reported to be the poorest major city. One in three Detroiters and nearly half of our children under age 17 live below the Federal poverty level. Our unemployment rate is at least 30 percent, much higher than the national average. Our infant mortality rate is around 15 per thousand live births. Our city budget is in deficit, causing cutbacks in city services and in workers' wages and benefits. Thousands of households have had water service shut off because of inability to pay. This winter, with gas and oil prices skyrocketing, many families will suffer terribly.

"At the same time Detroit has always reached out a fraternal hand to other nations. Our City Council has opposed the U.S. blockade against Cuba, called for an

end to the Iraq war and called for U.S. troops to be removed from South Korea. Many of our local community and political leaders are campaigning for 'Money for our cities, not for war in Iraq.'

"We certainly have watched with hope and support as Venezuela's current government diverts much of the national budget to programs that benefit the workers and the poor. We oppose all efforts by the U.S. government to interfere in or subvert the progress of Venezuela under the leadership of President Chávez."

Gasoline prices have spiked at around \$3 per gallon here, increasing the hardships for car-dependent workers. Already public service announcements on radio and television are issuing advice and "tips" on how to make single-family homes, which are prevalent in this area, more

weather-tight. Heating costs reportedly will increase by 40 percent this winter.

But no amount of dialing down the thermostat, putting plastic on windows and increasing insulation will erase the crisis for many families this winter. Utility shut-offs for nonpayment will now cut both heat and light, due to a merger of the Detroit Edison electric company and Michigan Consolidated Gas into DTE Energy.

Every winter children and seniors die in house fires accidentally set when candles or space heaters are used to provide warmth and light. This is why the Metro-Detroit Coalition of Black Trade Unionists, U.S./Cuba Labor Exchange, UAW union presidents and others are enthusiastically supporting the City Council's invitation. □

Bennett & Racism — U.S. STYLE

By **Monica Moorehead**

The heinous, racist statement made by former secretary of education William Bennett on crime and Black babies was in and out of the mainstream media fast enough to make your head spin.

The former Reagan cabinet member, also known as the “drug czar” in the 1980s, made the following statement Sept. 28 on his syndicated call-in radio show, Morning in America: “If you wanted to reduce crime, you could—if that were your sole purpose—you could abort every black baby in this country and your crime rate would go down. That would be an impossibly ridiculous and morally reprehensible thing to do, but your crime rate would go down.” (CNN)

Bennett’s statement caused a broad response of criticism from civil rights leaders, Democrats and even some moderate Republicans who view it as a setback in their efforts to woo more Black voters to their party. Bennett, who until now has refused to retract or apologize for what he said, stated that everyone took his statement “out of context.” Period, end of story.

Judging by what’s in the media, Bennett’s show has not been canceled by any of the stations that carry it. The Federal Communications Commission, charged by Congress with regulating interstate and international communications by radio, television, wire, satellite and cable, has not issued any public statement condemning Bennett’s remarks. Contrast this with its overblown reaction to Janet Jackson’s breast exposure during the Super Bowl XXXVIII half-time show.

Just as Hurricane Katrina erased any doubts that racism and poverty do exist in

the U.S., Bennett’s statement does the same. The truth is that Bush, Cheney and other white capitalist politicians in the higher echelons of the U.S. government share the same views as Bennett. The only difference is that they would not risk making an outright genocidal statement like Bennett’s in public, because of a certain image that they want to uphold.

The same is true of Christian right-wing zealots like Pat Robertson, who just recently called for the assassination of Venezuelan President Hugo Chávez. During this controversy, the Bush administration distanced itself publicly from Robertson’s statement but did not take any serious action—like arresting him for advocating the assassination of a legitimately elected head of state. Once again, the Bush administration was in solidarity with Robertson’s attack on Chávez.

Taken at face value, Bennett’s statement gives the dangerous impression that Black children are born with some kind of criminal gene. But in reality, his statement is a mutilation of the truth, that truth being that crime is rooted in capitalism—a system that puts profits and private ownership of the means of production before the needs of humanity.

It is capitalism that has created an environment whereby African-American children and other children of color are victims of institutionalized racism and poverty in a country of unimaginable wealth.

Official statistics admit to 37 million people who are impoverished in the U.S., defined as families living below the federal poverty level. According to 2004 figures from the National Center of Children in Poverty website, more white children live

in poverty than those of any other group, but this is only because whites make up a majority of the population. When rates of poverty are examined, it is Black and Latin@ children who suffer in disproportionate numbers.

Some 10 percent of white children live in poverty, a disgraceful figure in such a rich country. But even this is low compared to the 33 percent for Black children and 28 percent for Latin@ children. The District of Columbia, home to the federal government and a majority Black population, has a higher rate of child poverty—30 percent—than any other state.

There is another category called extreme child poverty. This refers to children in families earning less than HALF the federal poverty level. The District of Columbia is at the top of this list, too, followed by Louisiana, Mississippi, Arkansas, New Mexico, North Carolina, West Virginia, New York, Alabama and Tennessee. (NCCP.org) Yes, New York, the “Empire State,” home to Wall Street, is on the list of the 10 worst.

This kind of poverty alongside extreme wealth drives its victims to carry out desperate “crimes” for survival. It has led to the U.S. having the largest prison population in the world—over 2 million people—the majority of them people of color and poor.

Many of these alarming statistics stem from the devastating welfare “reform” pushed through Congress by President Bill Clinton in 1996. It virtually eliminated federally funded relief, won during the working class struggles of the 1930s, that guaranteed vital income and food stamps for the poor, especially single mothers with children. □

By Mumia Abu-Jamal from death row

The Padilla Omen

The recent appeals court decision in the case of Jose Padilla, which okays the right of the government to imprison an American citizen, indefinitely, without ever formally charging or trying that person, is a judicial omen that should mark the death knell of the Constitution.



Jose Padilla, who has been in U.S. custody for over three years, was initially held on charges that he plotted with al-Qaeda to detonate a so-called “dirty bomb.” (One wonders, is there ever a “clean” one?)

Padilla’s arrest came at a time when the U.S. Justice Department, which had dropped the ball on 9/11, was busting people, especially those of Arab descent, on any conceivable charge, many of which have fallen apart in the years since 9/11.

Some national newspapers protested the Padilla ruling, calling it an affront to the Constitution and a threat to the nation’s citizens. Surprisingly, many of these same papers reported, months ago, that the Bush administration lost in the Hamdi and Rasul cases, and their most recent tone suggests surprise at the Padilla decision.

Yet the Padilla and Hamdi cases are closer than they appear, and the administration actually lost far less than the newspaper reports suggested.

In the Hamdi decision, the U.S. Supreme Court decided that citizenship was no bar to the type of imprisonment that Padilla suffers. In their words:

“There is no bar to this Nation’s holding one of its own citizens as an enemy combatant. In [Exparte] Quirin [a case involving Nazi saboteurs—maj], one of the detainees, Haupt, alleged that he was a naturalized United States citizen... We held that ‘[c]itizens who associate themselves with the military arm of the enemy governments, and with its aid, guidance and direction enter this country bent on hostile acts, are enemy belligerents within the meaning of ... the law of war.’ ... While Haupt was tried for violations of the law of war, nothing in Quirin suggests that his citizenship would have precluded his mere detention for the duration of the relevant hostilities.”

The Hamdi/Rasul cases blithely suggest that “detention isn’t punishment” but a “temporary war measure”—a kind of “protective custody.”

The last time the court came to such a conclusion wasn’t Quirin, but the infamous Korematsu case, where Japanese-Americans, men, women and children, were sent to concentration camps across the country, essentially because they were Japanese.

There were no trials. No hearings. No due process.

There was Executive Order #9066. Period.

In the words of Gen. John L. DeWitt, “The Japanese race is an enemy race, and while many second and third generation Japanese born on United States soil, possessed of United States citizenship, have become ‘Americanized’, the racial strains are undiluted.”

Guilty of Japaneseness, thousands were put in camps.

How many Americans are now guilty of being Muslims?

How many Muslim and Arab-Americans have had their “rights” denied since 9/11?

In the blizzard of news around Katrina and Rita, many of us haven’t heard of Padilla’s fate.

Knowing what we now know about the lies that led to a war that has meant death for tens of thousands of people, can you blindly trust the government? Can any court that claims to defend the Constitution allow an American citizen to be consigned to a U.S. dungeon, simply on the president’s say-so?

If the Padilla case is any example, the answer is yes.

The implications of this should send shivers down your spine.

This government, which has brought Chaos into being since its “election,” now decides who it can detain, and why. Essentially forever.

This is a judicially-approved recipe for madness. □

Alberto Lovera Bolivarian Circle/Circulo Bolivariano Alberto Lovera, el Padre Luis Barrios, Ramsey Clark, Noam Chomsky, Peter Coyote, Marcia Campos, Danny Glover, Bishop/el Obispo Thomas Gumbleton, August Nimtz, James Petras, U.S. Rep/el Congresista. José Serrano, el Reverendo Lucius Walker and/y Howard Zinn invite you to/les invitan a:



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On 'Day of Absence'

MWMM to host town hall meeting

By Monica Moorehead

The Million Worker March Movement (MWMM) will be holding an important all-day town hall meeting on Friday, Oct. 14, in Washington, D.C. It is being held on the "Day of Absence" called by the Millions More Movement (MMM), which is urging people not to go to work or school to protest against all forms of injustice.

The MMM will be holding a mass rally the next day at the National Mall to mark the 10th anniversary of the Million Man March, which attracted more than 1 million, predominantly Black, men in 1995. The principal spokesperson for the Millions More Movement is Nation of Islam leader Minister Louis Farrakhan.

The MWMM, one of the official national co-conveners of the Millions More Movement, is calling upon activists who represent labor, organized and unorganized, working class issues and anti-war groups to attend the town hall meeting in order to strategize to help build a powerful, united movement against government-sponsored wars against the workers and the poor at home and abroad.

Fighting against the racism and poverty that Hurricane Katrina helped to expose will be a main focus of this meeting. Some of the issues to be addressed are: taking to task a criminal government

that serves the interests of only a wealthy few; supporting the right to return to the Gulf Coast region of thousands of mainly Black and poor people displaced by Katrina; fighting so they can determine how their communities should be restored; the freezing of all Halliburton-type contracts to rebuild for profit; reinstating the prevailing wage under the Davis-Bacon Act; stopping the military recruitment of people of color and other poor youth to fight in wars for profits, like in Iraq.

Speakers at the town hall meeting will include Clarence Thomas, Brenda Stokely, Chris Silvera and Saladin Muhammad, all national leaders of the Million Worker March Movement; Nellie Bailey, Harlem Tenants Council organizer; author Jack Rasmus; Larry Holmes, Troops Out Now Coalition representative; and John Parker, International Action Center-Los Angeles.

The MWMM founding national D.C. rally a year ago brought together thousands of rank and file workers, the unemployed, immigrants, women, youth, anti-

war activists and LGBT people in a call for an independent workers' movement to demand universal health care, repeal of the U.S. Patriot Act, bring U.S. troops home now, the protection of Social Security and pensions and much more. The MWMM is based on the principle of workers speaking in their own name.

The Oct. 14 town hall meeting will take place at Local 639 Teamsters Local Hall, 3100 Ames Place NE, from 10 a.m. to 10 p.m. Call (510) 444-6272 for more information. □

Katrina conference calls December actions

By LeiLani Dowell
Beaufort, S.C.

A conference of Hurricane Katrina survivors and their allies from across the country was held here the weekend of Sept. 30. The meeting, convened by the People's Hurricane Relief Fund and Community Labor United, brought together about 100 people, including activists, community leaders and residents of the Gulf Coast.

Organizations present included Black Workers for Justice, Malcolm X Grass-

roots Movement, the Troops Out Now Coalition, the Million Worker March Movement, Friends and Family of Louisiana's Incarcerated Children, INCITE! Women of Color Against Violence and others.

Survivors expressed the horrors they had undergone as a result of government neglect of the region—before, during and after the hurricane. A pressing concern expressed at the meeting was finding the survivors who have been scattered across the country.

A significant outcome of the meeting

was the creation of a National Solidarity Committee for Gulf Coast Hurricane Survivors, which will provide support to survivors and organizers in the Gulf Coast. In addition, plans were made for a Dec. 9 summit of hurricane survivors to take place in the Gulf region, as well as a Dec. 10 march on New Orleans on International Human Rights Day. The march is to denounce the crimes against humanity committed by the U.S. government in the region, and to demand the right of return for all survivors. □



WE MUST TURN OUR OUTRAGE OVER KATRINA INTO A MOVEMENT

On the 50TH anniversary of Dec. 1, 1955—the day in Montgomery Alabama that Rosa Parks sparked the modern Civil Rights Movement

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POVERTY,
RACISM
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— Rosa Parks

Let us work together and organize a Rosa Parks anniversary nationwide strike against Poverty, Racism & War on Dec. 1, 2005, the 50th anniversary of the day that Rosa Parks helped launch the modern civil rights movement—not a traditional strike in the sense that it's called by organized labor (although it will have a lot of support and participation from labor unions, working people, and people looking for work), but like the protest that people like Rosa Parks and Cindy Sheehan started, a non-traditional and grassroots strike that involves massive numbers of people in every part of the country not going about business as usual and instead participating in protest, including a MASS MARCH ON WALL ST., NYC and continued protest through Dec. 2 and 3 to maximize the widest participation.

Fifty years ago, Black people in Montgomery, Alabama were forced by law to sit in the back of public buses, and give their seats to any white person who demanded it. When Rosa Parks, a garment worker and civil rights activist, refused to give up her seat to a white man, she sparked the Montgomery bus boycott against segregation on public buses, one of the most successful and truly mass boycotts in history. The Montgomery bus boycott also introduced to the world a young reverend named Martin Luther King Jr., who became the boycott's principal public leader.

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Behind Washington's political scandals

By Fred Goldstein

Oct. 4 — The flames of scandal are rapidly spreading wider within the Republican Party leadership and upward towards the White House, raising hopes and expectations that the arrogant, right-wing, reactionary regime that dominates Washington will suffer severe, if not fatal, political damage.

However far this scandal goes, it is the result of a loose and shifting coalescence of various forces within the capitalist class and the political establishment. For a variety of reasons, these forces want to open an offensive on the practices of the Bush administration and on the administration itself. It may never get there, but right now it has the flavor of the early stages of Nixon's Watergate scandal.

Beyond the specific political forces at play, Bush and the right-wing Republicans running Congress are so drunk with power that they have begun to antagonize important sections of the corporate ruling class.

The workers and the oppressed can learn a great deal from this struggle about the lavish corruption and the underhanded methods of the capitalist politicians and the corporations behind them. It may be possible to use these exposures in the struggle against the bosses. But this struggle is within the ruling class, over the spoils of office and at the same time over the practices and character of the regime.

'The Hammer' falls

At present, Tom "The Hammer" DeLay, the House majority leader, has been doubly indicted for conspiracy and corruption; Bill Frist, the Senate majority leader, is under investigation for insider trading; Jack Abramoff, a powerful, Republican-connected lobbyist with ties to DeLay, is under criminal investigation by a Senate committee, several government agencies and the state of Florida; David Safavian, Bush's chief of procurement for the Office of Management and Budget (OMB), is under arrest for obstructing an investigation of Abramoff; and the head of the Food and Drug Administration, Lester Crawford, has been forced to quit after two months for failing to report his wife's sizeable holdings in pharmaceutical industry stock.

In addition, reporter Judith Miller of the New York Times has testified before a grand jury investigating the exposure of Valerie Plame as a CIA agent. Plame was exposed by the Bush group in retaliation for her husband's exposure of administration lies about weapons of mass destruction. Miller's testimony concerned conversations with Vice President Dick Cheney's key aide, Lewis "Scooter" Libby. The affair raises the question of the involvement of Deputy White House Chief of Staff Karl Rove, Cheney and possibly George W. Bush himself.

Without a doubt progressive humanity, not only in the U.S. but all over the world, is profoundly gratified to see the public exposure of the venal corruption practiced by this high and mighty group of reactionary, hypocritical moralists, who preach freedom and democracy to justify their bloody occupation of Iraq and spout "family values" from the roof tops while lying, cheating and stealing without bounds.

Corrupt redistricting in Texas

DeLay has been indicted in connection with a corrupt scheme to get Republican control of the House in 2004. A Texas law declares it illegal for corporations to donate to political candidates. In 2002 DeLay got around this by getting Texas

corporations to donate to a group he set up, Texans for a Republican Majority.

He then sent \$190,000 from the group to the Republican National Committee. The RNC sent checks back to candidates in Texas running for the State House. The Republicans won a majority there for the first time in 40 years, after which they carried out a redistricting of Texas so as to gain five congressional seats.

Abramoff and his partner, Michael Scanlon, a former spokesperson for DeLay, are under investigation by the Senate Indian Affairs Committee, headed by Sen. John McCain, for taking \$66 million in lobbying fees from various Native nations and using much of the money for projects "ranging from an Orthodox Jewish academy to an Israeli sniper school; some money went to pay off a personal debt." (Bloomberg.com)

Abramoff's firm and Americans for Tax Reform, founded by Grover Norquist, a national Republican strategist with close ties to the White House, gave \$4 million to Ralph Reed, founder of the Christian Coalition, who managed Bush's Southern presidential election campaign and also has close ties to the White House. The money was to start a "Christian campaign" to whip up opposition to gambling casinos that were opposed by Abramoff's casino clients.

The McCain committee found that Abramoff and Scanlon had pocketed \$6.5 million of \$7.7 million given them by the Choctaw Nation in Mississippi. DeLay once called Abramoff "one of my dearest friends." Abramoff paid for three trips that DeLay took to an exclusive golf club in Scotland.

David Safavian, who was in charge of \$300 billion worth of procurement contracts for the OMB, was arrested for concealing an illegal, secret land deal that he had made with Abramoff. The deal was made in 2002 when Safavian was head of the Government Services Administration. Safavian has been a lobbying protégé of Abramoff and a partner with Norquist.

Frist's high-profile cheating

Frist is under investigation by the Securities and Exchange Commission and a federal court for insider selling of millions of dollars of stock in HCA, the largest private hospital corporation in the U.S. His father founded the corporation and it is run by his brother. After allegedly having the stock in a "blind trust" for 11 years, he suddenly sold weeks before the company issued a bad earnings report, causing the shares to drop by 14 percent.

Frist's high-profile cheating was so blatant that the SEC would lose all credibility if it did nothing—not to mention the anger it would face from the financial interests whose stock lost value once Frist unloaded.

The direct motives of the protagonists in this struggle are transparent. The Democrats want the Republican Party tarred with charges of being the party of corruption. McCain, a Republican who is a rival of Bush and has his own presidential ambitions, has made militarism and campaigns against corruption his political trademark. The McCain-Feingold bill was supposed to put a stop to limitless corporate spending during elections.

The Valerie Plame grand jury investigation is part of an old struggle between the multilateralists, who were opposed to going into Iraq without first building alliances with the other imperialist powers, and the "preventive war," unilateralist, Bush-Cheney-Rumsfeld-Wolfowitz forces. Joseph Wilson, who was the real target of the exposure of Valerie Plame,

was a 23-year career diplomat who served in the first Bush administration and was on the National Security Council in the Clinton administration.

He was clearly acting on behalf of the multilateralist faction of the ruling class when he exposed the Bush administration's lies about Saddam Hussein trying to get nuclear material from Africa. The investigation is scheduled to be concluded in October.

'Lobbyists are going crazy'

Elizabeth Drew, in a major piece entitled "Selling Washington" (New York Review of Books, June 23), presents a picture that sheds important light on the complex relationships between the ruling class and the Bush administration, with its right-wing Republican political machine.

Drew discusses the new aggressiveness of the lobbyists. She quotes a friend: "There are no restraints now; business groups and lobbyists are going crazy—they're in every room on Capitol Hill writing legislation. You can't move on the Hill without giving money."

She goes on to discuss the so-called K Street Project. K Street is where the lobbyists in Washington, D.C., have their offices. The K Street project is designed to drive Democrats out of the lobbying firms and replace them with Republicans, friends and former aides.

"The Republicans don't simply want to take care of their friends and former aides by getting them high-paying jobs; they want the lobbyists they have helped place in these jobs and other corporate representatives to arrange lavish trips for themselves and their wives, to invite them to watch sports events from skyboxes; and, most important, to provide a steady flow of campaign contributions."

Republicans want to have "like-minded people on K Street who can further the ideological goals.... When I suggested to Grover Norquist, the influential right-wing leader and the leading enforcer of the K Street Project outside Congress, that numerous Democrats on K Street were not particularly ideological and were happy to serve corporate interests, he replied, 'We don't want nonideological people on K Street, we want conservative activist Republicans on K Street.'"

When the Motion Picture Association of America hired Clinton's former secretary of agriculture, Dan Glickman, as its head, after having been warned by Republicans not to hire a Democrat, the Republicans removed a \$1.5 billion tax relief measure for the industry. Glickman wound up having to hire an aide to Dennis Hastert, the Republican House speaker.

The Investment Company Institute, a consortium of mutual fund companies, was told that if it fired its Democratic top lobbyist, a "pending congressional investigation of mutual fund companies 'might ease up.'"

Drew described how "business groups are under heightened pressure to support the administration's policies—even those that are of no particular interest to them." She recounted a Business Week article that told of how the Business Roundtable was summoned to a meeting with a special assistant to the president, various cabinet officers and Karl Rove. The Business Roundtable is made up of the CEOs of 160 of the top corporations in the U.S. They represent a vast concentration of capital.

"They anticipated a friendly give-and-take about economic legislation, but instead they were told to get behind the President's plan to privatize Social Security. As a result, these organizations have spent millions of dollars promoting Bush's

new program, particularly through ads. Business groups have been notably reticent about criticizing administration policies—even ones they deeply dislike, such as the huge budget deficit. In the past, when they differed on tax issues, they spoke out. An adviser to business groups says, 'They're scared of payback, of not getting their own agenda through.'"

Forgetting who's the master

Bush and the Republican right wing are giving the corporations huge breaks and benefits to serve their profit interests. At the same time, they are making heavy-handed demands for money and political obedience. This is something that the bourgeoisie does not take kindly to—especially from the politicians who are supposed to be their servants.

If the bosses want a Democrat on their payroll, for reasons of influence, they don't want to be told whom to hire—not by their own servants, the very politicians they have put in office. The bosses will give money in bribes to get what they want, but when those bribes take on a flavor of extortion, then it's a different story.

If the bosses are in a bad mood about being pushed around by the likes of DeLay, Sen. Rick Santorum—another K Street enforcer—and Norquist, that mood is made even worse when they have to put up with the kind of cronyism and incompetence that showed during the Katrina disaster in New Orleans.

The capitalist class, the oil companies, the shipping companies, agribusiness and all the industries that relied on New Orleans could care less about the fate of the African American people, the immigrants and the poor whites who suffered and are still suffering. But they do care about the blow to the process of capitalist exploitation and the profits lost during the floods and the ensuing chaos caused by disorganization.

Furthermore, the bosses have gone to great lengths to create and nurture the two-party system of capitalist politics. It gives them more options, depending on economic and social conditions. They certainly do not want to become excessively dependent on one current or grouping in any party.

The Democrats are now looking at this discontent in the establishment and are licking their lips, hoping that they can get back into a majority in 2006 and have a shot at the presidency in 2008. In other words, they can get their lobbyists back on K Street. The ruling class can go through them to get its legislation and its deals.

The real conspiracy of both parties is that carried out against the interests of the working class and the oppressed, who should oppose the corrupt right-wing reactionaries without running into the arms of the Democrats. The latter are just more slick in the way they support capitalist exploitation.

The Democrats have to fight the Republicans on grounds of corruption because they have no political program to help the masses. They are for the occupation in Iraq: "Stay the course" is their motto. They voted for the right-wing, racist, anti-abortion, anti-worker, pro-big business John Roberts for Chief Justice of the Supreme Court. They have done nothing to help the victims of Katrina and Rita. They just play politics and criticize.

Settling for a more subtle and restrained form of corruption and corporate influence under the Democrats will not serve the interests of the working class and the oppressed. Only independent political and mass organization for struggle can chart a way out of the present crisis. □

China, Cuba unite to fight disease

By Stephen Millies

The Chinese-Cuban Biotech Pharmaceutical Co. opened its Beijing factory on Sept. 28—the 45th anniversary of diplomatic relations between the two socialist countries.

Cuba was the first country in the Americas to recognize People's China, which it did shortly after its own 1959 revolution. Until then, U.S. pressure had prevented countries in this hemisphere from establishing normal relations with the People's Republic for over a decade.

According to the Cuban newspaper *Ahora*, this facility will produce the Theracim h-R3 monoclonal antibody to treat neck and head cancer. The German drug maker Oncoscience is also interested in this medicine.

Two days before the Beijing plant was opened, a vaccine factory using Cuban technology started up in China's northeastern Jilin province. In 1999, Cuba had donated over a million dollars worth of hepatitis B vaccines to areas in China that suffered floods.

At a time when people all over the world are concerned about a possible flu pandemic, this collaboration between Cuba and China to develop vaccines is great news.

Before 1949, Shanghai symbolized human misery under capitalism. Bodies of beggars who died of starvation were stacked on the streets.

Then, 56 years ago, on Oct. 1, 1949, Mao

Zedong declared "China has stood up." The People's Republic of China was born. Today Shanghai has a lower infant mortality rate than New York City.

On Sept. 23, 1965, Chinese scientists produced the world's first synthetic insulin. This was a boon for diabetics all over the world. Natural insulin was often in short supply.

It was extra special news for Cuba. The inhuman U.S. trade embargo of Cuba, inaugurated by President John F. Kennedy, was already in its fourth year.

Cuba was blocked from buying any medicine from the United States. The Soviet Union, which gave a great amount of other aid to Cuba, produced barely enough insulin for its own needs.

Pentagon war criminals devilishly calculated that if thousands of Cuban diabetics slowly died after being cut off from insulin, their families would turn against the revolution.

Forty years later the U.S. embargo of Cuba continues. But little Cuba has become a medical superpower that is now helping China.

Even according to the CIA's online World Factbook, Cuban babies are now more likely to live until their first birthday than infants in the United States. That's what socialist revolutions accomplish.

In the early years of the Cuban Revolution, four-fifths of the country's doctors had been lured to Miami. Czechoslovakia, which at that time was a socialist country,

trained a new generation of Cuban physicians. Cuban leader Fidel Castro paid tribute in a 1968 speech to this tremendous labor contribution by Czech, Slovak, Roma and Hungarian workers in Czechoslovakia.

The Cuban leader is now offering to send 1,586 doctors to help the survivors of Hurricane Katrina. George Bush—who let poor people, mostly Black, drown in New Orleans—is refusing Cuban or Venezuelan help.

Cuba became the first country on the planet to immunize its people against meningitis. At least 300 people die every year in the United States from this disease. Their deaths are directly linked to Washington's embargo on Cuban products. They could have been inoculated with the meningitis B vaccine developed by the Finlay Institute, one of 52 research institutes in Havana.

This scientific powerhouse is named after Dr. Carlos Finlay, who found that mosquitoes were the carriers of yellow fever. It was one of the greatest medical discoveries of all time, yet Finlay was passed over for a Nobel Prize. History textbooks in the United States usually ignore this Cuban scientist and give all the credit to vanquishing yellow fever to U.S. Army doctor Walter Reed.

Even with this rich scientific legacy, Cuba couldn't even produce a single aspirin when Fidel Castro and Dr. Che Guevara marched into Havana in 1959 at the head of the Rebel Army that overthrew the U.S.-supported dictatorship of Ful-

gencio Batista. Today the Caribbean country is able to make 80 percent of the medicines it needs. Cuban pharmaceutical exports are expected to reach \$300 million in 2005.

Twelve thousand Cuban scientists are working to fight disease. Then-Assistant Secretary of State John Bolton slandered them in 2002 when he charged they were developing "biological weapons." George W. Bush has appointed this liar to be his ambassador to the United Nations.

People's China has been virtually integrated into the capitalist world market, and the once remarkable equality there has suffered. Recently, however, the Chinese government announced it was cutting the price of 400 medicines by as much as 40 percent.

No capitalist government is doing any such thing, least of all the one that occupies Washington, D.C., where the very high infant mortality figures reveal the colonial relationship of the state to the majority-Black population in the city.

The Bush regime is as much a tool of the big drug companies as it is a front for Big Oil. Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld used to be head of the drug company G.D. Searle, whose assets now belong to Pfizer's pharmaceutical empire. It was pressure from Rumsfeld that got the Food and Drug Administration to approve Searle's artificial sweetener aspartame after it refused to do so for a decade because of health concerns. □

Why Sec'y of State Rice visited Haiti

By G. Dunkel

With the U.S. position in Iraq crumbling, with the recent visit to the Middle East of Under Secretary of State for Public Diplomacy Karen Hughes a howling flop, with the prestige and influence of Cuba and Venezuela in Latin America growing stronger daily, U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice decided to visit Haiti Sept. 27.

The purpose of her visit was to give legitimacy to presidential elections scheduled for Nov. 20—a difficult task, considering that her government forceably removed President Jean-Bertrand Aristide from the country in February 2004. Aristide had been twice elected with broad support from the people.

Haiti is by far the poorest country in the Western Hemisphere and ranks among the 10 poorest countries of the world. U.S. strategists in subversion think that spreading money around at election time can make things turn out in their interests.

However, Rice's office was so worried about security that it announced the visit just one day earlier. When her predecessor, Colin Powell, went to Haiti in 2004, many protesters turned out. Rice helicoptered from the airport to the presidential palace, which was under heavy guard by the UN Stabilization Mission (MINUSTAH) soldiers.

At a press conference she held with the illegitimate prime minister, Gérard Lator-tue, in the National Palace, Rice ambiguously referred to "technical problems" affecting the election. In order for there to be a transfer of power on Feb. 7, she said, "You have to have elections and there are successive elections

that have to take place. And so they are really in many ways ... just technical matters that need to be dealt with, like the registration of polling places."

While it is unlikely that Rice went to Haiti to deal with "technical" problems,

there are plenty that can be used as an excuse to postpone the vote. The firm producing identification cards for the election has delivered only 20,000 for the 2.5 million registered voters; another 70,000 are supposed to be delivered the first week of October.

Another problem is the lack of facilities. In Delmas, a poor suburb of the capital, the election office is in a garage, with piles of garbage and pools of stagnant water in the courtyard, and electricity is often out.

Even though the Provisional Electoral Council (CEP) had announced registration was closed as of Sept. 30, after Rice's visit it announced registration offices would be set up in rural areas and in communities like Bel Air, Cite Soleil and the Grand Ravine and kept open until Oct. 15. Some 2.5 million registered out of 4.5 million eligible to vote would not give the appearance of "legitimacy" the U.S. wants and needs.

When asked what was her "real" message to the de facto government currently in power, Rice replied, "These elections must be free and fair and inclusive." The CEP has already knocked 20 or so candidates for president out of the race, leaving 32, and hasn't even started winnowing the candidates for senator and municipal councils.

Rice's prepared opening remarks to the press conference concluded, "[T]hroughout history, people have fought for the right to vote. Some have indeed died for the right to vote. There is no more powerful weapon in the hands of a citizen than the vote. And so to the people of Haiti, I urge you to use that powerful weapon, the vote, in the days ahead."

Nothing could be more hypocritical, coming from a country that deposed Haiti's democratically elected president.

The Haitian people are very political, and understand that if the ruling class of the United States and what it calls the international community—countries like France and Canada—disapprove of or dis-

agree with the choice of the Haitian people, that choice will be replaced. In 1991, when the Haitian Army still existed, the U.S. used it to push President Jean-Bertrand Aristide into exile. In 2004, they used the U.S. ambassador's armed security detail to carry out the coup-napping of Aristide.

When Rice was asked about the U.S. attitude toward Aristide, she replied, "Well, in fact, the international community is of one mind that it would not be a good thing for Mr. Aristide to return. I think that is very clear. The Haitian people are moving on."

She never once called him President Aristide, or even ex-president. It was always "Mr. Aristide," even though he was twice democratically elected as president.

And that is the real reason why the United States government is so set on keeping Aristide out of power and out of Haiti. The Haitian people rejected the U.S. choice when they elected Aristide. There are signs that they are again rejecting the "selection/election/rejection" being planned. If so, the Bush administration will have suffered a serious political defeat and will not be able to legitimize its chosen agents in Haiti. □

Protests hit terror in Haiti



Los Angeles.

PHOTO: S. ROSS-RISDEN

In 40 cities around the U.S. and the world, rallies and marches on Sept. 30 protested the ongoing terror in Haiti and commemorated the 14th anniversary of the first U.S.-backed coup against President Jean-Bertrand Aristide.

In Los Angeles, with the eyes of two U.S. State Department officials upon them, organizers from the Coalition in Solidarity with Haiti, Global Women's Strike, ANSWER, International Action Center

and Haiti activists gathered at the Brazilian Consulate.

The demonstrators were able to force a representative from the Consulate to come outside to meet with them. A U.S. State Department agent insisted on standing directly behind the Brazilian for what they said was his "security," even though organizers assured them that this was a peaceful gathering and they just wanted to

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Have they really forgotten?

Except when it experiences a terrible disaster like last year's tsunami, the nation of Indonesia is seldom in U.S. news reports, even though it is now the fourth most populous country in the world since the breakup of the Soviet Union.

The indifference of the imperialist media notwithstanding, Indonesia is a very important country and is bound to rise to its rightful standing in the world.

It is in the news now because, on Oct. 1, three bombs are reported to have gone off in public places on the resort island of Bali, killing 22 people and wounding 90 more. The media and Indonesian authorities are linking these bombings to a series over the last three years that they attribute to Islamic groups. Little effort is made to enlighten the public on Indonesia's history other than to blame "Islamic extremism," the stock explanation given by the Bush administration and its allies for the unstable situation in much of the world today.

Most shocking about the current musings in the West on the situation in Indonesia is the total absence of memory about what happened on Oct. 1, 1965—exactly 40 years before the explosions in Bali.

None of the journalists and experts who come up with explanations for why things happen in the world seems to have noticed the significance of this date.

It was exactly 40 years earlier that the top command of Indonesia's military, with the urging and support of the Pentagon and the CIA, seized power from the civilian government and began a purge of the leftist, progressive and nationalist mass organizations in Indonesia. Thus began the rule of the dreaded General Suharto. For months, small stories appeared in the more world-focused newspapers in the U.S. tallying up how many had been killed.

By the time the massacres were over, diplomats and journalists who visited that country estimated that over a million people had been killed. The army had systematically gone from village to village, across 3,000 separate islands, and exterminated or imprisoned anyone who might oppose the takeover of this independent country by those who had hired on to serve Western imperialism.

By the early 1970s, as the progressive government of Salvador Allende in Chile was meeting resistance to its social

reforms from the oligarchy and U.S. corporations, fascists were spray painting a warning to Allende on the walls of Santiago: "Remember Jakarta." Eventually, CIA officials even bragged to a young U.S. journalist, Kathy Kadane, about how they had helped plan and organize the Indonesian coup, and she was able to get the story published in many U.S. newspapers.

So these same newspapers have no excuse for failing to note Indonesia's terribly violent past as they talk about the situation today. The island of Bali was the epicenter of that horrible bloodbath. This beautiful area saw 10 percent of its population killed; its graceful palms today cover the sites of many mass graves. Buried deep in the hearts of the people is the understanding that they are at war; that peace is just an interlude between armed conflicts.

Once the military had secured a firm grip on the country, they began selling its precious resources to Western corporations that had lined up for the feast. One of its resources then was its unspoiled forests and coastlines. The destruction of much of Indonesia's mighty rain forests to satisfy the insatiable appetite of the wealthy abroad for exotic hardwoods is one of the ecological disasters of the century.

Perhaps the current bombings have nothing to do with the memory of that fateful day in 1965 when the generals began their slaughter. It could be a coincidence. But one thing is clear: social tensions are rising in Indonesia today as the wealthy few, including those foreigners who come there to enjoy the luxury hotels, frolic on the beaches and sway to the nightlife, come up against the desperation of the many. Even those not so poor must suffer great psychological pain as they see their ancient culture degraded and even their people put up for sale as the dollar moves in and rules all.

The Indonesian Communist Party had been the largest CP outside the socialist bloc. It was decimated by the fascist coup, but the task it had accepted of expropriating the exploiters and elevating the masses of people to shape their own destiny remains on the historical agenda. The revival of such a revolutionary mass movement is the only thing that can defeat the violence of the oppressors and replace despair with hope that a new world is possible. □

Ojeda honored as liberation fighter

Since the assassination of independence fighter Filiberto Ojeda Ríos in his home in Puerto Rico by FBI snipers on Sept. 23, the progressive movement there and in the U.S. has responded with many protests, rallies and other actions. At a Workers World Party meeting in New York City on Sept. 30, two Puerto Rican members of the Party gave a historical overview of the island's long struggle for freedom. Following are brief excerpts from their very informative talks.

Filiberto Ojeda Ríos, Machetero!

Let us remember Filiberto Ojeda Ríos as one of the leaders in the fight for the liberation of Puerto Rico. With his actions he showed that it is not only a struggle for political independence, it is also a class struggle.

Filiberto was born on April 26, 1933, in Naguabo, Puerto Rico, and eventually became a trumpet player. However, he is probably best known as a founding member of the Puerto Rican Workers Revolutionary Party, which as an armed entity took the name of "Ejército Popular Boricua-Macheteros" (Boricua Popular Army). In a communique on Oct. 10, 1978, commemorating "El Grito de Jayuya" of 1950, they wrote:

"Our intention is to wage war against the Yankee invader and their proxies, who after 80 years continue trampling on our soil."

The most daring action of the Macheteros was probably on the morning of Jan. 12, 1981. About 10 U.S. jet fighters worth close to \$50 million were destroyed at the Muñiz Air Base in San Juan. This attack on the "Yankee National Guard," said a Machetero communique, was an "act of revolutionary solidarity" with the people of El Salvador, who were being slaughtered by a U.S.-backed military regime.

However, the capitalists seem to have felt much more hurt by the Wells Fargo robbery on Sept. 12, 1983, in Hartford, Conn., where \$7.2 million was liberated for the struggle.

On Oct. 30, 1983, the Macheteros launched an M-72 anti-tank rocket against the Federal Building in Hato Rey, aiming for the FBI office. This was done in "fraternal solidarity with the heroic people of Grenada," in retaliation for the U.S. invasion of Grenada some days before.

Among many other actions performed by the Macheteros was one in solidarity with the telephone workers' movement that tried to prevent the giveaway of Puerto Rico's telephone services to private hands.

The reaction of the people of Puerto Rico to Filiberto's assassination is to quote the popular phrase: "Todo Boricua Machetero." (Every Puerto Rican a Machetero.) Tens of thousands were in the funeral procession for Filiberto. At least once the caravan could not continue because of the multitude of people.

—John Ramírez



WWP's support for self-determination

On Sept. 23, 1868, the first recorded revolt in Puerto Rico against colonial occupation took place in Lares. This day [the same date as the FBI assassination] has symbolized the Puerto Rican struggle for self-determination, first against colonial occupation by Spain and then, after 1898, colonial occupation by the U.S.

We are kept impoverished by the U.S., which gives welfare incentives to corporations to come to the island tax-free and exploit our resources and our people.

Over 60 percent of our population lives under the poverty line. The most recent cowardly act of the U.S. government—to massacre in cold blood Filiberto Ojeda Ríos, leader of the Macheteros, the militant wing of the independence movement, has polarized the population even more by sharpening the contradictions of the colonial status.

In New York City, the unemployment rate for African-American men age 18-40 is 40 percent, for Latin@s is around 30 percent, and for whites is less than 10 percent. It means there is a class war against the working people of the U.S., regardless of race or creed, but the most marginalized are the people of color. How does the multi-national Workers World Party fit into this?

Since its founding in 1959, this Marxist-Leninist party has recognized the right for self-determination of any nation oppressed by U.S. imperialism. Some believe a nation has to have physical boundaries, like a geographical territory. We believe that a nation of peoples can live within another nation that is oppressing them. That allows the Party to recognize African-Americans as constituting a separate nation, as well as Puerto Ricans.

The Party has unconditionally supported each of these struggles against the oppressor through material aid, participation in protests, and printing each respective nation's information in the weekly paper.

Since its beginning, the Party newspaper has helped build mass actions against imperialism like the 1976 "Bicentennial Without Colonies" in Philadelphia, the Hartford demonstration to free Puerto Rican political prisoners in 1986, and the struggles in the U.S. and Puerto Rico to stop the U.S. Navy's use of the island of Vieques for bombing practice.

—Arturo J. Pérez Saad

ted against the people of Haiti, Iraq, Gaza and elsewhere and U.S. imperialism. She pointed to the leadership of Fidel Castro of Cuba and Hugo Chávez of Venezuela as examples of true world leaders, punctuating her speech with, "What we need is a GLOBAL revolution!"

After the rally 18 individuals were arrested for sitting down and blocking the

entrance to the Federal Building.

In Brooklyn, N.Y., Patizan Jezikri and the Committee Against Genocide in Haiti held a march and rally, starting with a mass for the victims at Holy Innocent Church. Speakers denounced the sham elections that exclude Aristide from running.

Maggie Vascassenno, J. Marquardt and G. Dunkel contributed to this article.

Protests hit terror in Haiti

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dialog with the representative.

It was obvious that the Brazilian representative was painfully embarrassed. His words were very measured and his main defense against charges that his government was assisting U.S. genocide in Haiti was "I'm not aware of these facts" and "Politics is very complicated." Nolutando Williams of the Coalition in Solidarity with Haiti, Sidney Ross-Risden of Global Women's Strike and John Parker from the International Action Center led the questioning of the consular official.

In San Francisco, 75 people rallied in front of the Federal Building in solidarity

with the Haitian people. Several speakers addressed the U.S. government's role in the Feb. 29, 2004, kidnapping of Aristide and the continued occupation of Haiti by foreign troops.

Pierre Labossiere from the Haiti Action Committee spoke of the sham elections campaign currently being forced upon the Haitian people, saying, "Haitians can run their own democracy and will NOT return to slavery."

Kelu, a former Black Panther Party member and currently fighting for the freedom of Mumia Abu-Jamal, spoke from her wheelchair. She made the connections between the atrocities commit-

Int'l conference says:

'Let Iraqis speak!'

By John Catalinotto
Rome

Anti-imperialist organizers from 15 European countries and elsewhere, including the United States, helped build solidarity between the anti-war movement and the Iraqi resistance at a working meeting held here on Oct. 1 and at a militant public rally the next day before a standing-room-only crowd.

The Free Iraq Committee of Italy, which organized the events, and its counterparts in other European countries aim at providing a platform in the "West" for authentic representatives of the Iraqi resistance to the U.S.-led occupation.

To move toward that goal, the working meeting decided to organize a European tour for Haj Ali al-Qaysi, the hooded prisoner of Abu Ghraib who has become a symbol of the brutal torture U.S. forces inflict on occupied Iraq.

A full-fledged conference had been planned for Oct. 1-2 in Chianciano, Italy, that would have allowed the Iraqi representatives to speak and have launched Haj Ali's tour. Representatives of six diverse civilian organizations active in Iraq who give political support to the armed resistance had accepted invitations to participate.

The Italian authorities, under pressure from the U.S. government, refused visas to the resistance spokespeople for reasons of alleged national security. They then used a bureaucratic maneuver at the last minute to deny a visa to Haj Ali, claiming he needed a six-month resident permit from Jordan, not the three-month one he had.

The Free Iraq Committee's struggle against these denials of democratic rights aroused sympathy and solidarity for the event from the Italian peace movement, rank-and-file union groups (COBAS) and many progressive individuals. The fight for these rights will continue to be part of the focus of the struggle to hold, as soon as possible, an important conference of that type either in another European country or in Italy.

Rally applauds resistance

Iraqis who live in Europe and support the resistance spoke at the rally. The key talk was by Awni al-Kalemji, spokesperson of the Iraqi Patriotic Alliance (IPA). To the cheers of the mostly Italian audience, al-Kalemji said that the U.S. had lost the military battle for Iraq and that in the end the Iraqis would defeat the occupation.

Al-Kalemji also spoke of the attempt to get in touch with the IPA's secretary, Abduljabbar al-Kubaysi, a leading political figure among the over 100,000 Iraqis held in 200 U.S.-run prisons in Iraq. Neither his family nor any legal representatives have been able to visit him, let alone to prepare his defense.

An international team of jurists and attorneys is protesting this illegal seizure of al-Kubaysi by the U.S. occupation forces, and is attempting to get access to him. Kawthar al-Kubaysi, his wife, was scheduled to speak at the Oct. 2 meeting but had to cancel to continue her attempts to reach her husband.

Another important speaker from the Arab countries was Abdulhaleem Kandil, a spokesperson of Kifaya (Enough) in Egypt. This group supports the Iraqi resistance and works in Egypt to extend the democratic rights of the people. There are, he said, 20,000 political prisoners under the pro-U.S. Mubarak regime in that country.

From the United States, the International Action Center participated on the presiding committee of the conference

and also described the recent upsurge in struggle in the U.S. following the "Camp Casey" actions and the reaction to Hurricane Katrina.

In addition, a student from San Francisco State College studying in Florence described her group's actions in stopping recruiting on campus.

Among the well-known personalities speaking at the rally was Giovanni Franzoni of the Saint Paul base community in Italy. Franzoni is a former priest and writer known for his contribution to Liberation Theology. Swedish author Jan Myrdal and French philosopher George Labica sent statements of solidarity.

Impulse for Italian movement

Leonardo Mazzei of the Free Iraq Committee read a statement that the delegations from 15 countries had agreed upon the day before. The goals included the strengthening of a network of groups in the various countries giving political support to the resistance; organizing a coordinated tour for Haj Ali; and going forward with the attempt to hold a conference in Europe like the one originally planned in Italy.

As the committee was making its report, the campaign had already made a big breakthrough in Italy itself. When the conference was first proposed, the Free Iraq Committee was isolated in the anti-war movement and got no favorable publicity, even in the left media. On Oct. 1, however, the independent leftist daily newspaper *Il Manifesto* ran a front-page story on the Italian government's refusal to grant a visa to Haj Ali.

The organizers said that this shift meant that the question of solidarity with the Iraqi resistance was now part of the discussion in the anti-war movement and among the political parties.

Catalinotto represented the International Action Center at the conference. □

Wal-Mart set back in Canada

The Quebec Labor Relations Board has ruled that Wal-Mart did indeed close its store in Jonquière, Quebec, in order to break the union there, a local of the United Food and Commercial Workers.

Meanwhile, in British Columbia, the Labor Board has just certified another UFCW local at a Wal-Mart Tire & Lube Express in Cranford. BC labor officials are considering applications for UFCW certification at two other Wal-Mart Tire & Lube Express outlets. Wal-Mart is challenging those applications.

Three stores in Quebec are bargaining with Wal-Mart for an initial contract. Under Quebec law, if a first contract is not reached, the Labor Relations Board has the right in some circumstances to impose one on both parties.

The UFCW has 20 active organizing campaigns against the giant U.S. retailer throughout Canada. These widely reported successes are going to be a big boost for all of them, even though Wal-Mart earlier managed to beat back two union-certification votes—in Quebec and Ontario.

UFCW Canada's national director, Michael Fraser, said in a statement that the union will continue to organize Wal-Mart employees. "Wal-Mart says that, given a chance to vote, their employees always reject the union," said Fraser. "Those days are over." □



WW PHOTO: JOHN CATALINOTTO

Awni al-Kalemji, spokesperson for the Iraqi Patriotic Alliance in Europe.

Making way for 'constitution' New U.S. offensives in Iraq

By John Catalinotto

Just as the month-long Ramadan fast was beginning, the U.S. Army opened a new offensive in the West of Iraq called "Operation River Gate." On Oct. 4, U.S. occupation troops began attacking the cities of Haklanija, Parwana and Haditha in Iraq's Anbar province.

According to reports from news agencies, combat aircraft and helicopters bombed areas the U.S. forces described as "possible hiding places for resistance groups."

Some 2,500 U.S. soldiers and several hundred Iraqis were involved in the assault. While the U.S. military reported that at least 57 resistance fighters were killed, local doctors reported that women and young children were among the dead.

Numerous explosions reportedly lit up the sky over the three cities, while cannon fire could be heard. Electricity went out in large areas of Haklanija. According to the Pentagon, bridges over the Euphrates in Haditha and Haklanija were destroyed in an attempt to keep resistance fighters from fleeing into the desert.

"Operation River Gate" is said to be aimed at wiping out resistance forces in the three towns in anticipation of the Oct. 15 referendum on a "constitution." This is a document drafted by the occupiers and tweaked by different elements among the collaborators. Though the attack was supposed to be a surprise, there were reports that the invading troops were hit by many roadside bombs.

Earlier in the week, on Oct. 1, some 1,000 U.S. soldiers carried out an offensive called "Iron Fist." Both offensives continued, but reports from the area said that most resistance fighters had slipped out of the area before the U.S. struck.

In an attempt to assure passage of the "constitution," the Iraqi puppet parliament passed a new law requiring that two-thirds of "registered" voters in three provinces would have to vote against the charter for it to be rejected.

At home, the Pentagon is still having trouble filling its quotas of new enlistees. According to a report in *USA Today*, some 73 soldiers in a special reserve program have refused to appear for wartime duty. Some have been absent for more than a year.

Lt. Col. Bryan Hilferty told the newspaper that the Army has chosen not to take action against them. "We just continue to work with them," he said, "reminding them of their duty." The soldiers belong to the Individual Ready Reserve (IRR).

To partly make up for the lack of soldiers, private companies are hiring "third-country nationals" to clean the areas where the troops are gathering. □

Wal-Mart, like many other big U.S.-based retailers, wants to expand in Canada because markets in the United States are saturated and expansion is more difficult. The North American Free Trade Agreement eased many restrictions on the movement of capital. But companies like Wal-Mart are finding that the anti-worker political atmosphere in the United States doesn't carry across the border. The working class movement is stronger there and faces less restrictions on organizing. □

Ataque terrorista del FBI en Puerto Rico Francotiradores asesinan héroe independentista provocando grito popular anticolonial

Por Tom Soto
San Juan, 27 de septiembre

El 23 de septiembre, mientras centenares de trabajador@s y sus familiares estaban participando en la conmemoración anual independentista conocida como “El Grito de Lares”, agentes de la Oficina Federal de Investigaciones (FBI por las siglas en inglés) descendieron en el pueblo de Hormigueros en la parte oeste de Puerto Rico y dispararon los tiros que mataron al héroe de la lucha por la liberación de Puerto Rico, Filiberto Ojeda Ríos.

El Grito de Lares, conmemora la sublevación histórica de 1868 que hicieron trabajadores y campesinos en contra de la dominación colonial española. Esa rebelión se considera el nacimiento de la nación puertorriqueña.

Agentes del FBI pertrechados con helicópteros, vehículos militares, ametralladoras y con las armas especializadas de francotiradores –con el apoyo de la policía de Puerto Rico que cerró carreteras regionales y calles conducentes al municipio rural de Hormigueros– rodearon el hogar de Filiberto Ojeda Ríos, de 72 años de edad, y de su esposa, Elma Beatriz Rosado.

Ojeda era el líder del Ejército Popular Boricua –Macheteros.

A las 4:30 de la tarde, en un asalto estilo militar, el FBI irrumpió en la propiedad rompiendo la cerca de entrada con un vehículo y disparando más de 100 balas que impactaron la parte frontal de la casa. Ojeda se defendió, dejando a un agente del FBI herido.

Rosado habla con los medios de comunicación

Elma Beatriz Rosado se dirigió a los medios de comunicación el 26 de septiembre. Mientras lo hacía, miles de partidarios daban la última despedida al cuerpo de su esposo en el Ateneo Puertorriqueño y luego en el Colegio de Abogados en San Juan.

“Filiberto, mi esposo, temiendo por mi vida, me pidió que saliera. Él le gritó a los agentes: ‘alguien va salir, alguien va a salir’. Nos besamos y abrazamos... Cuando finalmente salí de la casa,.... ellos intentaron obligarme a arrodillarme. Cuando rehusé, me tiraron al piso, me pillaron contra la tierra con sus rodillas y me esposaron con las manos a la espalda.

“Después, me vendaron los ojos y en ese momento sentí en mi corazón, supe, que lo iban a asesinar”. Cuando finalmente me llevan del lugar, Filiberto estaba vivo... Él le gritó a los agentes en varias ocasiones que estaba dispuesto a entregarse al periodista Jesús Dávila. ... El FBI miente. Ellos lo asesinaron.

“No fue hasta el próximo día por la tarde, cuando me sacaron de la cárcel, que me entero que Filiberto había sido vilmente asesinado. ... Sin embargo,

Filiberto Ojeda Ríos está más vivo que nunca en mi corazón y en el de todos los puertorriqueños”.

Rehúsan el acceso de doctores para Ojeda

En la tarde del 23 de septiembre, cuando las noticias del asesinato del FBI comenzaron a regarse, abogados, familiares, doctores, activistas del movimiento pro-independencia y representantes de los medios de comunicación intentaron llegar a la casa de Ojeda y Rosado, pero fueron repelidos por la policía y el FBI. Varios doctores que estaban cerca del lugar, habiendo oído que Ojeda había recibido un tiro ofrecieron su ayuda. El FBI les rehusó acceso.

En una de las calles que conduce a la casa, se acumuló una multitud que señalaba a los agentes del FBI gritando “Éstos son los asesinos”.

Durante los dos días siguientes casi todos sectores de la sociedad puertorriqueña, desde el Arzobispo católico, Roberto González Nieves, hasta Ricardo Santos, presidente del sindicato de electricistas, pasando por el ex gobernador Rafael Hernández Colón y Rubén Berrios, presidente del Partido Independentista Puertorriqueño, en un grado u otro públicamente criticaron o condenaron al FBI por matar a Filiberto Ojeda Ríos. Todos los mencionados fueron al velorio y expresaron sus condolencias a Rosado.

Hasta Tomás Rivera Shatz, presidente titular del Partido Nuevo Progresista (pro-estadidad) públicamente cuestionó el juicio de las acciones del FBI, aparentemente por razones políticamente oportunistas.

El 24 de septiembre, 29 horas después de haber invadido el hogar de Ojeda y Rosado, el FBI por fin anunció que lo habían matado. Su cuerpo fue transferido a la Unidad Forense del Departamento de la Policía de Puerto Rico.

Allí, cientos de personas se concentraron en las calles.

Protestas frente al edificio de la Corte Federal

Esa tarde en San Juan, una multitud se concentró en el Estadio Hiram Bithorn, pronto sumando unas mil personas.

Marcharon al edificio de la Corte Federal, coreando: “FBI fascistas, verdaderos terroristas” y “Filiberto camarada, tu muerte será vengada”.

Bajo presión popular, el Gobernador Anibal Acevedo Vilá mandó a que el Doctor Héctor Pesquera del Movimiento Independentista Nacional Hostosiano le fuera permitido presenciar la autopsia oficial.



El Dr. Pesquera anunció sus conclusiones a los medios de comunicación: “Filiberto Ojeda Ríos recibió un disparo cerca de la clavícula derecha. “El proyectil le penetró a la altura de la clavícula derecha, ingresó al pulmón y salió por la espalda, donde la bala se quedó alojada entre su espalda y el chaleco antibalas que llevaba puesto. No murió por

el fallo de ningún órgano comprometido por la herida. Murió porque lo dejaron desangrar.

“La razón porque el FBI no permitió a los doctores entrar a la casa es porque querían a Filiberto muerto. En mi opinión a Filiberto le disparó un francotirador y lo dejaron desangrar hasta la muerte—esto fue un asesinato por parte del FBI”.

El Dr. Pesquera fue uno de los doctores que intentaron sin éxito en la noche del 23 de septiembre ayudar a Ojeda cuando se enteró que había sido tiroteado por el FBI.

El 26 de septiembre, casi 1.000 estudiantes de la Universidad de Puerto Rico en San Juan, encabezados por la Federación Universitaria Pro Independencia, se apoderaron de la Torre Principal del campo universitario y quitaron la bandera de los EEUU, remplazándola con una pancarta enorme que llevaba el retrato de Ojeda. La inscripción leía: “Filiberto, sigues en el corazón del pueblo”.

Los estudiantes entonces procedieron a atacar a un restaurante Burger King como símbolo de la dominación corporativa de los EEUU en la isla. Marcharon a la Corte Federal donde quemaron la bandera de los EEUU mientras miraban policías federales armados con ametralladoras.

Reportaje amplio en los medios

Por varios días cada periódico, canal de televisión y estación de radio, especialmente los programas radiales en vivo, han estado reportando el asesinato.

Aún la Legislatura Puertorriqueña, dominada por el Partido Nuevo Progresista, el cual es pro-estadidad, pasó una resolución auspiciada por el Partido Independentista Puertorriqueño que demanda una investigación de la operación del FBI.

Los días 26 y 27 de septiembre delegaciones de todas las tendencias políticas que apoyan la independencia — incluyendo el Partido Nacionalista de Puerto Rico, el Partido Independentista Puertorriqueño, el Movimiento Independentista Nacional Hostosiano y el Frente Socialista — sirvieron como guardias de honor en el velorio y en el funeral. Entre ell@s estaban la legendaria Lolita Lebrón y tod@s l@s otr@s pres@s politic@s que fueron lib-

erad@s de cárceles estadounidenses y que habían sido miembr@s de las Fuerzas Armadas de Liberación Nacional y de Los Macheteros.

Desde todas partes de Puerto Rico, trabajador@s y sus familias han viajado a San Juan para ver y honrar al héroe asesinado. Había tanta gente y las colas de espera eran tan largas frente al Colegio de Abogados que se tuvieron que extender las horas de velorio. Muchas figuras culturales famosas como los cantantes Danny Rivera, Roy Brown, y muchas otras estaban presentes.

La contribución histórica de Ojeda

La conferencia anual del Frente Socialista, la cuál tuvo lugar el 25 de septiembre, fue dedicada a Ojeda.

Jorge Farinacci, portavoz del Frente, caracterizó la contribución histórica de Filiberto Ojeda Ríos de este modo: “Yo trabajé con Filiberto. En los años 60 Filiberto representó el Movimiento Pro-Independentista en su misión en Cuba. Filiberto vivió en Cuba y estuvo profundamente influido por esa revolución socialista.

“Filiberto no era solamente un líder nacionalista, era una persona con conciencia de clase y simpatizaba con la lucha de l@s trabajador@s por la justicia social y el socialismo. Le influyeron grandemente las luchas antiimperialistas de esa época, especialmente la lucha de liberación del pueblo vietnamita.

“En los años a finales de los 60, Filiberto fundó el Movimiento Independentista Revolucionario Armado. En 1976 Filiberto fue miembro fundador del Partido Revolucionario de Trabajadores Puertorriqueños (PRTTP), el cuál a su vez organizó Los Macheteros en 1978.

“Aunque él era humilde y sereno, era tenaz y valiente, y muy preparado respecto a todos los aspectos de la lucha armada. Él fue nuestro maestro. El FBI acusa a Filiberto de planear el ataque guerrillero que tuvo lugar en 1981 en el Base Naval Muñiz que destruyó 11 aeronaves militares que valían \$45 millones.

“Filiberto fue un luchador pertinaz por los oprimidos y como Don Pedro Albizu Campos antes de él, nunca reconoció la autoridad estadounidense en Puerto Rico. En 1990, enfrentándose a las acusaciones relacionadas al robo de la Wells Fargo en Connecticut, se cortó su brazalete electrónico y entró en el clandestinaje.

“Yo puedo declarar categóricamente que la protesta nacional llevada a cabo por su asesinato es un reflejo del vasto apoyo de las masas del pueblo puertorriqueño por las acciones heroicas de Los Macheteros.”

En la mañana del 26 de septiembre, los medios de noticias reportaron que la bandera estadounidense que usualmente está en el Capitolio en San Juan había sido remplazada por la bandera verde de Los Macheteros. □