

Camp out on Congress's doorstep to say No funds for racist occupation!

By LeiLani Dowell

An exciting lineup of events has been announced to directly confront Congress and its complicity in the wars at home and abroad. As Congress meets to vote on spending billions more on the war in Iraq, people from across the country will be participating in a week-long encampment at its doorstep.

An article in the Sept. 6 New York Times shows exactly why actions directly challenging Congress are so important. Entitled "Democrats Newly Willing to Compromise on Iraq," the article details the Democrats' newest double-cross of the anti-war voters who supported them in November 2006.

Rather than call for a spring deadline for the withdrawal of all troops—which in itself is unsatisfactory to a large part of the U.S. population who want all the troops removed immediately—a new proposal authored by Democratic Senators Carl Levin and Jack Reed would, according to the Times, "order the administration to begin pulling at least some combat troops

out of Iraq, probably by the end of the year." The article states that these senators believe that the compromises will somehow allow them to "keep pressure on President Bush."

Apparently the Democrats envision the continuation of the war, which will require troops to go back to Iraq after they have come home. A proposal that is being revisited by Democratic senators would require that troops can be returned to Iraq only after they have spent an equal amount of time in the United States.

Convergence of grassroots forces

Meanwhile, the multinational, anti-imperialist Troops Out Now Coalition (TONC) says in a recent statement: "As Congress debates Bush's new funding request, we must be there to let them know that ... [w]e cannot wait for more phony deadlines—we need to set a deadline and demand that the troops be brought home now."

TONC activists throughout the country have been busy mobilizing and planning for the Sept. 22-29 Encampment to Stop

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the War at Home and Abroad. Activities include the construction of a giant billboard, on the first day of the encampment, demanding "Congress: stop funding the war—fund peoples' needs."

Sept. 27 is being billed as "Stop the War at Home Day," in which Katrina survivors from New Orleans and their allies will protest the racism and neglect of the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA); and immigrant rights activists will denounce the raids and detentions by Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agents.

Youth and students have called for a day of action on Sept. 28. A statement explaining the action states: "Youth and students, from the U.S. to Iraq, are under-

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SEPT. 29

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in front of the Capitol—to demand Congress:
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Soon, Congress will be voting to approve nearly \$200 billion more for war in Iraq & Afghanistan—this time, don't let them

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Behind health care crisis: Drive for profits

This week ...



By G. Dunkel

Most press reports on the health-insurance crisis in the United States and the struggle to expand the States Children Health Insurance Program (CHIP) ignore its human costs. Some 47 million people, according to the Census Bureau, have no health insurance, and accordingly get sicker, suffer more and sometimes die unnecessarily because they lack assured access to health care.

Even for many who have health insurance, the co-pays—their share of the costs of care—can be so high that they have to forgo that care. Insurance companies also have hundreds of reasons for denying a claim, from calling the symptom a “pre-existing condition” to designating a treatment “experimental” or “out of network.” Insurers often deny legitimate claims routinely, expecting that many insured will not pursue the claim further.

Those with health problems are not the only ones who suffer from a lack of health insurance. Their families and society as a whole lose what these individuals would contribute, and often must devote resources to the patient’s care.

In addition, without insurance, someone whose condition could be treated cheaply in a doctor’s office must often visit a high-cost hospital emergency room instead. Someone’s stroke—caused by untreated high blood pressure—might have been avoided if the person had had access to relatively inexpensive blood-pressure medication. Post-stroke care, on the other hand, could cost hundreds of thousands of dollars, an expense that might need to be absorbed by a charity.

Health insurance was first offered in the U.S. during World War II as a benefit to attract workers, when employers couldn’t offer higher wages. Health insurance became a benefit of many jobs when the Internal Revenue Service ruled in the early 1950s that its costs would not be taxed as income.

More than \$2 trillion is spent for health care in the U.S. annually, or 16 percent of the U.S. gross domestic product. The Commonwealth Fund claims in its report “Mirror, mirror on the wall,” that, “The U.S. health system is the most expensive in the world, but comparative analyses consistently show the United States under performs relative to other countries.”

The report studied six countries—Australia, Canada, Germany, New Zealand, the United Kingdom and the U.S.—and asserts the U.S. ranks last. It goes on, “Most troubling, the U.S. fails to achieve better health outcomes than the other countries, and ... the U.S. is last on dimen-

sions of access, patient safety, efficiency, and equity.”

The Commonwealth Fund’s complete 2007 report can be found by going to commonwealthfund.org and then searching for “Mirror, Mirror.”

The U.S. population spends \$6,100 per capita per year on health care. In Canada, the country with the next most expensive system of the six studied, the figure is \$3,100. The people in the U.S., however, get miserable and misery-causing results. The question, then, is why does the U.S. keep the system it has?

The debate about the SCHIP program hints about the answer to this question. SCHIP provides health insurance to children whose families’ incomes are too high to qualify for Medicaid, but too low to afford private health insurance or for family coverage from an employer, coverage which can cost up to \$350 a month. Medicaid covers only extremely poor families.

The number of children without insurance is increasing. Both the House and Senate passed bills expanding SCHIP’s coverage and allowing states to include families whose income is as much as 450 percent of the poverty line; that is, families with annual incomes of \$82,000 and under qualify.

The White House reaction was brutally frank and anti-working class: “This bill essentially extends a welfare benefit to middle-class households,” stated the White House Office of Management and Budget. (Washington Times, Sept. 4) President George W. Bush repeatedly expressed his intention to veto any SCHIP bill based on the House or Senate provisions because it “clearly favors government-run health care over private health insurance.”

When it was clear that Congress would override any veto, the White House tried a run-around. Bush set regulations that would effectively make it impossible for states to expand their coverage.

Basically what the White House has done is preserve the profits that flow to the private insurance companies that provide health insurance. The Bush administration even ignored misuse of government funds by these companies. According to a congressional report, “Private insurance companies participating in Medicare have been allowed to keep tens of millions of dollars that should have gone to consumers, and the Bush administration did not properly audit the companies or try to recover money paid in error.” (New York Times, Sept. 9)

It is the capitalist drive for profits, the tremendous profits that arise from the \$2 trillion spent on health care each year, that keeps the health care system in the U.S. expensive and inadequate. □

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Next battle over Jena 6: Sept. 20

By Gloria Rubac

Thousands of people will converge on the small, rural town of Jena, La., on Sept. 20 to stand up for the Jena Six, six high school students fighting Jim Crow injustice in a case involving a schoolyard fight between Black and white students.

Last week charges were reduced for three of the Jena Six, but Mychal Bell, the only one of the six to be tried and convicted, will be sentenced on Sept. 20 and could still face 22 years in prison.

Chartered buses from around the country will assemble in nearby Alexandria during Sept. 20's pre-dawn hours and caravan the 45 minutes to Jena. Folks will gather at 7:30 a.m. at the LaSalle Parish courthouse square to prepare for an 8 a.m. march. At 9 a.m. court proceedings will begin.

The case of the Jena Six has drawn nationwide support from progressive activists, civil rights leaders, community organizers and trade unionists. Celebrities, radio talk show hosts and comedians are joining in and the population of Jena

could easily double on Sept. 20. Rev. Al Sharpton, Rev. Jesse Jackson and Martin Luther King III will be there.

Racism in Louisiana has been a constant for centuries but this case of the Jena Six began last fall when Black students at the high school sat under a "white" tree during lunch. The next day there were three nooses hung in the tree. The responsible students were first suspended, but the superintendent of schools let them back in school, characterizing their actions as a childish prank.

Tensions escalated. The district attorney visited the school accompanied by police and told the Black students to stop their protesting or he could take their lives away with the stroke of his pen.

In the ensuing weeks and months, there were fights and skirmishes initiated by white students, including an incident where a gun was drawn on Black students at a convenience store in town.

Then last December, after another fight, a white student was taken to the hospital and later released. That's when the six

young men were charged with "attempted murder." No one brought charges against the white with the gun at the convenience store, though he actually had a weapon.

Each of the six—Curwin Jones, Mychal Bell, Theo Shaw, Bryant Purvis, Robert Bailey Jr. and an unnamed juvenile—was charged with attempted second degree murder and conspiracy to commit a crime.

When this happened, most people had never heard of Jena, which has only 3,000 residents. The small Black community of 300 people felt vulnerable and isolated. Bail was high and the students sat in jail.

But the word of this case got out and began to spread. Support started building. Lawyers began to volunteer to defend the young men. When Bell was to have been sentenced on July 31, more than 300 people came to Jena even though the sentencing had been postponed.

Last month, the Rev. Al Sharpton and Martin Luther King III traveled to Jena to visit the imprisoned Mychal Bell and to pray with Bell and community leaders.

A national conference call just took place with people from over 30 cities in on the call. The NAACP in Detroit is chartering a bus. The Millions More Movement in Houston has three buses reserved with vans as backup. United Auto Workers and postal workers unions are renting buses and car caravans are being planned throughout the South.

People will converge on Jena on Sept. 20 to demand freedom and justice for the Jena Six. □



'No business as usual'

NYC protest against police terror

On Sept. 11, the sixth anniversary of the attacks on the World Trade Center, hundreds of activists took to the streets of Manhattan against the omnipresent terror of the New York Police Department, which targets people of color on a daily basis, especially if they are Black and Latin@.

The Brooklyn-based December 12th Movement called the "Day of Outrage" protest to highlight police brutality in general and in particular the case of a 23-year-old Black man, Sean Bell, who was shot multiple times and killed by the NYPD last November on the eve of his wedding.

The other important cases highlighted at the demonstration involve Michael Tariff Warren and Evelyn Warren, both Black lawyers. They were both physically assaulted and then arrested for verbally coming to the defense of a Latino youth being brutalized by the NYPD in Brooklyn this past summer.

Protesters demanded that the charges be dropped against the Warrens along with justice for Sean Bell, the Jena Six in Louisiana and other victims of police frame-up and abuse.

Before the march, the group held a rally near Madison Square Garden. D12 leader Viola Plummer chaired and introduced Fred Hampton Jr., son of martyred Black Panther leader, Fred Hampton; Black City Councilperson Charles Barron; and Larry Holmes from the International Action Center, among other speakers.



The marchers took to the streets, stopping traffic during afternoon rush hour. They then proceeded to busy Herald Square, rallied in front of the Empire State Building and finished up at Macy's. During the march,

protesters chanted, "Whose streets? Our streets," "Black power," "Self-determination, self-defense" and "Power to the people."

—Report and photos by Monica Moorehead

Crash victim beaten after cops collide with car

By Sharon Danann
Cleveland

An incident involving mistaken identity turned into a grotesque nightmare for an innocent young Black man here in Cleveland on Aug. 24. The event is part of a continuing pattern of police abuse targeting the Black community, particularly youth.

Cleveland police chased a suspect into neighboring Warrensville Heights at 2:30 a.m. on Aug. 24 and lost control of their vehicle. The police car hit the median, jumped over it, crashed into a car and finally hit a pole 50 feet down the road. Both of the cops were badly injured. The suspect had fled.

The car the police hit flipped on its side. The driver of that car was Namir Spratt and he happened to be young (23) and Black. He too was injured. He managed to crawl out of the sun roof of his car. At about that time police reinforcements were arriving from Cleveland and Warrensville Heights.

The story of what happened next was not published in Cleveland's corporate

newspaper, the Plain Dealer. Only the Call and Post, a weekly newspaper oriented to the Black community, published the story.

According to Spratt, the late-arriving cops not only handcuffed him, they punched him, hit him and jabbed him in the ribs with their nightsticks. Spratt states that the officer "told me that they hoped I die. They said I killed two cops and that

they should kill me. One of the cops pulled a gun in my face and said that he ought to kill me 'right now.'" (Call and Post, Aug. 29)

The abuse continued until two Black Cleveland cops arrived and shielded Spratt. They also called for Emergency Medical Service for Spratt. EMS had only been alerted to the injured police up to that point. At the hospital Spratt was diagnosed with a punctured liver and a

ruptured spleen.

The original suspect was apprehended several hours later. The injured police are still in the hospital, one with serious head and face injuries and the other with a fractured knee and pelvis.

Spratt's family is now being represented by attorney George Forbes, president of the Cleveland NAACP and former Cleveland City Council member. □

Sheriff's deputies indicted in inmate death

By Sharon Danann
Akron, Ohio

A Summit County, Ohio, grand jury indicted five sheriff's deputies on Sept. 7 in connection with the August 2006 death of inmate Mark McCallaugh Jr. The medical examiner ruled the death a homicide caused by asphyxiation from multiple forms of restraint and blows. McCallaugh was 28.

The indictments are similar to the lawsuit filed last month by McCallaugh's fam-

ily against over a dozen deputies and jail medical staffers. Through their attorney, his parents have stated they believe that excessive force was used to subdue their son.

McCallaugh, who suffered from mental illness, was arrested Aug. 8, 2006, and charged with assaulting an Akron police officer. While in custody on Aug. 20, 2006, he became agitated and slashed his wrists. It was then, according to both the special prosecutor and the lawsuit, that the deputies went out of control.

McCallaugh was restrained by both his wrists and ankles, hit repeatedly with a stun gun, and sprayed with pepper spray. He was also beaten. The autopsy also revealed an unspecified anal injury.

The deputies will be arraigned Sept. 11 on charges ranging from: murder, for the ranking deputy; reckless homicide, for two other deputies; and felonious assault for the remaining two deputies. In a country where police brutality seldom is punished, this is unusual. So is the fact that the victim in this case, McCallaugh, was white. □

What next after auto contracts expire?

Workers need long-term perspective to struggle

By Martha Grevatt

Contracts between the Big Three auto makers and the United Auto Workers union expire Sept. 14. On Labor Day weekend, although UAW President Ron Gettelfinger had a huge audience of UAW members available, he gave no speeches at all. As of Sept. 11 workers have received no orientation whatsoever from the UAW as to how negotiations are progressing or what to expect in the next contract.

Who is Gettelfinger talking to? On Sept. 6 he addressed the bosses' forum, the Detroit Economic Club, where he has become a frequent speaker. There he built up a case for a national health care system.

This in and of itself is a progressive demand and sorely needed by the nearly

fifty million uninsured people in the U.S. In the context of the current negotiations, however, the effect of the comments is to let the bosses off the hook for providing health insurance to workers and retirees.

For decades there has been an understanding that the companies are obligated to provide these benefits. Now Gettelfinger's position implies that the companies aren't responsible for the failure of the government to provide health care and that the companies shouldn't face an unfair cost disadvantage with their foreign competitors. Thus the union should help the companies find a solution.

This is a dangerous outlook that leads to the establishment of a VEBA—Voluntary Employee Benefits Association. Under a VEBA, the companies make a one-time

lump sum contribution towards health benefits costs. After this lump sum, the auto makers would be free of all future obligations for health care.

For the union to accept a VEBA is a risky strategy that could see workers' benefits cut or even lost. The VEBAs established at Caterpillar and at Detroit Diesel, two firms with workers represented by the UAW, are now broke.

Other comments made in Gettelfinger's speech should add to rank-and-file unionists' concern. On the catastrophic loss of a decision—as a nation—that we are not particularly concerned about manufacturing jobs. Other nations treasure their manufacturing industries, and develop policies to nurture and support them. We don't."

Really? Doesn't "we as a nation" include workers who care deeply about keeping their jobs? It's only the minority ruling class that profits from shifting work to low wage countries—they make the decisions to close more and more plants. There is no "democratically elected" layoff.

Yet regardless of what their leaders are saying and to whom, workers are starting to see the companies' game plan for what it is. The Sept. 10 Detroit Free Press quotes a 37-year Toledo Chrysler employee, Dan Petersen:

"I think they've got psychiatrists and psychoanalysts on staff," Petersen said. "For the last couple of years, they put a little snippet in the paper here and there. ... After people read that for a while, they get it in their head 'I'm going to have to take something.' I really think they play with your mind over a period of time"

Now the attitude of the workers toward the companies and their union leaders may be one of "you can't fight City Hall." Yet if the rank and file need to find independent forms of organization to fight for their right to jobs, pensions and health care, they will do so. A recent article in the Detroit Free Press mentioning Soldiers of Solidarity—a rank-and-file organization of UAW members that wants to struggle—led to 13,000 hits on the group's web site.

An international fightback conference, even if called after the contracts are settled, could unite all the workers facing layoffs, foreclosures, loss of pensions, deportations and a whole host of economic attacks. This could spur a grassroots movement that could raise the level of class consciousness and snap the ideological fetters of class collaboration.

History suggests that such a break is inevitable. In March of 1937 William Green, president of the conservative craft union, the American Federation of Labor (AFL), made a point of denouncing the sit-down strike tactic and declaring it illegal. That year there were 477 recorded sit-down strikes, the most powerful action taken in organizing the industrial unions.

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Remembering the innocent



Shaka Sankofa, Frances Newton and Joseph Nichols—they were three innocent people sent to death row by the Houston district attorney, all African Americans, all executed and all buried in the same humble cemetery in northwest Houston. Their families, friends and anti-death penalty activists gathered at the cemetery on Sept. 9 to

honor and remember them. After an opening that included the African tradition of the pouring of libations and an indigenous dance and drumming, those who came visited the graves and shared remembrances. They then laid a dozen long-stemmed roses and sprigs of fresh rosemary on each grave.

—Report by Gloria Rubac

Long lines show taxi strike's success

By Workers World
New York bureau

The New York Taxi Workers Alliance (TWA) carried out a two-day strike in New York City Sept. 5 and 6. While billionaire Mayor Michael Bloomberg and the New York Times attempted to minimize the impact of the strike, anyone familiar with traffic here without a reason to lie about it could tell that there were far fewer cabs on the roads of New York City during the strike.

Bhairavi Desai, the executive director of the TWA, said that 90 percent of the drivers honored the strike.

According to the Associated Press, the strike caused disruptions at times in midtown Manhattan and for arriving passengers at LaGuardia and John F. Kennedy international airports in Queens. Since it was during Fashion Week, the foreign press picked up some stories on the strike.

"The numbers can be spun as much as the opposition wants, but the reality is, the waiting lines speak for themselves," said Desai.

The strike's main issue was the Taxi



WW PHOTO: G. DUNKEL

Driver Loabon Duclair wants 'dignity and respect,' above. At right, Shahid family.

and Limousine Commission's insistence that taxis use a Global Positioning System (GPS) device. This GPS would not give directions but would be tied into the taxi's meter and let the TLC track the cabs in real time. Cabs would also have to put in a credit-card reader and drivers would have to pay 5 percent of charges to the credit card company, the GPS company and the owner of the cab.

Cab owners have also increased the weekly rent on their cabs by \$30, claiming this was needed to pay for this new technology.



Workers World spoke with Loabon Duclair, a driver for 10 years, who was picketing at Penn Station in midtown Manhattan. Duclair, originally from Cayes in Haiti, said: "This strike is about dignity and respect. Drivers do not receive what we deserve. There's no reason to live without respect, and politicians do not consider cab drivers to be human beings."

The TWA, which is an association, not a union, had nevertheless joined the New York City Central Labor Council in March

and got a significant amount of support from the local unions during the strike. TWU Local 100 gave space in their building for a strike headquarters and the PSC/AFT 2334, which represents faculty and professional staff at the City University, got members out to join the TWA's picket lines.

Desai said that if the city government does not modify the deal it is trying to impose on the drivers, there will be further job actions. □

Truth Commission debunks Columbus myths

By Denver FIST

Colorado AIM and the Transform Columbus Day Alliance held a two-day Truth Commission in Denver on Sept. 8-9 as Colorado gears up for the 100th year since it began celebrating Columbus Day and as activists mobilized to oppose to the iconization of the slave trader and mass murderer.

Colorado held its first statewide celebration in 1907. The Transform Columbus Day Alliance has been protesting the holiday since 1989 and won a slight reprieve from further injury of Indigenous people through the celebration in 1992, some 500 years after Columbus led the European invasion of the Western Hemisphere.

However, the fete's organizers have continued to rebuff a dialogue with community leaders. State officials have refused to step in and stop officially celebrating a man who was responsible for the deaths of 80 percent of the original inhabitants in the Caribbean—the Taíno people.

Even the most conservative estimates of the population of Indigenous people say that the Caribbean islands were inhabited by 8 million people before 1492, this according to Shelburne Cook and Woodrow Borah's "Essays in Population History" Vol. I, Chapter VI. By the time Columbus left the Caribbean in 1500, due to his policies, which included setting up a slave system (encomienda), and to practices such as cutting off the hands of Taíno people who did not meet a quota of gold, the population had been decimated. (Transformcolumbusday.com)

'Who can believe it?'

Even Bartolomé de Las Casas, who arrived with Columbus, wrote of the savagery in his "History of the Indies": "There were 60,000 people living on this island [when I arrived], including the Indians; so that from 1494 to 1508, over 3 million people had perished from war, slavery and the mines. Who in future generations will believe this?"

Iraq war: What's Marx got to do with it?

By Caleb T. Maupin
Berea, Ohio

Fred Goldstein, a leader of Workers World Party, spoke at a meeting at Baldwin-Wallace College on Sept. 7 on "The War in Iraq: What does Marx have to do with it?"

"Marxism is a science and a method. Some in academia see it as something interesting to study and write about. We in Workers World Party see it as a tool in the hands of the oppressed." Goldstein, standing in front of a huge banner reading, "Stop the War," told an audience of Cleveland Area Activists and Baldwin-Wallace Students.

The FIST (Fight Imperialism, Stand Together) club of Baldwin-Wallace College sponsored the event, with the space provided by the political science department.

Attendees of the event included people from the World Can't Wait organization, supporters of the International Bolshevik Tendency, students from Case Western Reserve University, as well as Workers World Party and FIST members, and B-W students and faculty.

Goldstein's talk laid out the basic reasons that Marxists are in opposition to the war in Iraq. He covered the history of bloody U.S. interventions on behalf of the bankers and capitalist class, as well as

The Truth Commission took testimony from many leaders in the Indigenous community. George E. (Tink) Tinker, an Indigenous professor at the Iliff School of Theology, testified about the actual population of the Caribbean and the long history of undercounting, so as to make colonization seem less brutal than it was. Mark Sanderfer gave the actual history of Christopher Columbus—who, before getting lost trying to find a new route to Asia, was a slave trader who brought West Africans to Portugal.

Portugal was the first European country to begin the kidnapping and murdering of West African people for the purpose of enslaving them.

Larry Hales of FIST testified about Christopher Columbus and his legacy's impact on African people brought to the Americas. As the policies of Christopher Columbus led to the almost complete annihilation of the first people in the Caribbean, the colonizers then turned to the mass importation of African people to the Americas to provide slave labor.

According to the Web site africawithin.com, "The creation of the plantation system in the Americas and the Caribbean Islands set in motion a way of life for Europeans that they had not previously enjoyed. This way of life and the exploitation of the resources of the Americas and the Caribbean Islands, after the destruction of the nations and civilizations of the people referred to as 'Indians,' renewed the economic energy of Europe and gave Europeans the ability to move to the center stage of what they refer to as world progress.

"This was done mainly at the expense of African people, who are still not thoroughly aware of their impact on every aspect of world history. Education for a new real-

ity in the African world must train African people to understand the nature of their contribution to the different aspects of world history, past and present, and the possibilities of their future contribution."

Glenn Morris testified about the legacy of Columbus on Indigenous people and what it means today, as U.S. imperialism aggressively targets poor workers around the world for highly exploitable labor and to steal the resources underneath their feet.

Ultimately, Morris said, the Doctrine of Discovery is a thin veil for white supremacy. As European nations were competing with one another for riches, they were able to share in an ideology that exerted their superiority over darker people around the

world. This doctrine was used to validate the mass murder of people for profit and the enslavement of them. It continues to do so today, said Morris, as there has never been a dialogue around the colonization of the Americas and slavery and how the U.S. was born into the world dripping with blood from head to toe.

The Truth Commission, just like the International Tribunal on Hurricanes Katrina/Rita, provided the true history of people. As the struggle to stop imperialist wars abroad and the war against the oppressed and workers in the U.S. intensifies, this truth becomes increasingly more important and provides the history that will inundate the lies of the oppressors. □

PHOTO: MELISSA KLEINMAN



From left, George (Tink) Tinker, Natsu Sato, Glenn Morris and Larry Hales.

Raleigh FIST tells truth about Cuba



By Raleigh, N.C., FIST

Three members of Raleigh, N.C., FIST (Fight Imperialism-Stand Together) speaking at a Sept. 8 meeting shared a life-changing experience with their community. Tyneisha Bowens, Yolanda Carrington and Dante Strobino were members of the FIST delegation that traveled to Cuba earlier this summer. Joining the Venceramos Brigade and Pastors for Peace, FIST openly challenged the U.S. travel ban on Cuba.

After returning with a firsthand view of contemporary socialism, the young revolutionaries sat down with members of their local community to discuss the tremendous gains of the Cuban revolution.

About 15 community members attended the report back that centered on the travelers' education on the reality of Cuba and socialism. The three discussed various places they visited and described the people they met and their experiences

during their seven-day trip. The emphasis of the report back was on the progressive social programs and government agencies that have changed the racial, sexual and economic climate since the triumph of the Cuban revolution in January 1959.

Carrington and Bowens, both women of color, described their experience in Cuba as their first experience with an anti-racist and anti-sexist society. They discussed their experiences with various Cuban institutions, including meetings with the Young Communist League (UJC), the Cuban hip hop agency and the Center for Sexual Education in Havana. Speaking about these aspects of the trip led to a dialogue on Cuba's inclusive educational system, universal health care and the Cubans' political and social unity.

Raleigh FIST is planning another report back in October in hopes of continuing to spread the accurate and unbiased truth about the reality of Cuba. □

Solidarity with Katrina survivors

To mark the two-year anniversary of Hurricane Katrina, when the world witnessed devastation in the states of Mississippi, Alabama and Louisiana, members of the Women's Fightback Network, Workers World, Troops Out Now Coalition, Boston Workers Alliance and friends gathered in Boston Aug. 29. They spoke out against the atrocious inactions of the federal government in its response to the impact of Katrina/Rita on the Gulf Coast region.

The images of destruction, pain and loss called for all of us to reach out and offer support to our sisters and brothers. From Lower Ninth Ward to Lower Roxbury, we firmly believe that we've all been Katrina-ized, which means that poor and oppressed people of color are treated as less than human. As a group, we wanted to stand in solidarity with the Katrina Tribunal, which was happening in New Orleans, by organizing a speak-out in the streets of Lower Roxbury.

—Mia Campbell & Jonathan Regis,
event organizers



WW PHOTO: LIZ GREEN

Cop charged in immigrant's killing

By Kathy Durkin

Last April 28, René Javier Pérez, stricken by stomach pains, dialed 911 from a Mount Kisco, N.Y., laundromat. That was his last phone call.

Police officers George Bubaris, Edward Dwyer and Lt. Edward Dunnigan responded to Pérez's call. One hour later, a passing carload of food industry workers found Pérez unconscious and near death six miles away on Byram Lake Road, an isolated dirt road in nearby Bedford. He died a few hours later at Westchester Medical Center.

The county medical examiner, after performing an autopsy, ruled that Pérez's death was a homicide, caused by severe internal abdominal injuries. (New York Times, Sept. 9)

Anival Javier Pérez immediately demanded an investigation into his brother's death and to know who was responsible. He vowed, "What I want is justice, because he had a family. ... He was a person." (The White Plains, N.Y., Journal News May 10)

After four months of pressure by Pérez's family and Latin@ leaders, on Sept. 6 Westchester County Court announced that a grand jury had indicted and charged George Bubaris, a Mount Kisco police officer and former member of the New York City Police Department, with second-degree manslaughter, unlawful imprisonment and other charges in Pérez's death. The two other officers were not charged.

Immigrant communities and their supporters throughout the U.S. were outraged and remain so.

'A racist attack'

"The Latino community sees this as a racist attack on a Latino worker. The police should have brought René Javier Pérez to the hospital and called an ambulance. They had no right to beat him and kill him. They had no respect for his rights," said Walter Sinche, a leader of the

May 1st Immigrant Rights Coalition in New York City.

"People come here from poor South American countries to work. Many live where Pérez did. If they're homeless, they're considered criminals. If they're undocumented, they often are sent back to their countries.

"Here, justice has only been served halfway. Other murders in that town should be investigated. We hope it'll be an example and stop the racist attacks there. We demand total justice for Pérez."

Anival Javier Pérez has filed a federal civil rights lawsuit seeking damages against Mount Kisco, Bedford and George Bubaris for violating his brother's civil rights because he was Latino. He charges that both villages had a practice of "dumping" Latin@ immigrants into the other's district.

This lawsuit, filed by attorney Jonathan Lovett, says in part, "Border dumping, as routinely practiced by Bedford and Mount Kisco by means of its police officers, intentionally targets male Hispanics of Guatemalan national origin who members of the police departments in both jurisdictions believe should not be permitted to enter into and/or remain within their respective municipalities," (Journal News, May 25)

Anival Javier Pérez, who has taken a courageous stand, now fears retaliation.

Mount Kisco is touted as an idyllic "family town" of 10,000 residents with luxurious houses, schools and lawns. It is viewed as the "commercial hub" of northern Westchester, rife with professionals and farm owners reeking of wealth.

But Mount Kisco is actually two cities. The reality for one-fourth of the population who are Latin@s, many immigrants from Guatemala, is of another city entirely, of struggling families, of day laborers trying to get work, of the daily threat of immigration authorities, police repression, racist harassment and abuse.

This village has a long, sordid history

of anti-immigrant discrimination. A slew of lawsuits have been brought in recent years opposing biased housing codes and harassment of day laborers who are seeking employment. These have won some legal protections.

But despite the legal rulings, day laborers still face regular harassment by racist police. They are routinely picked up by cops and dropped off in remote areas, so they get lost. They have little, if any, legal recourse against abuse by state or city officials or employers. They are financially exploited, are paid very low wages and have difficulty obtaining housing and medical care.

Mysterious deaths of Guatemalan immigrants

There have also been other mysterious deaths of Guatemalan immigrants, four since 2000: José Manuel Soto, age 20; Carlos Rodríguez, age 36; Santos Bojorguez, age 33 and Robert Martínez, 42. Two of the deaths were labeled homicides. All are unsolved, despite requests by Latin@ activists to investigate and find those responsible.

Manuel Ochoa, who knew Pérez and is a day laborer in Mount Kisco, told The Journal News that "so many people from our country, from Guatemala die, and it's just forgotten about." (Sept. 7)

The strong arms of the Bush administration and its anti-immigrant agencies have reached deeply into Mount Kisco with their racist program, and in the process given the police even more of a green light to terrorize and abuse Latin@ workers.

In March, the Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), together with the Mount Kisco Police Department, raided two apartment buildings housing immigrant families. They arrested 20 workers, detained them in ICE facilities and charged them with breaking immigration laws. Eleven face deportation. (nylegalblog.com)

René Javier Pérez emigrated to the U.S., along with thousands of other Guatemalans, from the Chiquimula region. They came in the last two decades, forced to leave their homeland by extreme poverty and the difficulty of supporting their families. Their aim has always been to find jobs so that they can send financial aid back home to their loved ones.

One million Guatemalan people have emigrated to the U.S. to work. In just the last year, they have sent \$3.6 billion in remittances to their relatives at home.

But the earning of those crucial funds necessitates huge sacrifices by those who come here, the first of which is leaving their loved ones, maybe never to see their families or homeland again. Then they face dangers in crossing the border, only to live with the constant fear of immigration authorities, detention and deportation once they succeed in crossing.

The jobs open to them are often back-breaking, dangerous and seasonal. Many must face racist harassment and the danger of physical abuse by police and other right-wingers. Many risk their very lives.

It takes great courage and determination to help their families living this tough and perilous life.

René Javier Pérez left his wife and baby 15 years ago to find work in New York State to help them survive. His life in Mount Kisco was very difficult, marked by poverty, homelessness and constant police harassment.

Yet by working as a day laborer, he always sent money back to his family up until his death. His now-15-year-old daughter had never met her father, although he sent her money for a cell phone so she could call him. Now she will never know him.

René Javier Pérez, though, will not be forgotten by the millions of immigrant workers in this country and their supporters, who will stand up and loudly demand justice for him. □

Bush, Blanco, Nagin named

Tribunal judges find 'crimes against humanity'

The following are excerpts from a Sept. 6 news release sent out by the New Orleans-based People's Hurricane Relief Fund, the main initiator of the International Tribunal on Hurricanes Katrina and Rita in New Orleans. President Bush, Louisiana Gov. Kathleen Blanco and New Orleans Mayor Ray Nagin were cited by the jurists for crimes against humanity.

Between Aug. 29 and Sept. 2, a Tribunal of 16 esteemed jurists from nine countries, including Algeria, Brazil, France, Guadeloupe, Martinique, Mexico, South Africa, Venezuela, and the United States, convened in New Orleans to hear testimony by experts and survivors of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita.

After hearing nearly 30 hours of testimony by hurricane survivors and experts—covering government neglect and negligence in 15 areas, ranging from police brutality to environmental racism, from misappropriation of relief to gentrification—the jurists announced their preliminary findings.

Jill Soffiyah Elijah, the Deputy Director of the Criminal Justice Institute at Harvard Law School and Coordinating Justice for the International Tribunal on Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, announced the Tribunal's preliminary findings, "It



Lower Ninth Ward in New Orleans, Sept. 1.

WW PHOTO: MONICA MOOREHEAD

is our view that the U.S. government has committed crimes against humanity particularly in relation to its failure to maintain functional levees that should have protected the City of New Orleans from flooding. ... It was the reckless disregard and, in some instances, negligence of the U.S. government, the state of Louisiana and the city of New Orleans that created the devastation we continue to see today."

Elijah also announced that the Tribunal made preliminary findings that the fed-

eral, state and local governments are guilty of violating the human rights to life, dignity and recognition of personhood; the right to be free from racial discrimination—especially as it pertains to the actions of law enforcement personnel and vigilantes; the right to return, resettlement and reintegration of internally displaced persons; the right to be free from degrading treatment and punishment; the right to freedom of movement; the right to adequate housing and education; the right to vote and participate in governance and the right to a fair trial, the right to liberty and security of person and the right to equal protection

under the law. Both actions and failure to act by the governments had disproportionate devastating impact with respect to race and gender.

The jurists announced that they would deliver their final verdict Dec. 8—the second anniversary of the Katrina Survivors' Assembly. In the meantime, prosecutors will be submitting additional evidence and videotaped affidavits from an additional 25 survivors.

The prosecution team included experienced attorneys from respected legal associations around the country: the ACLU of New York, National Economic and Social Rights Initiative, the U.S. Human Rights Network, the National Conference of Black Lawyers, the Center for Constitutional Rights, National Lawyers Guild, the Center for Law and Social Justice at Medgar Evers College, the NAACP Legal Defense and Education Fund, Mississippi Workers Center for Human Rights, Washington D.C. Legal Defender, Mississippi Disaster Relief Coalition, International Association of Democratic Lawyers, Legal Empowerment Center and the Louisiana Justice Initiative.

For samples of videotaped testimony, contact Monifa Bandele at (917) 407-3018.

For more background information on this tribunal, go to www.workers.org. □

At Katrina Tribunal

Immigrants testify on exploitation in New Orleans

By Teresa Gutierrez
New Orleans

The International Tribunal on Hurricanes Katrina and Rita took place here from Aug. 29 to Sept. 2. The tribunal was initiated by the People's Hurricane Relief Fund and was supported by many national and international organizations. The purpose of the tribunal was to expose the multitude of crimes against humanity carried out by the U.S. government on a local, state and federal level.

For a full account of the tribunal, also see the Sept. 13 Workers World article titled "Int'l tribunal on Katrina & Rita: We charge genocide" at www.workers.org.

Two years after the fact and the government continues to viciously assault the people of the region, especially the Black community. The right to return home, the right to a job, and the right to housing and education continue to be under fierce attack in New Orleans today.

Testimony from the people of the region documented the heavy toll of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita on the community as a result of government neglect.

Road paved by exploitation, not with gold

One section of the tribunal was on labor and two of the testimonies were from Latino immigrants. Their testimony brought out a critical issue with regard to immigration policy today. In addition, their testimony addressed a salient point for the progressive and people's movement: unity, especially among oppressed people.

In the aftermath of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, many construction and cleaning contractors brought in labor from abroad for the extensive cleanup that was desperately needed.

The testimony of these two immigrants at the tribunal exposed the criminal attitudes and practices—not only of the contractors but the government—that were complicit in this policy. What ensued emphatically demonstrates the bankruptcy and horror of an immigration policy that is highly touted by the Bush administration as well as by certain elements in the ruling class. That policy is the so-called guest worker program.

Dennis, who is from Honduras, and Daniel, who is from Peru, came to New Orleans right after the hurricanes. Both were promised that they would be earning tons of money because there was going to be so much well-paid work to clean up the area.

Dennis described how he was paid about \$200 a day in the beginning. But there were so many times he was not paid at all, he said. Then one day, after being picked up on a corner where day laborers gathered, one employer kept Dennis for about a month.

"The first week I was paid for two days, the second and third weeks only one day, and the fourth week, I was not paid at all," Dennis explained. "The boss finally told me I would not be paid anything and if I protested, he was going to call the police. I was scared and did not do anything."

At one point, Dennis injured his hand so severely he could not move his fingers and was not able to work at all.

Later, after he got out of the situation, Dennis stood on the corner at a Home Depot looking for work. Managers from



WW PHOTO: MONICA MOOREHEAD

From left to right, Daniel; PRHF leader Kali Akuno; Tribunal prosecutor Joan Gibbs; Dennis; Atlanta activist Lizz Toledo and May 1st Immigrant Rights Coalition leader Teresa Gutierrez in New Orleans Aug. 31.

the store called the police on the workers and armed police arrived in five patrol cars. The workers were not only arrested, Dennis described, but police stole \$200 from him. In jail, he said, the Latin@ workers were terrified.

But in a show of tremendous solidarity, it was local African-American organizations that raised the money for their bail, Dennis told the crowd.

'Impossible to pay back debt'

The other worker that testified, Daniel from Peru, came to New Orleans about a year and a half ago on a visa with the H2B guest worker program. Daniel's testimony was also very moving, and like all of the testimonies in the four-day tribunal, greatly stirred the audience as well as the judges.

Daniel described how he was led to believe that he would be making lots of money with the cleanup of New Orleans. The H2B program required that he pay for his visa, which cost him a shocking \$4,000. Daniel stated that some workers, however, like those from India, have to pay a staggering \$20,000 for each visa!

The visas are granted through a lottery. Daniel described how about 800 people applied for 80 visas. "I was a favorite," Daniel said, "but I didn't know what I was coming to. To pay the \$4,000 I mortgaged my home, thinking that I would recoup the money with all the promises that were made by the recruiter."

The recruiter promised the workers a good home, with a swimming pool, a television and telephone service. "But when I arrived," Daniel said, "the reality was totally different."

Instead, the workers were taken to a motel that was semi-destroyed. That is where they were to live. "They put us eight to a small motel room. We had to fix up the motel at the same time, and they charged us all \$50 a week to live there. We were promised 40 hours of work a week but there were so many workers brought in that we worked only 20 to 25 hours a week and were paid only \$6 an hour."

Furthermore, Daniel said, for other jobs

there was no transportation provided and workers had to walk to work—no small thing during the heat of the Louisiana summer.

"It became impossible for me to pay my debt. Back home, I was having problems with the bank that had given me my loan."

As a result of this fraud and exploitation, Daniel began to organize the workers. He was fired from that job for organizing but he has since become a leader of the Alliance of Guest Workers for Dignity.

Guest worker = enslaved wage worker

The Bush administration launched a new wave of attacks against immigrant workers on Aug. 10. Not able to get the legislation it wanted earlier in Congress, the Bush administration sidestepped Congress by announcing a new round of policies.

Specifically, the Department of Homeland Security in conjunction with the Social Security Administration launched a major escalation of the "no-match" policy. No-match refers to the inconsistencies of Social Security numbers in the government data base with the numbers submitted by workers.

The government announced that it would penalize bosses monetarily if they continued to employ workers whose Social Security numbers did not match government records. Fortunately the AFL-CIO, along with immigrant rights groups, filed a lawsuit against this policy. In an Aug. 31 ruling, a federal judge temporarily barred the Social Security agency from sending out massive numbers of no-match letters to employers.

Obviously, the U.S. government does not mean to shut down the countless industries whose profits depend on immigrant labor. Instead, what the government and the capitalist class aim to do is make immigrant labor more manageable and more controllable and therefore more profitable.

David Bacon, a well-known progressive journalist who has written on the immigration issue for decades, comments on this current policy: "The impact [of

the Department of Homeland Security announcement] will be catastrophic." Bacon documents how this no-match policy has been used to bust up union drives such as the horrible terrorist attack raids by Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) teams at the Smithfield pork slaughterhouse factory in Tar Heel, N.C., and the Woodfin Suites campaign in California.

Bacon also illuminates what is behind the escalation of the no-match policy. The journalist writes, "Employers worried about the loss of their workers, Commerce Secretary Gutierrez said, could avail themselves of existing guest worker programs, which allow corporations to recruit workers outside the U.S. and bring them in on visas tied to employment."

The aftermath of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita is one illustration that shows how the guest worker program is used to "enslave" workers.

In February, Daniel's organization—Alliance of Guest Workers for Dignity—exposed that close to 100 Mexican guest workers had been trapped for months in Westlake, La. The boss had illegally confiscated their passports—a common practice.

Workers were again recruited under false pretenses and treated to humiliating conditions. The campaign to expose these conditions was led by both Latin@ and African-American community leaders.

In Mississippi, immigrants and their supporters report that once they are no longer needed to clean up the area, Latin@ workers are now being threatened and harassed.

One Latina, forced to walk to a doctor's appointment in the August heat, took up an offer for a ride from a male stranger. "When the police stopped them," she says, "they let the driver go, but charged me with prostitution."

Seeds of victory in soil of exploitation

The ruling class has successfully managed to drive down living conditions for the most oppressed workers in a way that can make heads spin. In addition, in every

Continued on page 8

Cafe provides forum for anti-war soldiers

By Jaimeson Champion

Some 80 active-duty soldiers, their friends, families and supporters gathered Sept. 1 at the Different Drummer Cafe in Watertown, N.Y., just outside the Fort Drum military base, as part of a sendoff party organized by the Fort Drum chapter of Iraq Veterans Against the War (IVAW).

The IVAW called the event for a brigade of young soldiers from the Fort Drum-based 10th Mountain Division that is about to embark on yet another 15-month tour in Iraq and Afghanistan. For many soldiers in the brigade, this will be their second or third tour through those countries' hellish battlefields, where they bring an even greater hell to the Iraqi and Afghan people.

In Watertown and in base towns across the U.S., it is easy to see that the so-called "volunteer army" of the U.S. is composed primarily of working-class young women and men. Faced with few employment opportunities and astronomical college tuition costs, working-class young people are funneled into the ranks of the army by the economic draft. While the corporations continue to rake in billions of blood-soaked dollars from the occupation of

Iraq, it is working-class young women and men who will risk life and limb everyday for the next 15 months for a war that an increasing number of them oppose.

The Sept. 1 sendoff featured speakers from IVAW who stressed a message of solidarity with their brothers and sisters who were about to be redeployed into harm's way. Speakers expressed their opposition to the war in Iraq and spoke of the need to bring all the troops home immediately so that not a single additional soldier will lose their life in this imperialist conquest. The sendoff also featured live musical performances that expressed anti-war sentiments.

The sendoff was the latest in a series of important events and performances hosted by the Different Drummer Cafe, which opened in the fall of 2006. The cafe is modeled after the famous GI coffeehouses of the Vietnam era, which helped to organize GI opposition to the war against Vietnam. During that other U.S. war of aggression, anti-war activists established G.I. coffeehouses in base towns across the country. These coffeehouses provided a safe space for soldiers to get away off their bases and express their opposition to the war, away from the watchful eyes of commanders on base. They complemented the work done

by active-duty GIs organizing in the barracks, such as those with the American Servicemen's Union (ASU).

The Different Drummer provides an open forum for GIs and anti-war activists to share ideas and experiences from the current war. Film showings and town-hall style meetings are held there regularly, with a high priority placed on open discussion and the free exchange of ideas. Film showings have included such titles as "Poison DUst," about the effects of depleted uranium, and "Sir! No, Sir!" about GI resistance during the Vietnam War. Live musical performances regularly draw in sizable crowds of young people to the Different Drummer, many of them active-duty soldiers from Fort Drum.

Recent polls of active-duty soldiers have shown that more than a third of them no longer support the mission in Iraq. An additional third want a firm troop withdrawal date set within this year.

But the politicians in Washington, both Republican and Democrat, have shown that they are in no rush to end this war. Every day the war continues is another day that the politicians' real constituents, the corporations and banks, continue to profit off the blood of the U.S. troops and the Iraqi population. And after all, the pol-

iticians are not the ones that have to see their buddies lose their limbs to roadside bombs. They are not the ones who return home racked by post traumatic stress disorder from the indescribable horrors faced on the battlefield.

The Republicans and Democrats in Washington have proven that they are unwilling to end the war. But a surge in active-duty troops refusing to fight or finding ways to resist could end the war in a heartbeat, and help preserve the collective heartbeat of an entire generation of working-class young people, besides bringing relief to millions in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Active-duty organizing, mobilization of Iraq veterans, confrontation of recruiters and places where GIs can meet and discuss like the Different Drummer can all play a role in organizing the struggle against the war and occupation of Iraq and Afghanistan. Through the mediums that speak to our generation—music, film, poetry, spoken word, etc.—soldiers and civilians can come together, united in their commitment to end the war, and freely exchange ideas and strategies. As the Iraq war slogs through its fifth year, the need for innovative collaborations between anti-war soldiers and civilians has never been more apparent. □

The 'Sisson papers'

A Big Lie to justify war—90 years ago

By Stephen Millies

Before the billionaires can start a big war they have to spread the Big Lie.

Everybody knows Bush fibbed about "weapons of mass destruction" (WMD) in Iraq. There weren't any.

That didn't prevent the White House from scaring people with images of mushroom clouds. And it doesn't stop Bush and the Pentagon from lying about Iran today.

It isn't just Fox News and right-wingers on the radio promoting a new war. So is the "liberal" New York Times with its hostile coverage of Iran.

The Times and the rest of the capitalist media regurgitated Bush's lies prior to the invasion of Iraq. The WMD fiasco was so embarrassing that the New York Times later criticized its own coverage. The Times also acknowledged earlier examples of war propaganda, especially the Gulf of Tonkin hoax.

President Lyndon Johnson lied in 1964 when he claimed Vietnamese PT boats attacked the U.S. Navy. By 1975 millions of Vietnamese, Cambodian and Laotian people had died, along with 58,000 GIs.

An earlier big lie that's almost never mentioned is the "Sisson papers."

"The world must be made safe for democracy," declared President Woodrow Wilson when he entered World War I in April 1917. Three months later Wilson did nothing when 200 African Americans were murdered by white mobs in East St. Louis. W.E.B. Du Bois, a Black political leader and renowned intellectual, organized a march down New York's Fifth Avenue to protest this massacre.

Millions of workers and poor people were killed in World War I. But it was a gold mine for capitalists in the U.S. The Du Ponts made so much money selling dynamite to imperialist Britain, France and the U.S. military that they bought General Motors.

The Russian Revolution pulled massive Russia, then allied with Britain and France against the German and Austrian empires,

out of this bloodbath. Led by Lenin and the Bolsheviks, the working class took power in Russia on Nov. 7, 1917. Workers councils, called soviets, started to build a new society. A year later the German and Austrian emperors were overthrown by revolutions inspired by the Bolsheviks.

Every big capitalist and landlord from Tokyo to Toledo wanted to strangle the Russian Revolution. A dozen foreign armies invaded Russia. Wilson sent thousands of U.S. troops to help occupy Siberia and Archangelsk.

It was hard to justify military intervention against the Soviet republic simply because workers were taking over factories and peasants were driving out landlords in Russia. The millionaires didn't even want U.S. workers and farmers to know about this stuff. It might give them some dangerous ideas!

Edgar Sisson was then stationed in Russia as a representative of Wilson's war propaganda agency, the "Committee on Public Information." Sisson spread far and wide a series of documents claiming the Bolsheviks were agents of the German Kaiser or emperor. This Kaiser had already been demonized by U.S. war propaganda, while the Bolsheviks were relatively unknown internationally.

The "Sisson papers" were absolute forgeries. They were concocted by agents like those who had manufactured "The Protocols of the Learned Elders of Zion," a notorious anti-Semitic pamphlet.

But for months they were a sensation that swept the U.S. Edgar Sisson's lies helped pave the way for U.S. intervention in Russia.

At that time, too, the New York Times played a key role in promoting these lies. On Sept. 15, 1918, the Times printed a 10,979-word article with these screaming headlines: "Documents prove Lenin and Trotsky hired by Germans. ... Berlin financed revolt." Lenin and Trotsky were the best-known Bolshevik leaders.

Along with the Times' support for the U.S. joining World War I, its publication of the Sisson papers made the Times the

leading "paper of record" in the country.

Racism was also embedded in the Times' pages. Articles in the Times in 1910 raised fears of the consequences if Jack Johnson, the first Black heavyweight champion, should successfully defend his title against James Jefferies. Its May 12, 1910, editorial stated, "If the black man wins thousands and thousands of his ignorant brothers will misinterpret his victory as justifying claims to much more than mere physical equality with their white neighbors."

The trouble with making the Sisson papers believable was that hi-tech in 1918 consisted of manual typewriters, like the popular Underwood model. These Sisson documents were supposedly typed in different European capitals. But even untrained eyes saw these typewritten copies all looked the same.

That's because they were almost all pecked out on the same typewriter. This

was easily proved by the position of letters in these documents.

Even the phony WMD in Iraq didn't explode as quickly as these forgeries did nearly 90 years ago. The exposure of the Sisson papers helped deflate the war drive against the Soviets.

While the Soviet Red Army fought back, one out of seven industrial workers in the U.S. went on strike in 1919. Dockworkers in Seattle smashed rifle crates instead of shipping them to counter-revolutionary "White Guards" in Siberia. Marcus Garvey rallied millions of African Americans. Even U.S. troops sent to Russia were refusing to fight.

This movement of the working class and oppressed people stopped Wall Street from immediately strangling the Russian Revolution. It's just such a movement that's needed to get the troops out of Iraq and stop a new war against Iran. □

At Katrina Tribunal

Immigrants testify on exploitation in New Orleans

Continued from page 7

single facet of life, the community of New Orleans and all the Gulf Coast is being brutally and inhumanely hit. The horror the world saw in August of 2005 continues today in the wake of "Hurricane U.S. government."

But the tribunal and the work that is being carried out every day to win justice for Katrina survivors show that people are fighting back against these attacks. During the tribunal, for example, this writer was able to tour the work being carried out by Common Ground Collective in the lower Ninth Ward of New Orleans. This work shows that despite the hardships and the government onslaught people are organizing and fighting back.

Immigrants, too, are not just lying down.

Daniel's final words to the tribunal audience show what is on the horizon: a solidarity and unity between the oppressed that is so mighty and powerful that when it is organized, it can bring the system down.

Daniel said, "When I came to New Orleans, I saw Black people on the corner just hanging out. When I asked why they were not given these jobs, my sister and others told me that Black people were lazy. I have since learned this is not true.

"I want to develop relations among Latinos and African Americans so that we can build a real alliance and go forward. They have manipulated both our peoples: they tell us you are lazy and they tell you we steal your jobs. But we are brothers and sisters and we have to live together so we can all go forward." □



Occupations protested on three continents

By John Catalinotto

Sydney, Australia

10,000 protest Bush at APEC summit

Despite a downpour, some 10,000 people protested at the Asian-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) summit Sept. 7 in Sydney. Demonstrators particularly targeted U.S. President George W. Bush's Iraq policies and Australian military interventions.

Bush and Australia's Bush-like Prime Minister John Howard were the favorite protest targets. Howard has ordered Australian military units into Iraq, Afghanistan, East Timor and West Papua, among other places.

As they set off on a march, the protesters chanted: "Howard, Bush, USA, how many kids did you kill today?" A large banner carried by a group of marchers read: "War criminals not welcome here—Bush go home."

Among those protesting Bush were former Guantanamo Bay detainee Mamdouh Habib, who was released without charges in 2005, and U.S. Marine veteran Matt Howard—no relation to the prime minister—who had spoken of his Iraq experiences at recent anti-war meetings throughout Australia.

The Australian regime had 5,000 police and soldiers on hand and a three-meter-high fence to keep demonstra-

tors away from the APEC summit. The security operation was the largest ever mounted in Australia and included jet fighter overflights, police on jet water-skis in Sydney's harbor, a water cannon and special laws aimed at repressing protesters, of whom 17 were arrested.

Berlin, Germany

Sept. 15 protest against Afghanistan War

The anti-war movement in Germany has called for a national demonstration on Sept. 15 in Berlin, aimed especially at stopping that country's military intervention in Afghanistan. Germany is part of the NATO military support for the U.S. occupation of the Afghan people.

A coalition of left anti-war forces issued a call supporting the action, which read in part:

"We welcome the nationwide campaign against the German Federal Armed Forces mission in Afghanistan and join the common call for a demonstration on Sept. 15.

"The direct intervention in the war in Afghanistan is, however, only the most visible participation of Germany in Western wars and interventions. Our protest is directed of course against all international missions of the German Federal Armed Forces.

"In addition, we also oppose German

military, logistic and political support of the war against Iraq, the war threats against Syria and Iran, and also demand that intervention in Lebanon and the Israeli occupation of Palestine be terminated."

Washington, D.C.:

Arrested demanding right to poster

U.S. Park Police arrested three anti-war activists in front of the White House on Sept. 6. The activists were holding a news conference to protest fines of \$30,000 for putting up anti-war posters calling for a Sept. 15 demonstration in Washington, D.C.

The three arrested were Tina Richards, CEO of Grassroots America and mother of Iraq War veteran Cloy Richards; Adam Kokesh, the co-chair elect of Iraq Veterans Against the War (IVAW); and Ian Thompson, an organizer with the ANSWER Coalition. Richards and Kokesh had announced that they would put a Sept. 15 March to Stop the War poster on a lamppost following the media conference. Mounted police then charged into the news conference to break it up.

The ANSWER Coalition's goal, according to statements on its Web site, is "to sponsor a large protest in Washington, D.C., timed to coincide with the report

by General [David] Petraeus on the 'surge' in Iraq."

Petraeus's report on Sept. 10—no surprise—called for keeping U.S. troops levels high at least until next summer. Bush will make a national address on Sept. 13, when he is expected to propose an eventual cut of 30,000 troops, but only if the U.S. occupation stabilizes.

Some movement activists protested as Petraeus was speaking, and Capitol police arrested anti-war spokespeople Rev. Lennox Yearwood, Jr., a former Air Force officer and head of the Hip Hop Caucus; Cindy Sheehan; and members of the IVAW and Code Pink who had been interrupting the general's demand for more blood money.

Other actions will take place in the week following Sept. 15. These events, led by many different groups, include a "Truth-in-Recruiting Day," organized by Iraq Veterans Against the War on Sept. 17, and a Moratorium on Sept. 21.

Starting on Sept. 22, a series of actions called an encampment, organized by the Troops Out Now Coalition (TONC), will take place in Los Angeles and in Washington, D.C. These actions are aimed at stopping congressional approval of the war budget and are directed against the war "at home and abroad." They will culminate in mass demonstrations in both cities on Sept. 29.

E-mail: jcat@workers.org

Camp out on Congress's doorstep to say No funds for racist occupation!

Continued from page 1

attack. Military recruiters prey on our communities and our campuses, trying to get us and our friends to kill and be killed in a criminal war. Money that should be being spent to make education affordable for everyone and provide scholarships is instead being spent to continue the four-and-a-half year old occupation of Iraq.

"Police harass us for simply being young, for being a person of color, or for being lesbian/gay/bi/trans/queer. Bush's top war adviser, Army Lt.Gen. Douglas Lute, says that 'it makes sense to certainly consider' reinstating the draft. It's time to raise our voices and our fists and fight back."

The cast of "SiCKO"—Michael Moore's movie exposing the depravity of the for-profit health care system—will be present at the encampment, holding a vigil on Sept. 28 for all the victims of that industry, and organizing a "Healthcare, Not Warfare" contingent in the mass march the following day.

Other actions planned include events against U.S. intervention in Latin America, against a new war in Iran, and in solidarity with Cuba and the Cuban 5.

In Los Angeles, a parallel encampment

will be taking place, with two tent cities in different areas of the sprawling city. Events there include a 15-mile march between the two tent cities, a protest in support of the Palestinian struggle, a teach-in on the war and labor solidarity, and more. (Workers World, Sept. 9)

Cultural resistance

The encampment will also reflect the important and vital role that culture plays in movements of resistance to capitalist oppression and imperialist rule.

"Rock the Rulers," an evening concert series of culture and resistance, will be held each night of the encampment, featuring hip hop, soul, r&b, funk, visual arts, theater and spoken word from artists throughout the country, including Nana Soul, Spirit Child, Pam Parker, Public Disturbance, Days of Rage, Bojah and the Insurrection, World War III Arts Collective, Not Now Right Now, Enemy Combatant, The Foundation, Nemiss, Hasan Salaam, Kahlil Khan, Phase One, Head-Roc, Rahula Today, Rebel Diaz, Soul Cannon, Strike Anywhere, Songs for Peace, Children United for Peace and more.

On Sept. 28, BAYAN USA, the New York Committee for Human Rights in

the Philippines, and TONC will host an outdoor concert billed "Never Again." A flyer for the event states: "Join Filipino-American artists' call for withdrawal of U.S. military aid for Philippine death squads and an end to the undeclared martial law under the Arroyo government. This concert is dedicated to all victims of Philippine martial law past and present."

All these events will culminate with a

mass march on Sept. 29 to stop the war at home and abroad, demanding an end to all occupations—from Iraq to Palestine to Haiti and the Philippines—an end to racist police terror, freedom for all political prisoners and money for social services, not war.

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

E-mail: ldowell@workers.org

SEPT. 22-24 1st Tent City: Westwood Federal Bldg.
 SEPT. 25 March: Westwood to Downtown Federal Bldg.
 SEPT. 25-29 2nd Tent City: Downtown Federal Bldg.

LOS ANGELES MASS MARCH & RALLY
 Gather NOON Broadway & Olympic

SEPT. 29

STOP THE WAR

TONC-LA at the Int'l Action Center 5274 W. Pico Blvd, Rm. 203, L.A. 90019
www.TroopsOutNowLA.org 323.936.7266



Remember Sabra & Shatila

A quarter century ago, acknowledged Israeli war criminal Ariel Sharon, commander of Israeli occupation forces occupying southern Lebanon, allowed Lebanese fascists to massacre up to 3,000 Palestinian civilians of all ages in the Sabra and Shatila refugee camps.

Tel Aviv had carried out an invasion of Lebanon in June of 1982 with the complete backing of the Ronald Reagan government of the U.S. It continued its war of aggression against Palestinians and Lebanese with the backing of U.S. imperialism and the powerful interests of finance capital that drive it to seek domination of the oil-rich and strategic Middle East.

During the summer of 1982, the Israeli military mercilessly bombed Beirut, killing more than 20,000 people, mostly civilians. In September 1982, a ceasefire agreement was forced upon the Lebanese and Palestinians resisting the assault, which resulted in moving most Palestinian fighting forces out of Lebanon.

Israeli forces surrounded the Palestinian refugee camps of Sabra and Shatila in Lebanon. Under Sharon's orders, the Israeli forces backed up the entrance of Lebanese fascist forces on that Sept. 15. These forces carried out the mass slaughter—mass lynchings really—of the Palestinian civilians in the camp. The killers were Lebanese fascists; their physical support came from the Israelis; their bullets were made in the USA.

The attack on Sabra and Shatila was meant to instill terror. Yet the struggle of the Palestinian people continues today, as does the brutal repression by the nuclear-armed Israeli state.

Today, anti-war activism has focused a spotlight on the phony “debate” among Democrats and Republicans on Congressional Hill over a vague plan to gradually reduce troop deployment in Iraq. But both sides of the aisle on Congressional Hill have funded that brutal war as well as the occupation in Palestine.

Billions in financial and military support, without which Tel Aviv's occupation of Palestine could not last a day, have been quietly rubber-stamped by Democrats and Republicans—no matter which party of big business occupied the Oval Office.

The struggle of the Palestinian people deserves the support of the entire anti-war movement, which can raise—in one loud, clear voice—support for the right of Palestinian self-determination, sovereignty and right of return to their historic homeland.

The Palestinian people have fought for these rights for more than half a century, and now, as they commemorate Sabra and Shatila, they continue that struggle today. Long live Palestine. □

A peace treaty with Korea?

Why Bush won't talk about it

By Deirdre Griswold

It has been quite clear for some time now that the people living in the southern half of Korea, which is still occupied by 37,000 U.S. troops more than five decades after the Korean War, want those troops out and want an end to the official state of war that still exists between the U.S. and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea in the north.

Yet, in the fictional world created by Washington, its troops remain to “protect” the people of South Korea from the north.

Furthermore, no politician from the south is supposed to say anything in public contradicting this fiction.

So when Roh Moo-Hyun, the president of South Korea, violated this unwritten rule recently, it was a major “diplomatic incident.”

Roh met with George W. Bush at the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation Business Summit, held in Australia during the first week of September.

At a photo op after their private meeting, Roh asked Bush to state publicly his position on signing a peace treaty with the DPRK. A visibly miffed Bush answered that an end to the Korean War—which is still officially in force—would come after “Kim Jong Il verifiably gets rid of his weapons programs and his weapons.” Then, as Roh pressed him to be “clearer,” Bush snapped that the session was over.

A number of media, including the U.S. business news service Bloomberg, viewed Roh's audacity as due to the fact that he faces an election soon and was playing to the audience at home—which was a tacit admission that most people in South Korea want the U.S. to sign a peace treaty and get out. Roh has also faced strong opposition at home for going along with the Bush administration and sending South Korean troops to Iraq and Afghanistan.

Bush's logic—that what is holding up a treaty is the north's development of nuclear weapons—doesn't make a bit of sense. Washington has had 54 years to sign an agreement to end

the war. During all but the last couple of years, the DPRK had no nuclear weapons and no program to make any. It was constantly being threatened with attack by the most powerful nuclear power on earth.

A couple of years ago, the DPRK announced that its scientists had been able to produce a small number of bombs. The U.S., by contrast, has some 10,000 nuclear warheads on ships, submarines, planes and bases all over the world.

Furthermore, the DPRK has every reason to need a strong defense. It is the aggrieved party—it was invaded by the U.S. in 1950 and for three years the Pentagon bombed the DPRK mercilessly to try to break the country. But its leaders stood firm.

Yet, according to Bush, the country that was invaded, divided and occupied must dismantle its defenses, while the invader continues to wage wars anywhere it wants. Such an argument comes from the height of imperialist arrogance.

In fact, shortly before Bush spoke the DPRK had officially invited Washington to send observers to inspect its nuclear facilities and see that it is indeed dismantling its weapons program, in accord with an agreement made in February at six-party talks.

Some Asian media—especially in South Korea and China—are interpreting what happened at the APEC forum as confirmation that in fact Washington has shifted its position to one of being ready to talk about a peace treaty. But Bush doesn't want to say publicly what his negotiators say privately.

As much as Bush wants to make it appear that the ball is in Pyongyang's court, the opposite is true and the world knows it. What is holding up a change on the Korean peninsula that would allow the people of the north and south to collaborate amicably and move toward reuniting all the families torn apart for at least two generations is the U.S. government's refusal to give up its imperial ambitions. □

Free the Five!

Cuban leader says people in U.S. can help

Reprinted from the *Agencia Cubana de Noticias (Cuban News Agency)*, Sept. 5.

The head of the Cuban Parliament, Ricardo Alarcón, said the possibility of having the five [Cuban] men imprisoned in the U.S. released earlier depends very much on the support they receive from the American people.

“The first step is to let that people know the truth. This is what we need to keep on demanding,” said the Parliament president.

In the daily TV Round Table show, Alarcón gave legal and ethical details of the Five's case, showing the double standards of the U.S. policy and its hostility towards Cuba. The statements were the continuity of an interview he gave Aug. 27, also broadcast on Cuban TV.

The president of the Cuban Parliament said the American government is aware of the effect that the support of the American people could have on international opinion. For that reason the media has been instructed to refer to the Cuban men only as “spies.”

Alarcón said the American government has refused to see news releases that show Washington's political bias against the

Five. He mentioned the articles posted by London's BBC and the New York Times, which were very objective, but they are not willing to follow the case.

It will be nine years on Sept. 12 since Gerardo Hernández, Fernando González, Ramón Labañino, Antonio Guerrero and René González were sent to American jails.

That day in 1998, the five Cuban men were arrested and later subjected to a politically biased trial in Miami. The judicial process ended in 2001 with the judge handing down harsh sentences on the men, whose only crime was to infiltrate Miami-based extreme right groups that operated with Washington's consent, organizing and conducting terrorist actions against the Cuban people.

Alarcón pointed out that the U.S. does not have evidence proving that the Five were conspiring to commit espionage or murder. However, they are serving outrageous terms in jail.

All the evidence is available online to all news agencies willing to report on the issue, Alarcón said. ...

Alarcón said on one occasion the American government decided to remove the second charge, conspiracy to commit espionage, from the files of three of

the defendants—Gerardo, Ramón and Antonio—as long as they pleaded guilty to other crimes. However, the third charge would not be taken to the negotiating table. Instead, seeking to please the Miami-based Cuban-American community, a charge of quadruple first-degree murder was added to the case.

The U.S. government ended up recognizing in writing, before the Court of Appeals of Atlanta, that the charges had been manipulated. Now we have to wait until the court overrules such allegations, explained the Cuban official.

The head of the Cuban Parliament went on to say that the Cuban Five acted under the principle of “state of necessity,” comparing the case with that of former U.S. President Jimmy Carter's daughter, who was arrested in the late 1980s for taking over a building to protest against the CIA. Eventually, she was released on the grounds that she and the other 14 people accompanying her had committed minor crimes to avoid a greater one.

Likewise, Alarcón mentioned the case of Zacarias Musagüi, accused of being involved in the Sept. 11 attacks. He noted that the mother of Moroccan-born Musagüi was allowed to visit her son. Meanwhile, the mothers of the five Cuban

men are patiently waiting in line to get an entry visa to the U.S. to be able to see their sons. “It is the right of any prisoner, irrespective of the crime they committed, and in this case the Five did not even threaten nor shoot anybody, nor did their relatives,” Alarcón stressed.

Alarcón concluded the interview by saying that no one should think that they are doing too much for the Five. “We are not even doing a fraction of what they are doing themselves, with their constancy, resistance and leading the battle for justice and for their release.” □

Free the Cuban 5 Month

Sept. 12 will mark the ninth anniversary of the arrest of the Cuban 5. In honor of this anniversary, the month of Sept. 12 through Oct. 12 has been declared “Free the Cuban 5 Month.”

Countries that have announced actions as part of this international campaign include Argentina, Belgium, Bolivia, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Cuba, Dominican Republic, England, France, Germany, Guinea-Bissau, Italy, Kazakhstan, Lebanon, Mexico, Peru, Puerto Rico, Spain, Ukraine and Uruguay. For information on actions in the United States, contact info@FreeTheFiveNY.org. □

PETRAEUS REPORT

Senators posture, but will they vote war funds?

By Deirdre Griswold

Gen. David H. Petraeus, the commander of U.S. forces in Iraq, has made his long-awaited report to the U.S. Senate. As expected, it was crafted to bolster the Bush administration's claims that, having sent tens of thousands more troops into combat over the last few months, it is now making "progress" in that ravaged country. Indeed, the report had been "vetted" by the White House itself.

Ryan Crocker, the U.S. ambassador to Iraq, also testified in a similar vein.

The administration's vow to prolong the war is sure to be answered by tens of thousands of protesters who will descend on Washington in September to demand an immediate withdrawal of U.S. troops.

Senate Democrats and a few Republicans asked Petraeus the kinds of questions that showed their extreme skepticism with his claims. Five of the senators on the panels that heard the general's testimony are candidates for president. They are very aware of the mass anti-war sentiment in the U.S. that is also growing among the troops themselves. They took advantage of this forum to make thinly veiled campaign speeches.

According to the U.S. Constitution, it is Congress, not the White House, that has the right to declare war and to raise the money for it. Less than a year ago, completely disgusted with this war, the electorate voted out enough Republicans to give both houses of Congress a Democratic majority. Ever since grammar school, they had been taught that this was how you change the government and its policies.

Yet the unanimous view of all the big capitalist media today is that none of the political theater now happening in Washington will lead to any significant withdrawal of troops from Iraq, nor will the Democratic Party lead a struggle to stop the funding of the war—which will be up for a vote within the next month.

Partisan politics and posturing

Looking at what happens in Washington purely from the point of view of partisan politics, all this can seem quite puzzling. Aren't the Democrats the opposition party? Don't they know they'll get more votes if they seize the golden opportunity Bush has given them and voice their opposition to this most unpopular war?

Yes, they know it very well. And so they talk quite eloquently about the lying, the deceit and all the "blunders" that caused the war to go ahead. Of course, they voted to make it happen in the first place, so they have to excuse themselves by saying they, too, were deceived.

Talk is one thing. Voting to stop the funding of the war is quite different. When that subject comes up, the now-majority party suddenly pleads weakness and invokes the probability of a presidential veto.

None of this should be surprising. Bill Clinton ran for president in 1992 promising a health care plan that would cover everyone in the country. He won the election and the Democrats also took both houses of Congress. But the health care plan was dropped after running into stiff opposition from industry lobbyists. His administration also gutted the welfare system, which had been a safety net for the very poor since the Depression.

And, far from pursuing a peaceful foreign policy, the Clinton administration, together with Europe's imperialist powers, also launched a war against Yugoslavia that saw the merciless U.S. bombing of the capital city of Belgrade—a prelude to "shock and awe."

Vietnam: similar but reversed

More and more, the present war is being compared to Vietnam. Then, the political situation was reversed from what it is now.

It was two Democratic Party administrations—under John F. Kennedy and Lyndon Johnson—that started the war. The public had to be deceived, of course, so in 1964 an "incident" was cooked up that later was proven to be phony. But the Senate passed the Gulf of Tonkin resolution, which gave the president the authority and funds to vastly escalate the war. Only two senators opposed it.

When Richard M. Nixon ran for president in 1968, he claimed to have a plan to end the war. It dragged on for seven more years under two Republican administrations. Millions of Vietnamese were killed in combat and by abuse and torture; the land was poisoned by Agent Orange and other chemicals that are still causing birth defects and lingering deaths today; nearly 60,000 U.S. soldiers were also killed and a huge number disabled by both physical and psychological injuries.

The determining factor in both these wars is not which party controls the White House or the Congress. It is how the ruling class of the United States sees its interests. If the super-rich think a war will open up vast new areas for exploitation and profit, their attitude is: Go for it.

This view then becomes the dominant one in the corporate media and among the

politicians of both capitalist parties. All kinds of justifications are invented to convince ordinary working people, the ones who have to do the fighting and dying, that the war is for a noble cause, that their way of life is threatened and that the targeted people are an evil enemy.

If, however, the war fails to achieve its objectives despite overwhelming U.S. military superiority, if the heroic resistance of the Vietnamese or the Iraqis prevents the kind of stability that would allow for "orderly" capitalist exploitation of their labor and natural resources, then voices of dissent begin to be heard even within the U.S. ruling establishment itself.

This is where things are at now with the war in Iraq. Even more than Vietnam, the economic stakes are immense. Iraq's strategic location in the Middle East—at a time when the huge oil companies and the military-industrial-banking complex see control over the world's petroleum as vital to their immense wealth and power—is the main reason why few politicians have taken a definite stand for immediate withdrawal. To do so would bring down the wrath of the corporate media, which is so embedded with the military-industrial complex that it still uses phrases like "cut and run."

At the same time, the military can't recruit, so it has to send soldiers back to Iraq for a third tour, risking potential mutiny. Immigrant workers are told that joining the military is the only way to get legal documents. Senators can still be forced out through anti-gay entrapment but not because they voted for a criminal war. Police shootings and overstuffed prisons show where the racist brutality behind Abu Ghraib comes from.

And the U.S. economy is turning sour, disproving the idea that war brings pros-

perity for the many along with the profits for a few.

Even the puppet government in Iraq chosen by the U.S. occupation is being criticized for not being able to carry out its master's orders to "pacify" the country.

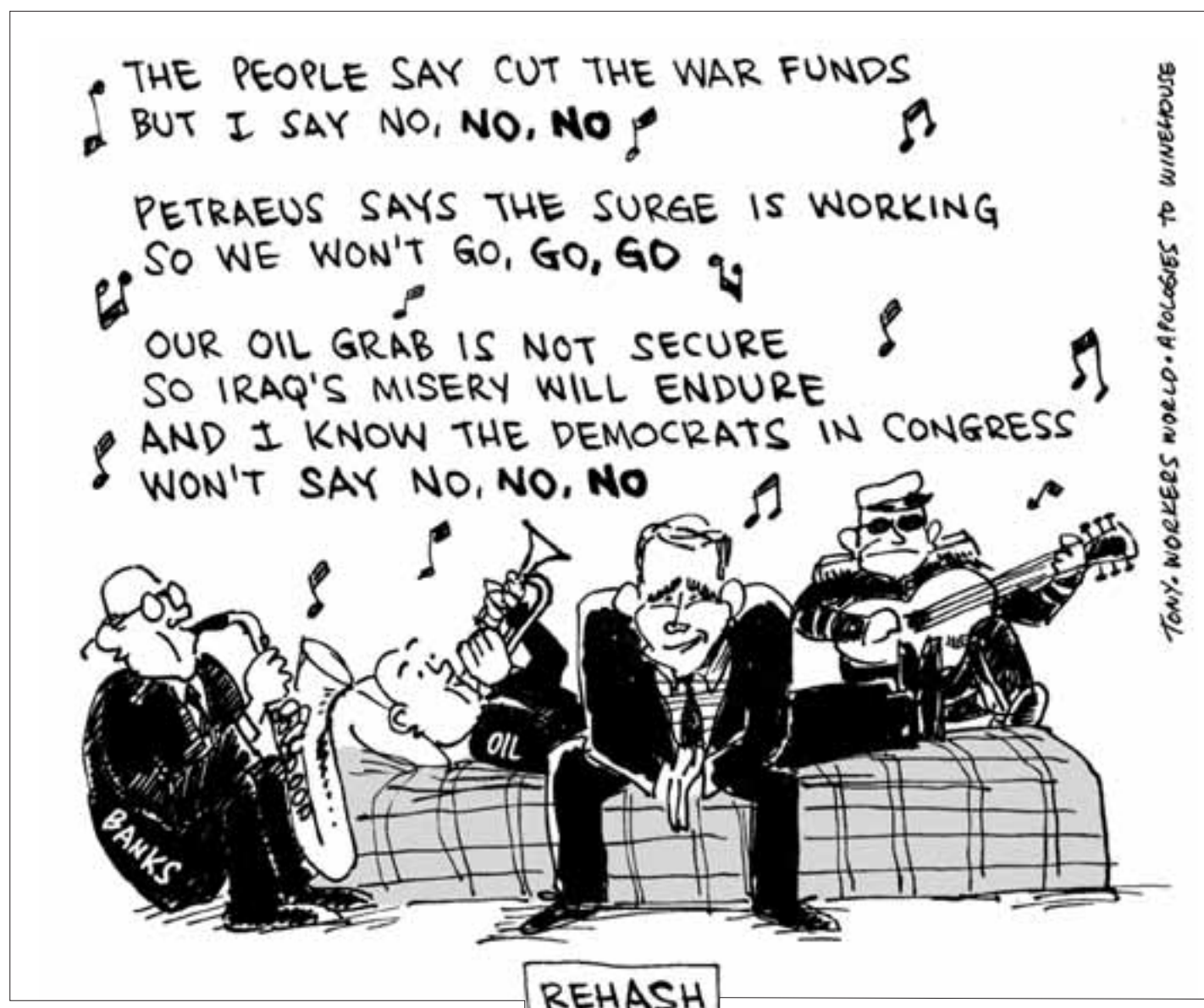
With all this, won't the ruling class establishment just decide it's in their interests to end the war?

Not yet. There is no easy way to end this war. The first thing to understand is that the people, not the capitalist political establishment, will do it. The orders to really bring the troops home will be written only when the ruling class has become convinced that it will never win, no matter how many soldiers it grinds up and no matter how much suffering and destruction it inflicts on the Iraqi nation.

That will take more than the resistance in Iraq. It requires a storm at home, a rebellion of the type that swept this country in the sixties and seventies.

The youth, facing the military draft, joined forces with returning GIs to rock the establishment. Rebellions against racism in hundreds of cities were also huge de-facto demonstrations against the war. The military chain of command broke down as soldiers deserted, demonstrated, disobeyed orders and even "fraggged" their officers.

Several anti-war demonstrations are coming up in Washington—a march called by ANSWER on Sept. 15, followed by the Troops Out Now Coalition's Sept. 22-29 Encampment on the Mall and march to Congress to say NO to war funding. TONC is also organizing an encampment and mass march in Los Angeles. These protests must let the real rulers of this country know that they face another period like the sixties if they don't end this abominable war. □



¡Proletarios y oprimidos de todos los países, uníos!

La ocupación estadounidense está provocando un desastre humanitario en Irak

Por Sara Flounders

Nota: Gracias a la traducción del inglés por Beatriz Morales Bastos para Rebelión (Revisada por el equipo de Mundo Obrero)

Si se sacara a la luz todas las dimensiones que tiene el horror que la ocupación estadounidense ha creado en Irak y se les hiciera frente, la indignación mundial llegaría a tal extremo que la ocupación no continuaría.

Una gran cantidad de informes que han sido ampliamente ignorados por la prensa corporativa, o que los han mencionado sólo de pasada, confirman un nivel sin precedente de destrucción de las infraestructuras esenciales, de pérdida de vidas y de desplazamiento generalizado de personas.

Hay más de cuatro millones de refugiad@s iraquíes y más de un millón de muertes. El 70% de la población infantil no va a la escuela. Con todo, estos informes y estadísticas no empiezan a contar la historia de destrucción y violencia ocasionadas por la ocupación estadounidense.

Irak, que era un país moderno e industrializado antes de la primera guerra de los Estados Unidos en 1991, se encuentra ahora bajo la ocupación estadounidense y se enfrenta a una catástrofe y a una desintegración nacional. Su sistema de salud pública, que antes fue internamente elogiado además de ser gratuito, se encuentra hoy en una situación caótica. Su milenario patrimonio cultural ha sido saqueado y destrozado.

Durante los 12 años de sanciones impuestas por Estados Unidos, desde agosto de 1990 hasta marzo de 2003, que crearon una enorme hambruna, toda la población de Irak seguía estando alfabetizada y se luchaba por mantener el suministro de agua potable y de electricidad, y unas raciones alimenticias básicas para su población de 25 millones de personas.

Ahora, según Oxfam y una red de 80 agencias de ayuda, 8 millones de personas, esto es, casi una tercera parte de la población, necesita ayuda de emergencia.

El movimiento contra la guerra aquí en los EEUU debe centrar su atención en los informes que exponen la terrible violencia de la ocupación estadounidense. Si no, los medios de comunicación corporativos serán capaces de “dar la vuelta a la tortilla” acerca de quién es el responsable de la violencia actual en Irak. Estos medios echan sistemáticamente la culpa del horror que se está desarrollando, al pueblo iraquí y no al ejército estadounidense de ocupación.

Los medios dominantes generalmente están dando una amplia cobertura diaria a los sonos de tambor procedentes de los políticos estadounidenses, tanto republicanos como demócratas, que se frotan las manos y describen el caos y la violencia que seguirá a la retirada del ejército estadounidense. Este tema constantemente repetido se entretiene con la cobertura de los ataques sectarios y aparentemente sin sentido contra civiles por parte de “fuerzas terroristas”. En cada artículo de noticias se describe al ejército estadounidense como



uno tratando de acabar con la “violencia sectaria” e intentando desesperadamente de traer orden y seguridad.

Resistencia a la violenta ocupación

Lo que los medios buscan centrándose constantemente en los tumultos y en la aparentemente indiscriminada violencia, supuestamente cometida por milicias iraquíes contendientes, es ocultar la violencia total de la ocupación. También distorsionan quién es la resistencia y cuáles son las principales acciones en las que están comprometidos los luchadores de la resistencia. Según el informe del Brookings Institution —Irak Index, 23 de agosto— los ataques de la resistencia de todo tipo durante el año pasado, incluyendo bombas en las carreteras, ataques con misiles, ataques suicidas y coches-bombas, aumentaron de 4.000 a 5.000 al mes, o lo que es lo mismo, a más de 150 ataques al día.

El informe contiene una gráfica que demuestra que la inmensa mayoría de los ataques de la resistencia son ataques contra el ejército estadounidense y las fuerzas de seguridad iraquíes, no contra civiles. Según esta gráfica, el objetivo del 80 al 85% de los ataques son la ocupación y sus colaboradores.

Sin embargo, para el ejército imperialista de ocupación, toda la población iraquí se ha convertido en enemiga y es tratada con una represión brutal y absoluta provocando una destrucción generalizada.

El último envío de tropas estadounidenses ha aumentado (“surge”) el número de éstas en Irak a 170.000. También hay más de 200.000 “contratistas privados” o mercenarios. Según Jeremy Scahill, autor de “The Mercenary Revolution” [“La revolución mercenaria”], estos mercenarios no responden a ninguna autoridad o ley. Las autoridades de la ocupación estadounidense han garantizado a estos mercenarios una inmunidad total ante cualquier acusación, bien por parte de las leyes iraquíes o de las leyes militares estadounidenses. Los contratistas pueden interrogar o torturar a prisioneros, hacer labores de inteligencia y matar al azar.

La revista médica británica The Lancet ha publicado dos estudios sobre las muertes debidas a la invasión de Irak y a su continua ocupación. Los estudios de 2004

y 2006 calcularon el número de muertes causadas por la ocupación, tanto directa como indirectamente. El informe de The Lancet de 2006 informó que el cálculo más correcto del estudio era que desde junio de 2006, habían muerto 655.000 iraquíes más de lo que se podría haber esperado en una situación en ausencia de una guerra.

Desde entonces han pasado otros 14 meses de caos y violencia aún mayores que pueden haber aumentado el número de muertos hasta cerca de un millón.

Agencias de las Naciones Unidas, como el Alto Comisionado de NNUU para los Refugiados, informan que el 70% de la población iraquí carece de acceso a agua potable y que el 80% carece de servicios sanitarios efectivos. La Organización Mundial de la Salud ha constatado un aumento en los casos de diarrea y cólera debido al agua contaminada.

El informe de la Oxfam afirma que “los servicios de sanidad pública están generalmente en una situación catastrófica en la capital, en las principales ciudades y a través de los departamentos”. El 43% de l@s iraquíes se encuentra ahora sumido en la “pobreza absoluta”. La tasa de desempleo asciende al 50%. Desde que Estados Unidos impuso las sanciones a Irak [en agosto de 1990] mucha gente tuvo que depender de las raciones alimenticias repartidas por el gobierno y desde que empezó la ocupación su número ha aumentado. Pero la mayoría de l@s más de dos millones de desplazad@s internos en Irak no pueden conseguir raciones subvencionadas porque no están registrad@s en sus nuevos hogares.

Muchas escuelas están cerradas y los edificios han sido ocupados para alojar a las personas sin hogar. Más del 40% de l@s profesor@s de Irak, ingenier@s, personal médico y otr@s profesionales esenciales han abandonado el país desde 2003.

Crisis de refugiad@s y prostitución

Al menos otros dos millones y medio de iraquíes han huido a países cercanos. Cientos de miles han agotado sus ahorros. Unos 500.000 de l@s refugiad@s son niñ@s en edad escolar que tiene un acceso limitado a la educación o carecen totalmente de él.

Los informes afirman que para muchos miles de mujeres, que se han convertido en cabeza de sus familias, la prostitución se está convirtiendo en uno de los únicos medios de alimentar a sus familias. El London Independent, el New York Times, MSNBC y otros medios de comunicación, junto a Amnistía Internacional, confirman los informes sobre el aumento de la prostitución infantil y del tráfico de niñ@s iraquíes.

Hana Ibrahim, fundadora del grupo de mujeres iraquíes Women’s Will en Siria calcula que 50.000 mujeres han sido obligadas a entrar en el tráfico sexual porque sus maridos y padres han muerto y a ellas se les prohíbe trabajar legalmente.

Una familia tiene pocas opciones para sobrevivir.

El programa de Amnistía Internacional del Oriente Próximo y norte del África describe a la cada vez mayor población refugiada como “una crisis humanitaria que puede acabar con la zona”.

Refugee International informa que entre 40.000 y 50.000 iraquíes más huyen de sus casas cada mes, lo que convierte a esta crisis de refugiad@s en la que más rápidamente crece del mundo.

Colaboracionistas incapaces de gobernar

En Irak no existe actualmente un gobierno capaz de organizar o de proporcionar servicio social alguno: ni seguridad, ni servicios sanitarios, ni escuelas, ni electricidad o agua potable. Hay sólo un puñado de corruptos colaboracionistas con los estadounidenses, altos cargos de ministerios designados que viven en la Zona Verde estadounidense bajo la protección de los Estados Unidos. No se atreven a aventurarse fuera de la zona. Los contratistas estadounidenses se han dado cuenta de que no tienen a nadie sobre el terreno en la administración local que acepte los proyectos fraudulentos con los que los contratistas inflan los contratos que presentan al gobierno.

Cuanto más tiempo se queden las tropas estadounidenses en Irak, mayor será la destrucción y la violencia. La única solución de la ocupación es tratar de ahogar la resistencia en sangre y fragmentar la sociedad con tácticas de dividir y vencer. Esta ha sido la postura de Washington desde los primeros días de los bombardeos de la operación “Espanto y Pavor”.

La compensación que la ocupación ha exigido al gobierno títere de Nouri al-Maliki y al Parlamento iraquí incluye firmar la renuncia completa al control futuro de los recursos petrolíferos de Irak. Estas exigencias descaradamente coloniales lo único que hacen es aumentar la determinación de la mayoría de los iraquíes de resistir a la ocupación por todo los medios posibles.

Más que nunca Irak necesita un movimiento mundial que haga frente a las interminables excusas estadounidenses para seguir con la ocupación. Un movimiento que exija que se ponga fin a todos los fondos destinados a esta guerra criminal. Que exija que el ejército estadounidense salga de Irak y de la zona. Que exija reparaciones al gobierno soberano de Irak que con toda seguridad surgirá uno que sustituirá al régimen colaboracionista de modo que Irak pueda recuperarse del desastre que el imperialismo estadounidense ha impuesto a su pueblo.

Fuentes utilizadas en este artículo incluyen a:

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Enlace con el original: <http://www.workers.org/2007/world/iraq-0906/>