

# WORKERS WORLD

Workers and oppressed peoples of the world unite!



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50¢

## MASSES HIT APARTHEID JUSTICE

# 'We are all the Jena 6'

By Gloria Rubac  
Jena, La.

Sept. 20—A militant, dignified and powerful sea of mostly African Americans filled almost every street in the small rural town of Jena, La., today to let the world know that Jim Crow injustice is not going to be tolerated any longer.

With chants of "Enough is enough—Free the Jena Six", "We are all the Jena Six" and "No justice, no peace, no racist police!" throngs of people protested in front of the LaSalle Parish Courthouse, on the lawn of the Jena High School, in a large city park and on many streets throughout this small city.

They came from all over the United States, particularly from every single Southern state, by train, plane, bus, motorcycle and car, to take a stand in support of the Jena Six.

Dozens of historically Black colleges and universities had delegations, including

Texas Southern University, Prairie View A & M University, Paul Quinn College, Dillard University, Spelman College, Grambling State University, Jackson State University, North Carolina Central University and Southern University, to name a few.

Of the buses from Houston and surrounding areas, two were from Prairie View, three were from Texas Southern, and three had working people, students, youth and elders. Hundreds from Dallas caravanned with their churches, universities or groups of friends.

Many in Jena had never marched before but came with their school, while many

others were working people who had taken a day off. A large number of these latter had participated in the 1960s civil rights marches and protests.

Some groups of families and elders sat in portable, lightweight chairs in groups of 10 to 25, talking about the Jena Six, eating homemade picnic lunches, and reminiscing about the struggles that brought about the victories of the civil rights movement. They eagerly accepted literature and signed petitions.

A large delegation from North Carolina Central University Law School sat together in maroon law school shirts,  
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- Racist repression and gentrification are on the rise
- First U.S. Social Forum
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## Invitation or an ambush?

# Iranian president dukes it out at Columbia

By Deirdre Griswold  
New York

If the appearance of Iran's president, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, at Columbia University in New York on Sept. 24 proved anything, it is that the high-priced educational institutions of the United States are an integral part of the political establishment that directs the imperialist foreign policy of this country.

The event was intended to be a trap, a photo op to rev up anti-Iran propaganda to a white heat and give President George W. Bush a cover for the Pentagon's plans to attack that oil-rich country.

The tabloids in New York tried to crank up a lynch-mob spirit. "The evil has landed," was the huge front-page headline of the Daily News, along with a photo that caught Ahmadinejad with his eyes half closed.

Columbia's president, Lee Bollinger, had been harshly attacked, especially by supporters of Israel, for extending an invitation to the Iranian president. But they loved it when he spent 14 minutes insulting Ahmadinejad in what was supposed to be an introduction to this guest speaker. In the guise of giving a welcoming speech, Bollinger went completely over the line, calling the elected Iranian president a "petty, cruel dictator" who was either "brazenly provocative or astonishingly uneducated."

Outside, what amounted to an anti-Iran rally was taking place on the Columbia campus, to the delight of all the corporate news media.

Did it work? Only if you go by what the media said about the meeting. And that, of course, is all that most people in the United States get to hear about it.

But transcripts and the video that have made it onto the Internet show that Ahmadinejad was sharp, calm but combative, and restored some measure of reality to the event when he finally got a chance to talk. He also got support from some of the students.

After being pilloried by the head of the university—who, by the way, is also a member of the Federal Reserve Board of New York, a sign of his standing among the financial elite—Ahmadinejad right away replied, to applause, that in Iran a guest would never be treated that way: "We actually respect our students and the professors by allowing them to make their own judgment, and we don't think it's necessary before the speech is even given to come in with a series of claims and to attempt in a so-called manner to provide vaccination of some sort to our students and our faculty."

He went on to reply to the questions raised—something very few heads of state, especially those from the imperialist powers, ever do. Ahmadinejad and Iran have been accused of denying the Holocaust happened and of trying to build nuclear weapons. The imperialist powers, led by the United States but including Britain and now France, are actually threatening war against Iran, supposedly because of its nuclear program. A huge armada of U.S. warships sits off its coast.

Asked his position on the Holocaust, Ahmadinejad did not deny it happened, but questioned what had happened to the Middle East since then in its name. "It happened in Europe. The Palestinian people had no role to

play in it. ... Why is it that the Palestinians must pay the price, innocent Palestinians?" he asked. "For 5 million refugees to remain displaced or refugees abroad for 60 years—is this not a crime? Is asking about these things a crime by itself?"

Asked if he wanted to see Israel destroyed, the implication being that Iran was poised for a war against the Zionist settler state, Ahmadinejad referred to the territory as Palestine, and replied, "Let the people of Palestine freely choose what they want for their future."

The Israeli regime has expelled millions of Palestinians and won't let them return to their homeland, where they would become the majority. If democracy really existed there for all the people, including the Palestinians now forced into dismal refugee camps, a secular state of Arabs and Jews could have replaced the theocratic state of Israel a long time ago.

On Iran's nuclear development, Ahmadinejad stressed that its purpose was to provide peaceful power, that his country has been a member of the International Atomic Energy Agency for over 33 years, and that member states have the right to peaceful nuclear fuel technology. But he also pointed out the extreme hypocrisy of Washington on this issue. "If you have created the fifth generation of atomic bombs," he said, "and are testing them already, what position are you in to question the peaceful purpose of other people who want nuclear power?"

The next morning, in his speech to the UN General Assembly, Ahmadinejad laced into "certain powers" that pretend to be exclusive advocates of human rights while "Setting up secret prisons, abducting persons, trials and secret punishments without any regard to due process, extensive tapping of telephone conversations, intercepting private mail, and frequent summons to police and security centers have become commonplace and prevalent." Everyone understood who he was talking about; the U.S. and Israeli delegates boycotted the speech.

It wasn't long ago that Pentagon saber-rattling was so feared that few of the once-colonized countries of the world seeking sovereignty and peaceful development dared challenge U.S. imperialism in public. Like the resistance in Iraq and the emergence of nationalist regimes in Latin America, the Iranian leader's visit to the U.S. underscored that the times they are a-changing.

And they're changing inside the U.S., too. The liberal news Web site commondreams.org on Sept. 25 ran a short piece on Ahmadinejad's visit by Ru Freeman that excoriated Bollinger for acting "appallingly and disgracefully," and concluded that "the president of Iran possesses a grace that neither his host nor the hecklers at Columbia University nor the press in this country nor, I might as well state the obvious, the president of this country can claim."

By that evening, 116 e-mails had been posted commenting on Freeman's article—and they overwhelmingly criticized Bollinger's treatment of the Iranian president and the arrogance of U.S. authorities in general. One writer summed it up: "How come Bollinger never managed the courage to direct those words towards our own petty, cruel dictator?" □

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## WASHINGTON, D.C.

## Encampment targets FEMA, ICE &amp; Congress

By LeiLani Dowell  
Washington, D.C.

Anti-war activists, veterans, military families and community organizers from across the U.S.—from as far away as Oregon, Florida and Maine—arrived here beginning Sept. 22 for the Encampment to Stop the War at Home and Abroad, a tent city positioned in front of the Capitol building organized by the Troops Out Now Coalition (TONC).

The Encampment will culminate in a march on Sept. 29 with multiple targets: Congress for its complicity in funding the war; the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) for its continued racist neglect of the survivors of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita; and the Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) offices for the anti-worker raids and detentions against immigrants.

On Sept. 22, a large banner was erected that reads, “Congress, the whole world is watching: CUT OFF WAR FUNDS.” The Encampment is timed to coincide with the expiration of the current round of funding for the war and the ongoing debates in Congress. The appropriations passed in the last session of Congress are due to expire on Oct. 1.

Parked in front of the Encampment is the tour bus of Iraq Veterans Against the War, which features large signs reading, “Don’t attack Iran” and “Impeach Bush.” Along with TONC, Code Pink—Women for Peace, the Green Party and others have pitched their tents. More tents will be pitched as Katrina survivors, youth and students, Cuba solidarity and immigrants rights activists arrive in the coming days.

### Press conference announces Encampment

Organizers held a press conference Sept. 24 to announce the Encampment and the mass march on Sept. 29. TONC spokesperson Larry Holmes opened, saying, “The Democrats say they want to cut war funding but they can’t get past a veto. But they could simply make sure the funding question doesn’t get to the floor.”

Rev. Lennox Yearwood spoke about unity in the struggle: “I’m so pleased to see support here for the struggle in Jena; I was pleased to hear, in Jena, people talking about how the bombs in Baghdad are affecting people in the United States. ... Our struggles will continue, but we will win.” Yearwood was recently beaten by D.C. police at an anti-war press conference.

Adam Kokesh, co-chair of the board of directors of Iraq Veterans Against the War, described his organization’s demands, including immediate withdrawal of all forces from Iraq—and we mean Army, Navy, Air Force, Marines, Blackwater,

Halliburton”—and full payment of reparations to the people of Iraq.

Nana Soul of Artists and Activists United for Peace described the weeklong concert being held as part of the Encampment. “The movement needs cultural inspiration, talent and creativity. We know that [Iraq] isn’t the first time that the United States has invaded a sovereign nation. ... We have a chance to translate the [U.S. government’s] actions.”

Representing the Green Party, Vietnam War veteran Rick Clemens stressed: “This war is about imperialism, about the exploitation of labor power and markets of other peoples. There is no thing as ending the war without ending the economic system that perpetuates war—capitalism.”

Toby Blomé of Code Pink described the encampments their group has undertaken at Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi’s house, after months of her refusing to meet with them to discuss war funding. They plan on visiting her office regularly during the Encampment and will be fasting throughout the week; the group hosted an organizing meeting on Sept. 24 at the Encampment.

Vernon Hoffman, who biked 4,500 miles with his family from Portland, Ore., to join the Encampment, said he’d “rather bike for peace than kill for oil.”

Lastly, a young war resister described how he enlisted in the military in 2005 because of limited career opportunities in his rural hometown. However, he says, “I happened to join at the same time as Hurricane Katrina, and I saw on TV the bodies floating in the streets. It really hit home to me. I got out of training 25 weeks later and nothing had changed. Despite all the rhetoric about homeland security and national security, this government’s priorities are not for the people.”

### Hub of anti-war activity

The Encampment has become a veritable hub of anti-war activity in the D.C. Metro area. At daily morning and evening meetings, activists converge to plan their outreach strategies to build for the mass march on Sept. 29.

From the Encampment, teams have fanned throughout the Washington, D.C., and Baltimore, Md., areas putting up posters, handing out leaflets, riding in sound cars and talking to students on campuses and workers on the streets. The response has been overwhelmingly positive.

In addition, passersby to the Encampment, including many tourists, have been appreciative of its work. An activist reported that one such person showed his identification card—as an employee of the U.S. Embassy in Baghdad. He assured the activist that many people in the Green Zone in Iraq are in agreement with the



WW PHOTOS; LEILANI DOWELL

sentiments of the Encampment.

### ‘Get out of Iraq! Stay out of Iran!’

Responding to the venomous attacks against Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad during his visit to New York for a UN General Assembly meeting, Encampment activists piled into the IAW bus on Sept. 26 and rode to the White House, where they held a picket line to demand, “Get out of Iraq! Stay out of Iran!” Recalling the demonization of former Iraqi President Saddam Hussein, activists denounced the attacks on Ahmadinejad as an attempt to prepare the U.S. population for an expansion of the war to Iran.

Upcoming events include a discussion on the war at home in Washington, D.C.—where libraries are closing, thousands of units of affordable housing have been lost, and residents can’t vote—hosted by the Green Party; an event entitled “Justice for the Jena 6, Katrina/Rita survivors and immigrant workers: Fighting racism is building solidarity”; a vigil with the cast of the movie “SiCKO” for those who have died due to inadequate health care; a youth and student day of action; and events to free the Cuban 5 and to demand an end to political repression in the Philippines.

For more information, visit [www.troopsoutnow.org](http://www.troopsoutnow.org).

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WW PHOTOS; CHERYL LABASH

### LOS ANGELES

## ‘Tear down the walls’

Braving rain and stiff winds, the “Occupy the Occupiers” camp staked its territory at the Westwood Federal Building in Los Angeles on Sept. 22. First day workshops on the history of struggle in the Philippines by BAYAN and the struggle in El Salvador by Farabundo Marti Liberation Front (FMLN) culminated in the screening of “Salt of the Earth.”

The following day, Ron Kovic, disabled anti-war veteran of Vietnam, relived the sit-in on the seventeenth floor of the Westwood Federal Building 39 years ago that catapulted the inhuman conditions facing paralyzed Vietnam veterans in VA hospitals into the national media. Kovic, whose story was the basis of the film, “Born on the Fourth of July,” recounted how his consciousness changed from Marine vol-

unteer to life long anti-war campaigner.

The group held additional teach-ins on the history of Iraq plus the background of the strong resistance movement and the impeachment campaign. Despite the appearance of sheriffs in riot gear on day one and repeated visits from so-called “homeland security” throughout day two, participants kept up the banner making, music and discussion. On Sept. 25, the encampment broke to walk 15 miles to reconvene at the downtown Federal Building until the Sept. 29 march. They held street rallies at the Israeli, Philippine and Salvadoran Consulates on the way, chanting, “Tear down the walls from Palestine to Mexico” outside the Israeli Consulate. Pacifica station KPFC is the media sponsor.

—Cheryl LaBash



WW PHOTOS; DUSTIN LANGLEY

## Bosses' intransigence arouses resistance

# 73,000 striking GM workers fight for their jobs

**Bulletin:** On Sept. 26, General Motors and the United Auto Workers announced a tentative settlement that ended the two-day strike. The ripple effect of the two-day strike hurt GM. Buzz Hargrove, president of the Canadian Auto Workers Union, said that GM production in his country was coming to a standstill. In the U.S., Teamsters were refusing to cross picket lines and other labor support was growing. On the Sept. 29-30 weekend UAW members—only those active at GM—will be eligible to vote to accept or reject the agreement.



WW PHOTO: MARTH GREVATT

By Martha Grevatt

"You gotta do what you gotta do." After being on strike a mere eight hours, this General Motors (GM) worker summed up the feeling on the picket line at the Parma, Ohio stamping plant.

"They want more, and there's gotta be a point somewhere where you say no," another added.

They had been told on Monday, Sept. 24, to walk out at 11 a.m. if they weren't told otherwise. By 11:01 workers began streaming out of the plants by the thousands. This is the first national strike against GM since 1976.

The core issue, according to United Auto Workers President Ron Gettelfinger, is job security. Apparently the heads of GM are refusing to guarantee work to those 73,000 remaining autoworkers at the company that once employed hundreds of thousands.

It had been thought that if there was a strike it would be around the issue of retiree health care costs. Yet the two sides had actually agreed on the details on creating

a VEBA—Voluntary Employee Beneficiary Association—to be administered by the UAW. The VEBA would in the long run boost GM profits incalculably, as it would relieve the company of future burdens of paying for retiree benefits.

The VEBA represents a historic retreat from the position that obligated automakers to provide health insurance to all employees and retirees, as well as to their dependents. For more than half a million retired workers and loved ones, the lifetime coverage they've grown accustomed to is at risk. If the fund underperforms, it puts the UAW in the awkward position of cutting benefits to those it is supposed to represent.

Yet rather than show appreciation to the UAW for coming to its rescue, GM's reported stance was that the more they give to the VEBA the less they will be willing to preserve in the areas of wages and job security.

What inhumanity—asking the union to choose between job security or the security of affordable health care! After working

for decades at hard, monotonous and at times dangerous work—work from which the Big Three profited handsomely—why should anyone have to worry about becoming underinsured?

### GM provoked the strike

At the news conference announcing the strike, Gettelfinger pointed to the concessions already made by autoworkers in the past four years: "We're shocked and disappointed that General Motors has failed to recognize and appreciate what our membership has contributed during the past four years. Since 2003 our members have made extraordinary efforts every time the company came to us with a problem: the corporate restructuring, the attrition plan, the Delphi bankruptcy, the 2005 health care agreement. In every case, our members went the extra mile to find reasonable solutions."

The bosses don't care. Through no fault of the workers, domestic automakers have lost market share—losing billions—or they are seeing a radically diminished rate of profit. Dealers' lots are overflowing with gas-guzzling vehicles they can't sell. GM, Ford and Chrysler combined are nearly \$100 billion in debt for their health care obligations, and health insurance premiums are skyrocketing with no end in sight. The auto barons want to take a huge bite out of labor costs no matter how much or how many it hurts.

The corporation is determined to weaken the UAW with a severe cost-cutting policy. Their strategy—expand global operations at the expense of the North

American work force.

In the midst of negotiations, GM arrogantly announced plans to build an \$800 million state-of-the-art Buick plant in Shanghai. The global market is their future and the plunge in the dollar will make their products cheaper and more competitive, and expand operations abroad. The billions to be invested must come at the expense of the GM workers' jobs and benefits. Plants will be shut down to lower costs and investments in the U.S.

The third party in all these negotiations, causing both sides to weigh their options carefully, is the state of the capitalist economy. What began with the sub-prime mortgage crisis has morphed into a generalized crisis of the financial markets, causing lenders everywhere to tighten purse strings. Finance capital is not inclined to be generous towards the workers in the higher-paid manufacturing sector while its overall situation is precarious.

On the other hand, the economic crisis weighs heavily on the workers, many of whom are mired in debt for homes, cars and college tuition. A rumored \$5-per-hour wage cut, for example, could put someone in the position of choosing between taking their kid out of college or looking at foreclosure. Even one more plant closing would spell disaster for a town in Michigan or Ohio, where foreclosures are already the highest in the country.

No wonder the workers see a strike as "doing what you gotta do."

Whether the strike is short or long, in this context the display of workers' power by 73,000 UAW members has tremendous significance—more than can even be known at this time. □

## As auto showdown looms

# Forum examines globalization's impact on U.S. workers

By Jerry Goldberg  
Detroit

"Globalization, Imperialism and the Struggle for Socialism in the 21st Century" was the topic of a Sept. 8 Workers World Party public forum in Detroit. Fred Goldstein, National Committee member of WWP and a contributing editor of Workers World newspaper, was the featured speaker.

Goldstein, a leading WWP member and a communist activist and organizer for nearly 50 years, discussed the current attack on the working class in the context of the historical development of capitalism and imperialism, along with strategies and tactics to fight back in the current period. He had addressed these issues in May at an International Communist Symposium in Brussels, Belgium.

The Detroit meeting occurred at a critical moment for the working class. The hourly auto work force has diminished from 1 million workers in 1980 to 200,000 today. Despite this decline, in the current auto-industry contract negotiations the ruling class is clamoring for further concessions and givebacks from the workers, threatening them with even more plant closings. The bosses demand that the UAW take over the health benefits for workers and retirees through an underfunded and ill-conceived Voluntary Employee Benefits Association, or VEBA.

Goldstein explained the new phase of imperialism ushered in by the high-tech era, and its social effects. He elaborated on one of the themes of "Colossus with

Feet of Clay," a book about U.S imperialism that he is working on.

Goldstein pointed out that imperialism used to be characterized primarily by the robbery of the resources of the oppressed nations by the multinational corporations. The super-exploitation of the oppressed nations allowed the imperialists to maintain a layer of relatively well-paid workers in the oppressor nations who were the social base for the conservative labor leadership. This privileged, relatively highly paid layer allowed the class struggle to be moderated in the oppressor nations at the expense of the oppressed.

In its current phase, imperialism has expanded the plunder of the resources of the oppressed countries and added a new feature: the export of jobs globally to wherever bosses can pay the lowest wages. Workers in the oppressor nations are being pitted in a never-ending wage competition against those in the oppressed nations, creating a race to the bottom. This new global drive to bring down wages and working conditions is sure to revive the class struggle in the U.S. and other imperialist countries.

Goldstein stressed that the bosses within the United States have aimed their campaign of offshoring and outsourcing jobs, along with the super-exploitation of immigrant workers, at undermining the union movement. He showed that the attack on the unions is really an attack on the entire working class. Organized labor sets the economic standards for the working class as a whole.

Union struggles won the five-day 40-hour week, the eight-hour day, and all the protective labor laws including overtime pay, paid vacations, sick pay, the minimum wage, health care, Social Security, pensions, unemployment insurance, job safety provisions, limits on child labor, welfare for families unable to work, among other things. The bosses gave nothing without the struggle. Now, as the unions are being pushed back, the living standard of the entire working class is declining.

### Vast potential for fight back

Goldstein said that the capitalist media love to cite statistics about the decline of the unions. They mean to demoralize workers and make them feel powerless. In contrast, he emphasized the opposite point: that the unions are still in a potentially strong position in every industry and sector, including auto, steel, rubber, mining, trucking, air transport, railroads, the ports, municipal services, hospitals, schools and so on. The new "just-on-time" global production system renders the bosses vulnerable to shutdowns, if the workers can take advantage of the situation.

As such, they have a vast potential to open up a struggle to fight back. It is the leadership and the will to struggle that are the decisive questions.

In order for the fight back to be effective, it must be based on the unions mobilizing far beyond organized labor. It must include demands for the working class and the oppressed communities

as a whole. Fighting racism and national oppression, and organizing and defending undocumented workers, must be on the top of labor's agenda, he said.

For example, labor should be in the forefront of the struggle for justice for Katrina survivors and to free the Jena 6. Labor must fight, Goldstein said, for the rights of women, lesbians, gay, bi and trans people. It must fight for health care, housing, an end to subprime mortgage foreclosures, and many other demands. It must become the engine of social progress.

And just as class solidarity at home is essential to victory, international solidarity is the only answer to the bosses' program of international wage competition. For example, he said, the UAW could invite workers, organized and unorganized, from Mexico, Thailand, Brazil, wherever GM workers are, to participate as consultants, as representatives of GM workers, to fight for improving conditions both in the U.S. and internationally.

The labor movement must reach out to workers from India to Poland, Goldstein said. The new communications technology used by the capitalists against labor internationally can be turned around and used by the international working class to organize against capital.

If labor is to turn the situation around, said Goldstein, there needs to be a rank-and-file leadership that not only fights the demand for concessions but rejects the bourgeois idea that the workers have to help the bosses be "competitive" or face

Continued on page 8

## ON THE PICKET LINE

by Sue Davis

### Labor supports Jena 6

"In addition to our contingent from the Chicago Area Region 4 Civil Rights Council of the Auto Workers at the Jena 6 rally, I saw contingents of Longshoremans from Charleston, S.C., postal workers from New Orleans and health-care workers from California," Larry Goldbetter, member of the National Writers Union, UAW Local 1981, told Workers World.

"You could just sense the potential in the huge crowd, which was two-thirds youth. It was incredible."

Before that, on Sept. 14, Goldbetter reported that the Region 4 UAW Civil Rights Council had passed a unanimous resolution to send representatives with a \$500 check to the Sept. 20 rally.

The resolution included two other provisions: informing members of all locals and shops in UAW Region 4 about the racist injustice in the Jena 6 case and conducting plant gate collections to aid the legal defense.

Goldbetter also reported that on Sept. 17, UAW Local 551 at the Chicago Ford Assembly Plant had passed a similar resolution at their membership meeting and sent a \$500 check with their delegation to the rally. That local also took up a shift-change collection.

"I am proud to represent our union in Jena and urge every member to take part in this struggle," wrote Goldbetter. "Send a check to the NAACP-Jena Fund and raise it in your union to get your local to take a stand."

Members of the Steering Committee of the NWU New York Chapter responded by signing the petition on [www.colorofchange.org/jena](http://www.colorofchange.org/jena). If you haven't yet signed the petition, do so today.

### Taxi drivers sue to stop GPS

Eight taxi drivers and the New York Taxi Workers Alliance filed a class action lawsuit on Sept. 19 asking for a temporary restraining order to prevent global positioning software technology from being installed in the city's 13,000 yellow cabs.

The lawsuit charged that forcing drivers who own cabs to install unwanted and costly equipment in their private property is unconstitutional.

In the meantime, the 13,000 drivers who belong to the NYTWA began voting on whether to authorize another strike after their successful Sept. 5-6 job action. There is no official word on when a second walkout would take place, but it might be before Oct. 1.

The Taxi & Limousine Commission has stipulated that all cabs must have GPS technology for their first inspection after that date. ([www.ny1.com](http://www.ny1.com))

### UFCW holds talks with Smithfield

The United Food and Commercial Workers union announced Sept. 21 that it has begun negotiations with Smithfield Foods about representing the 5,500 workers in its plant in Tar Heel, N.C.

The statement read in part: "In past elections, workers have been threatened, called racial epithets, fired and even assaulted for their support of the union. So while we are hopeful that we can reach an agreement, we are determined that only a clearly defined process that fully protects the workers' right to choose a union is acceptable."

For periodic updates about the Smithfield workers' struggle for union representation, visit [www.ufcw.org](http://www.ufcw.org) and sign the petition to demand justice for the workers.

### Verizon guilty of union busting

On Sept. 13 the National Labor Relations Board took a very unusual stance when it supported charges brought by the Communication Workers that Verizon Business was engaged in union busting in Pittsburgh and in Monsey, N.Y.

The union charged that Verizon "has been interfering with, restraining and coercing employees in the exercise of their rights."

The NLRB found that Verizon admitted it had fired Verizon Wireless workers for union activity and boasted of this as a threat to frighten other workers.

A union statement noted that VBZ workers have faced a relentless campaign of coercion, surveillance, firings and other anti-union tactics to stamp out efforts at collective bargaining. Despite that, the majority of VBZ workers have signed union cards.

Separate NLRB hearings on these cases are set for Oct. 31 in Pittsburgh and Nov. 5 in New York City.

### Support passage of ENDA!

The Employment Non-Discrimination Act is moving toward a vote in Congress. It's imperative for all progressive people to tell their legislators that the federal government must protect working people against discrimination on the basis of sexual and gender identity.

To learn more about ENDA and to sign the Pride at Work petition, go to [www.unionvoice.org/campaign/pawenda](http://www.unionvoice.org/campaign/pawenda).

An injury to one is an injury to all! □

# Jena 6 highlight right to self-defense

By Larry Hales

*"I don't favor violence. If we could bring about recognition and respect of our people by peaceful means, well and good. Everybody would like to reach his objectives peacefully. But I'm also a realist. The only people in this country who are asked to be nonviolent are Black people."*

*"Nonviolence is only preached to Black Americans, and I don't go along with anyone who wants to teach our people nonviolence until someone at the same time is teaching our enemy to be nonviolent. I believe we should protect ourselves by any means necessary when we are attacked by racists."*

—Malcolm X, 1965

Surely no Black person, for that matter any oppressed person, considers the hanging of nooses a prank. Nor should any white person. Such a thing is never done in jest, but is a threat of an intended action, a threat meant to control behavior or actions. It is a threat of an oppressor to keep the oppressed in line. The racists who hung the nooses were very clear on what they were doing.

Thousands of Black people have been lynched in this country, extra-legally and legally. There have been numerous studies of recorded lynchings of Black people, especially between 1865 and 1965. There are no really accurate numbers but most historians agree that these numbers range in the thousands, with the largest disproportionate number taking place in the South beginning with the end of Reconstruction.

The lynchings continued even after 1965. In 1981 19-year-old Michael Donald was lynched in Alabama. James Byrd was dragged to his death in 1998 in Texas; though he was not hanged with a rope, this is still considered a lynching.

So a noose is not a benign symbol.

The young Black students, now known as the Jena 6, who sat under the "White Students Only" tree, challenging a racist code at the high school in Jena, La., took a bold action. Their action is reminiscent of the actions taken by SNCC (Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee) and other groups at lunch counters during the Civil Rights era in the South.

When the oppressed resist or defend themselves, the state will seek to crush any inkling of resistance and defense before racist terror.

This is so because racism is a weapon of the U.S. capitalist rulers. The virulent ultra-right racists, such as the KKK or Nazi skinheads, are small. It may be difficult to ascertain their actual numbers, but relative to the actual number of people in the United States, their numbers are very small. Even the Minutemen, racists who have doffed their

white robes and hoods, are small in number. They have attempted, but failed, to ally themselves with oppressed nationalities who are U.S. citizens against immigrant workers—to divide the unity of the oppressed.

But, as Sam Marcy, the late chairperson of Workers World Party, wrote in "The Klan & the Government: Foes or Allies": "The financing and the spread of neo-fascist and downright KKK and Nazi groupings is a logical supplement to the legal repressive and terrorist apparatus of the capitalist state in times of need. For that reason, a short-lived perspective in fighting the fascist menace is erroneous."

Movements don't spring up spontaneously. Marcy also pointed out, "Capitalism is the fountainhead of political reaction in general and of KKK and neo-Nazi terror in particular."

Reaction springs from the system itself. While ultra-right groupings may appear to be on the fringe and isolated, they never disappear and are never insignificant under capitalism. Groups like the Minutemen, in seething chauvinist fits, will try to appeal to the masses in an economic downturn, such as is beginning now, but they exist to confuse workers in general, to divide the oppressed from one another, but ultimately to maintain the white supremacist-dominated U.S. capitalist system.

The events in Jena highlight perfectly the racism inherent and endemic to the system. Many have and will continue to try to minimize the impact of hanging nooses by labeling it as an isolated event or a prank.

Even in defense of the Jena 6, some may say, "It was just a school fight. Why the ridiculous charges against the six young Black men?"

However, it should be stated emphatically that what the Black youths did was self-defense and that it is the right of the oppressed to defend themselves.

#### Demonization of Black youth

The state's response is a symptom of the racist in-justice system. This can be seen in the criminalization of the poor, especially people of color. Black people make up half of the more than 2.2 million people incarcerated in U.S. prisons. Add the number of people in jails and on parole or awaiting trial and the number is over 8 million.

Unemployment in the Black community has been consistently in the double digits and in major cities such as New York can be as high as 50 percent for young men in their twenties. The lack of health care, education and other disparities are all glaring in the

case of Black people in the U.S., and similar for all the oppressed.

Black people are vilified and Black men in particular are made society's pariah. These are the conditions the Jena 6—Robert Bailey Jr., 17; Theo Shaw, 17; Carwin Jones, 18; Bryant Purvis, 17; Jessie Rae Beard, 14; and Mychal Bell, 16—lived with at the time of their arrest.

When the nooses were hung from the tree, history compounded with the nature of racism today. If Jena was and is not a racist place, as some white residents have claimed—all while avoiding the mass march that symbolized an uprising of Black people across the country in response to the Jena 6 case—then the students responsible would have been dealt with by the white residents in solidarity with the Black residents.

This, however, is not what happened. A series of events occurred, including the light treatment of the white students who hung the nooses; the threat by the district attorney to make the lives of the Black students disappear with the "stroke of his pen"; the beating of Robert Bailey; the pulling of a shotgun on Robert Bailey and two of his friends, and subsequent theft charges after the young men disarmed the white person.

Nothing was done. What were the young men to do in the wake of these attacks and threats? What was left to them in a small town that is more than 85 percent white?

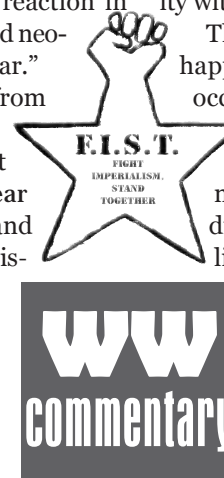
When Justin Barker was attacked for jeering Robert Bailey and calling the young men the "n" word, the young men were standing up and defending their fellow students, themselves and the entire Black community.

The response of the local state officials was an assertion that young Black men don't have the right to self-defense—that they should cower and hide, because the officials already showed they would not act to stop the racists.

The Jena 6 are heroes and should be held in that light, as history will attest. Their actions of defense were for the oppressed of Jena, for the people of New Orleans, victims of police brutality and racist terror. Their actions and the reaction of the state have awakened the Black masses and have sparked an emerging uprising across the country.

It is up to the anti-racist, anti-imperialist movement to lift up the Jena 6. Their freedom must be demanded. All charges should be dropped and the D.A. stripped of his position and license to practice law. And the progressive and working-class movements should affirm and support the right of the oppressed to self-defense.

The writer is a leader of FIST (Fight Imperialism, Stand Together) youth group. Contact [fist@workers.org](mailto:fist@workers.org).



## As thousands march for Jena 6

# Mychal Bell denied bail

By Monica Moorehead

The day after tens of thousands of people, mostly African Americans, marched and rallied Sept. 20 in Jena, La., to demand justice for six Black teenagers known as the Jena 6, Mychal Bell, the only one of the six who is incarcerated, was refused bail. That bail had originally been set for \$90,000.

Along with Bell, Robert Bailey Jr., Carwin Jones, Bryant Purvis, Theo Shaw and Jesse Ray Beard were originally charged with second-degree attempted murder and conspiracy in the beating of a white student, Justin Barker, last Dec. 4. Barker was able to attend a school function the same day after being released from the hospital.

Three months before the arrests, racist students had hung three nooses from a "white students only" tree that Black students defiantly sat under at Jena High School. The Black students had asked permission from the school administration to sit under the tree.

Charges for four of the Jena Six have since been reduced to battery as they

await trial. If convicted, these youths could receive up to 22 years in prison. One of them has been allowed to attend school while the other four remain expelled.

Three white teens who hung the nooses were suspended from school but were not prosecuted. According to the law, the nooses were a "prank."

When one of the Jena Six attended a mostly white party soon after the Dec. 4 incident, he was physically attacked. As of now, no one has been arrested for this racist assault.

On the other hand, Bell has been incarcerated for the past nine months. He was convicted of attempted murder charges and remained so until the week before the Sept. 20 protest, when a state appeals court overturned the conviction. The ruling stated that Bell could not be tried as an adult. Bell has turned 17 since his arrest.

On Sept. 21, Bell's parents, Melissa Bell and Marcus Jones, other family members and supporters attended his bail hearing in a Baton Rouge court. His parents brought fresh clothes for him to change into in anticipation of his release. It was not to be.

The same judge who presided over Bell's trial as an adult stated that Bell was not to be released until prosecutors decide to appeal the state ruling. Bell's parents left the courtroom stunned and in tears.

Prosecutors could possibly institute new charges against Bell.

Bell's parents along with the Rev. Al Sharpton will be meeting with U.S. Rep. John Conyers in Washington, D.C., on Sept. 25 to seek Senate Judicial Committee hearings on the Jena Six case.

After the massive Jena Six rally in Jena, a Ku Klux Klan youth was spotted by Black protesters driving a pick-up truck with two nooses hanging from it in the nearby town of Alexandria. Also, a neo-Nazi group has made death threats against the Six on its Web site and have actually published the addresses of some of the youths.

Larry Holmes, a leader of the Troops Out Now Coalition, which is organizing a week-long encampment Sept. 22-28 at the U.S. Capitol to demand an end to war funding told WW: "The case of the Jena Six is much more than the racist persecution of six Black youth in the Deep South. This case and countless similar but lesser

known cases personify the widespread epidemic of criminalization and scapegoating of Black people, especially young men, by the government from the East Coast to the West Coast and in between."

Holmes went on to say: "The demonstrations in Jena and throughout the country on Sept. 20 were very significant, especially for the truly massive outpouring by the Black community. What was disappointing was the small turnout by whites who should have been in Jena also in huge numbers alongside their African-American sisters and brothers. This type of multinational unity would have shaken the foundation of the racist status quo. There has to be a concrete commitment especially on the part of whites to show anti-racist solidarity with Black people, immigrants and other people of color who are on front lines when it comes to resisting repression. This is a clarion call to the entire movement to make this a top priority no matter what kinds of struggles you may be involved in."

Sources for this article include National Action Network Web site.

## SOLIDARITY WITH JENA 6 SPANS THE U.S.

The protest demanding justice for the Jena 6 extended far beyond the tens of thousands of people who were able to make the journey to Louisiana. In a movement comparable to the recent upsurge in the immigrant rights struggle in its grassroots nature, demonstrations took place in cities large and small, from coast to coast. This outpouring brings hope that a stronger, more militant rebirth of a new civil rights movement is on the horizon.

### LOS ANGELES

Activists and Students for African People joined forces in solidarity with the Jena 6. Jasimen Tyler of United Liberation Army—an organization of anti-capitalist, pro-immigrant Black youth—stressed the importance of this case to the lives of all Black people.

The event grew to hundreds with militant chants and speeches reaffirming the right of Black people to self-determination and defense against all racists, specifically the police.

The Black community was not alone. William Torres, a leading organizer from the March 25th Coalition for Immigrant Rights, spoke of this struggle as being one with the immigrant rights movement, stating, "We are all one people."

Namibia Donadio, a Latina organizer and member of the Troops Out Now Coalition, reminded everyone of people's power when they are united and understand their common enemy as the same grouping that forces them to go to war against Iraq.

TONC member Bev Tang of BAYAN-USA pledged the support and solidarity of the Filipino community in this struggle for justice. Introducing Tang, the emcee exclaimed, "We've got the Filipinos in the house, y'all!" to rousing applause.

Earlier, Black Surfers closed down half of Sunset Boulevard for two hours.

### SYRACUSE, N.Y.

Ariel Hall, 15 years old, cut classes to attend one of two rallies that drew 600 people, dressed in black. Many wore free T-shirts from Power 106.9-FM radio inscribed "Free the Jena 6."

Tenth-grader Hall said: "I'm proud to



LOS ANGELES



PHILADELPHIA



CLEVELAND



WW PHOTOS: CHERYL LABASH, BETSEY PIETTE AND SHARON DANANN

be part of something. I'm shocked to see that racism isn't over. It's still alive."

Preston Fagan, president of the Syracuse-Onondaga NAACP chapter, said: "This issue is happening in Syracuse. Jena just woke us up." He and other speakers compared the Jena 6 case to the federal RICO law used to crack down on city youth resulting in the prosecution of 56 young African Americans.

Minister Mark Muhammad of the Nation of Islam told the crowd: "Young men are getting railroaded. There's a whole gang of them not guilty of anything. ... If they are sitting on the block and maybe sold some drugs once, they shouldn't be doing 15 to 20 years in jail and getting arrested by association."

### ITHACA, N.Y.

About 50 students at Cornell University staged a rally sponsored by the Black sorority Sigma Gamma Rho and Black fraternity Iota Phi Theta.

"The goal was to get exposure for the issue. ... We can't ignore oppression; we face it every day," said event organizer Christopher Whylie.

### WASHINGTON, D.C.

More than 2,500 people gathered for a rally that lasted six hours outside the Russell Senate Office Building. Brad Luna of the Human Rights Campaign for LGBT rights said: "What a wonderful scene to see and hear people—Black, white, gay, straight—all standing together chanting, 'Enough is enough!' Injustice against one of us is a cold, hard reminder that injustice in America still exists for a lot of us!"

Later thousands packed an auditorium at Howard University where thunderous

applause broke out when a speaker said: "We're here to identify our enemy. And that enemy is injustice!"

### PHILADELPHIA

Several thousand young people, predominantly Black, joined in two days of solidarity rallies. Seven hundred Temple University students staged a walkout to attend a rally that had been organized by the Black Student Union using Facebook, an online social-networking tool.

Organizer Maj Toure said, "It calls to mind images of lunch-counter sit-ins in the Jim Crow South, peace rallies during the Vietnam era, and anti-South African apartheid protests."

David Fattah, co-founder of the House of Umoja, said: "They have awakened a sleeping giant. That fire from the civil-rights movement has finally caught up with them." He mentioned Emmett Till. The lynching of Till, a Black teen killed by a white mob in 1955, was an important spark for the Montgomery, Ala., bus boycott that began three months after his killing. "It's that kind of anger they're waking up to," Fattah concluded.

More than 1,000 people joined an 8 p.m. protest that surrounded City Hall and led to a spontaneous march through Center City that caught police and rally organizers off guard. Outrage over the Jena 6

brought many first-time protesters out.

A Black motorcycle club also led a procession to the sports complex named for Wachovia Bank because its founders profited off the slave trade.

Speaker Pam Africa, from International Concerned Family and Friends of Mumia Abu-Jamal, linked the protest around the Jena 6 to the growing movement against injustice and war. She got a positive response from those gathered.

### CLEVELAND

The morning air rang with militant chants as more than 500 people marched from an inner-city boys' school to Cleveland State University for a rally organized by the Black Studies Program.

The song "Wake up, everybody" became the chant, "Wake up, America!" repeated with building intensity. "No justice, no peace!" morphed to "No peace! No peace!"

The coalition of organizations calling the event included the NAACP, Nation of Islam, New Black Panther Party, Black on Black Crime, Inc., Survivors/Victims of Tragedy, Inc., New Alliance of Black Nationalists, Antioch Baptist Church, and United Church of Christ Justice and Witness Ministries.

# 'It felt like history in the making'

By Dianne Mathiowetz  
Jena, La.

Sept. 20—There is probably no way to determine the exact number of people who filled the streets of Jena, La., for more than 12 hours today.

It was both a work and a school day in this small town in rural Louisiana, far from any major population center and accessible mainly by a two-lane road. Yet, from dawn until dusk, the scene in downtown Jena was one of an ever-flowing crowd of people wearing black tee shirts—people of all ages but of one mind: to demand justice now for six African-American teenagers whose prosecution for a schoolyard fight with a white classmate illuminates the racial disparities endemic to the U.S. justice system.

It is clear to all that many, many thousands gathered in Jena. Was it 100,000, as some say? It was impossible to count them all, but for sure those tens of thousands came representing hundreds of thousands; came demanding justice for the millions of African-American people throughout the country who suffer daily from racial discrimination, national oppression and racist profiling.

During the huge turnouts of immigrants in the spring of 2006, when millions at May Day demonstrations throughout the U.S. demanded dignity and human rights, the corporate media, as usual, was oblivious to the massive mobilizations taking place in communities of color. Jena is no exception.

Arrogant in their ability to define what is news and confident that people have been rendered incapable of acting in their own interests, the major television networks and newspapers scrambled to catch up with these historic actions.

A vital element is the role of the radio talk show hosts whose programs aired the issues concerning the community.

Michael Baisden, Tom Joyner and other nationally syndicated radio personalities played a major role in alerting Black communities across the country to the situation that was unfolding in Jena.

Many youth, especially on the campuses of historically Black colleges and universities, became educated about the case through the Internet. Many blogs aroused students to mount demonstrations and rallies and teach-ins on their campuses as schools came into session this fall. The Color Of Change activists harnessed this technology to blast the case all over cyberspace.

Certainly the support of Rev. Al Sharpton and his National Action Network, Rev. Jesse Jackson, the American Civil Liberties Union, the Nation of Islam, the NAACP, the Southern Christian Leadership Conference and other national organizations and famous personalities were important in bringing the case to light and persisting, despite the lack of interest by the corporate media.

What was apparent when watching the mass of people in Jena was the grass-roots

character of who chartered and filled the hundreds of buses. The organizers were first-time demonstrators from colleges and universities; union members from Detroit's auto plants and Teamsters from Atlanta; church women, Black businesspeople, parents, and neighborhood activists mostly from towns and cities across the South but also from the Northeast, Midwest, Southwest and West Coast.

Carloads of families and friends drove for hours, bringing children so they could be part of "making history."

Grey-haired seniors who had experienced the terror of Klan night-riders and lynchings during the 1960s; residents of New Orleans and the Gulf Coast who have survived criminal neglect and injury by the government during Katrina and Rita; mothers and fathers who can never escape worrying about whether their children will be victims of police brutality, all melded together in the courthouse square, in parks where parallel rallies were taking place, and along the streets in front of shuttered businesses.

The slogans on two of the most com-

mon signs explain why the protest defied all expectations: "Enough is enough" and "We are the Jena 6."

Distrust of the justice system, the presence of inequality every day decades after the passage of civil rights legislation, the ever-looming possible loss of employment, housing, healthcare and education, and the weight of endless war and occupation caused an eruption from below.

It was a remarkable day, not just in Jena but everywhere else that people rallied and marched in solidarity, wore black to work or school, and talked about organizing to make a change.

Will Jena mean the same for this generation that Montgomery or Selma meant for the millions decades ago who broke the back of Jim Crow segregation? That story is yet to be written by those who on Sept. 20 marched and rallied, listened and chanted, taught and learned from each other that a movement is when the people MOVE in an unstoppable journey toward freedom.

The writer is an organizer of the International Action Center in Atlanta, Ga.

## 'We are all the Jena 6'



WW PHOTOS: GLORIA RUBAC

Continued from page 1

taking in all the activities with wide eyes. One young woman commented, "I thought this only happened in history books. And here I am!"

A middle-class Black family sat together in lawn chairs with a big sign that read "No justice, no peace—OKC" and had a large peace sign in the middle. When asked if the "OKC" meant Oklahoma City, they proudly told WW they had driven all night from there to be a part of history and take a stand in support of the Jena Six.

Working Black ranchers from rural Florida attended. They said to tell everyone that Black ranchers were represented in Jena and emphasized that they not only owned their ranches but also worked them every day.

Folks from all over Louisiana attended, from big cities like Baton Rouge, New Orleans and Lake Charles to small towns like Broussard, New Iberia, Bunkie, Wilson, Houma, Crowley and Opelousous.

Traditional civil rights organizations were well represented. Large groups carried NAACP signs from many cities. The SCLC also had hundreds of signs.

There were also members of the New Black Panther Party, the Millions More Movement, the National Black United Front, and other activist and revolutionary organizations.

A large white RV owned by Robert Clark of Monroe, La. had people on top of it speaking to the crowds all morning. A man recited Martin Luther King's speech on Vietnam as well as his "I Have a Dream" speech from the 1963 march on

Washington.

Clark began raising bail money for Mychal Bell, one of the Jena Six., around 10 a.m. By noon over \$18,000 had been collected in donations of \$5, \$10, \$20 and \$100. The crowd on that block cheered every time someone put a bill in the box and Clark said who they were and where they were from. When it was announced that over \$18,000 had been raised and that they would try to bail out Mychal Bell that afternoon, the crowd went wild.

Because every street in Jena has only two small lanes, and because the courthouse rally had an inadequate sound system for such a huge crowd, each block began its own impromptu rallies, street meetings, drumming, second line dancing, picnics, reunions, conga lines and marches.

The mood of the crowd was very serious, militant and determined. Many conveyed the feeling that they knew the whole world was watching Jena and were therefore careful to maintain discipline while being excited, angry and focused. Participants picked up every scrap of paper and every empty water bottle off lawns and streets.

Taking photos and videos was the order of the day. At the Texas Death Penalty Abolition Movement table, several people asked that the banner be held straighter as they snapped the shutter so folks at home could see who was there in Jena.

Two men from Mobile, Ala., held a big white banner. They asked people to sign it so they could send it to the Jena Six families. It read, "Free the Jena Six—Mobile, Alabama." Hundreds of people signed with their names and hometowns.

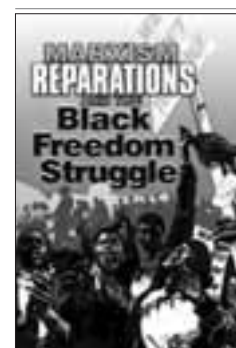
At least a dozen different Jena Six tee shirts were being sold. Many organizations

had come wearing their own originally designed shirts. Others sold shirts on the street. Some shirts had nooses, some had the "White Tree," and some had quotes from Fannie Lou Hamer. Over 90 percent of the crowd wore black, as requested by organizers.

Some sympathetic whites in Jena waved to the buses while sitting in their yards. One elderly man gave two thumbs up to the crowd and told them, "Thanks for coming!"

Despite the 90-degree heat and not a cloud in the sky, people were focused and unity was the theme. Everyone agreed that each state has its own Jena, that it isn't just Louisiana. And all left with a determination to continue the fight, not only for the Jena Six but for justice, when they get back to their homes.

The writer is an organizer with the Texas Death Penalty Abolition Movement in Houston.



### Marxism, Reparations & the Black Freedom Struggle

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### DENVER

At least 100 people gathered in solidarity with the national rally for the Jena 6 in Denver's historic Black neighborhood of Five Points.

Speakers, poets and musicians called for support for the Jena 6.

One musician had composed a special blues song for the Jena 6. The chorus was, "Never did I hear of such a thing as a white folks' tree." Another group of three poets called for Black and Brown unity in times of racial injustice.

### FAIRFAX, VA.

At an open speak-out at George Mason University the podium was placed under the shade of a tree. First-year student Marty Sullivan said: "The civil-rights movement didn't begin in the 60s and didn't end in the 60s. It began when the first Black slave was brought to America ... and it's not going to end anytime soon."

A diverse group of students and officials spoke to a growing audience in front of the Student Union. School faculty supported the rally, saying they were proud of GMU students for becoming active.

Concluded senior Lauren Williams: "Racism ends today! Not tomorrow!"

The following writers contributed to this round-up: John Parker, Los Angeles; Sharon Black, Baltimore; Sharon Danann, Cleveland; Melissa Kleinman, Denver; and Betsey Piette, Philadelphia. □

# NYC solidarity movement cheers Cuban minister

By Teresa Gutierrez  
New York

At the same time that President Bush's administration was slashing desperately needed public housing in New Orleans, George Bush was at the United Nations this week hypocritically denouncing and demonizing various world leaders.

One of those leaders is the beloved president of Cuba, Fidel Castro.

Cuba has been a target of U.S. imperialism since 1959 when the island nation decided to prioritize the needs of its people over the dictates of the multinational corporations. Since then, despite many obstacles, the Cuban Revolution has stood as a shining example for the people of the world that a society based on peoples' needs, a socialist society, is far superior to a capitalist one.

Bush's slanderous remarks against Cuba this week were nothing new.

The U.S. government has imposed on Cuba the longest economic and political blockade in U.S. history. It has carried out more than 600 attempts to assassinate President Fidel. And it has aided and abetted right-wing counterrevolutionaries to operate out of Miami and carry out acts of sabotage against Cuba.

For that and for much more, the Cuban government was forced to send to the U.S. some of its best children in order to moni-

tor the acts of terrorism emanating from Florida. These Cubans were defending not only their country from terrorist attacks but they were saving U.S. lives as well.

The U.S. government, despite the fact that the Cuban government had notified the U.S. of their presence in this country, arrested these Cubans on Sept. 12, 1998.

These men are Fernando González, René González, Antonio Guerrero, Gerardo Hernández and Ramón Labañino. These five heroes sit in U.S. federal jails throughout the country facing some of the harshest sentences ever. In addition, families of two of the prisoners continue to be denied visitation rights by the U.S. Justice Department.

They remain in jail today, examples of not only Cuba's best, but of the spirit of resistance against merciless imperialism, a testament that justice will prevail despite the odds.

## Cubans address the solidarity movement

Representing Cuba at the U.N. this week was Foreign Minister Felipe Pérez Roque.

The Cuban foreign minister spoke at the U.N. on the issue of global warming. In addition, the Cubans hosted an event at the Cuban Mission on Sept. 24 where Pérez Roque spoke to many of Cuba's supporters.

When President Bush addressed the U.N. General Assembly on Sept. 25 and went into a tirade against Cuba, the Cuban delegation magnificently walked out during Bush's comments.

Bush said: "In Cuba, the long rule of a cruel dictator is nearing its end. The Cuban people are ready for their freedom. And as that nation enters a period of transition, the United Nations must insist on free speech, free assembly and, ultimately, free and competitive elections."

The Cuban delegation later issued a statement saying the decision by Foreign Minister Felipe Pérez Roque to leave the session was "a sign of profound rejection of the arrogant and mediocre statement by President Bush."

U.S. imperialism—whether its government is headed by Republicans or Democrats—will never reconcile itself with revolutionary socialist Cuba. When Bush said that "the long rule of a cruel dictator is nearing its end" and "as the nation enters a period of transition," he got a lot of things wrong. On purpose, of course.

Cuba has already made its transition: from a neo-capitalist colony to a socialist liberated island.

Fidel has never been a cruel dictator. Not only the Cuban people but the masses around the world deeply love and respect Fidel. He would not be alive today if that were not true.

At the public event for Foreign Minister Pérez Roque, the Cuba solidarity movement gave a stirring standing ovation as soon as Pérez Roque entered the room. He received this ovation not just because—as guest speaker and Cuba's dear friend, Rev. Lucius Walker, said—Roque is "one of the youngest and best foreign ministers in the world." The standing ovation was because Cuba is dear to the hearts of the progressive movement in the U.S., too.

At the event, the Cubans recognized the many activists and leaders of different organizations who came to hear the foreign minister. They were of all nationalities and many political tendencies. Pérez Roque's comments that Fidel's health was fine received thunderous applause.

That applause represents what the masses around the world that are yearning and fighting for their own liberation want for Cuba: a healthy and long life not only for its president but for its Revolution.

The guest speakers at the event represented IFCO/Pastors for Peace, the Venceremos Brigade, Cuba Solidarity NY and the Popular Education Front for the Cuban Five as well as Rainbow Solidarity for the Cuban Five.

They, as well as everyone else in the room, left the event motivated to keep up the work to free the Cuban Five and to defend revolutionary Cuba against U.S. imperialism. □

# Battle over abortion rights moves to Illinois

By Kris Hamel

Aurora, Ill., has become the latest battleground in the struggle for abortion rights. Located 42 miles southwest of Chicago, the city has been besieged by anti-choice protesters since it became known that Planned Parenthood was building a new, state-of-the-art clinic there for women's health care. The 22,000-square-foot clinic will provide a full range of women's medical services, including cancer screening, contraception and abortion.

In July, anti-choice zealots found out that the clinic was under construction and set to open in September. They immediately began holding mass protests and "pray-ins" at the construction site.

In a shameful act of deference to anti-choice protesters, city officials have asked the county prosecutor to review the clin-

ic's permits for fraud and other criminal violations. In August, the anti-woman forces had jammed a City Council meeting at which Aurora officials conceded and ordered an investigation of the permit process for the new facility.

Planned Parenthood applied for and was granted construction and other required permits under the subsidiary name of Gemini Office Development, a completely legal business maneuver. Aurora city leaders have knuckled under to the right wing, which has stated that Planned Parenthood was deceitful and misleading about the nature of the facility under construction.

Apparently, women's right to access a full range of health-care services is not a concern of city officials.

On Sept. 20, Federal Judge Charles Norgle denied a motion by Planned

Parenthood to lift an injunction preventing the new clinic from opening to the public. Aurora officials had granted a temporary occupancy permit in August.

Planned Parenthood attorney Christopher Wilson told Norgle that if the new facility had housed a foot clinic, Aurora officials would not be doing an in-depth review. In court, Wilson charged that city officials are expressing concern about how the medical clinic was approved only because of pressure from anti-choice groups.

"We are here because we are being denied equal protection under the law," Wilson said.

Cecile Richards, national president of Planned Parenthood, has called Aurora the new "ground zero" in the struggle for reproductive rights.

"We are facing no less than the most

emboldened protest by the most radical anti-choice people I've ever encountered," Richards wrote in a recent mass e-mail asking for support for the group's Chicago affiliate, which oversees the Aurora clinic.

Debbie Johnson, a leader of the Detroit Action Network For Reproductive Rights, told Workers World: "What is really needed in this situation is a mass outpouring of pro-choice, pro-women's rights activists. Anti-choicers are a clear minority, as every poll has shown that a majority of people in the United States supports women's right to choose. A mass demonstration by pro-choice advocates would show the city of Aurora that their tactics to intimidate Planned Parenthood will be resisted. Every woman in that area of Illinois should have the right to access the many services the new clinic will provide." □



## Lares rebellion remembered

Demonstrators marched from Times Square in New York to the United Nations headquarters on the East Side on Sept. 23 to commemorate the 139th anniversary of the Grito de Lares (Cry of Lares), an uprising of Puerto Ricans against Spanish colonialism in the town of Lares in 1868. It is today remembered by those struggling against the continued U.S. colonial domination of Puerto Rico.

—Report and photo by Anne Pruden

## Forum examines globalization'

Continued from page 4

plant closings and offshoring.

The workers have a property right to their jobs and the factories and offices that have been built based on the wealth created by the workers. Just as workers in the 1930s had to occupy the plants in order to create unions and decent jobs, workers today have the same right to keep those unions and those decent jobs from being destroyed.

Goldstein explained that the vicious new international wage competition breaks down the formerly privileged sections of the working class in the oppressor nations. Inevitably it will breed international working-class solidarity based on a program defending the right of all workers everywhere.

The Detroit meeting was well attended by a multinational crowd, many of whom participated in a lively discussion after Goldstein's talk.

Ignacio Meneses, a retired auto worker and the leader of the Justice for Cuba Coalition, said workers throughout Latin America are in the forefront of challenging neoliberalism, imperialism's attempt to rob the wages and resources of the workers there.

Abayomi Azikiwe, a leader of MECAWI, a leading anti-war and social justice organization in Detroit that has recently proposed an emergency moratorium on foreclosures, evictions, utility-shut-offs and lay-offs, thanked Goldstein for Workers World newspaper's publishing the series Azikiwe prepared on the 1967 Detroit rebellion.

Andrea Egypt chaired the meeting. Egypt is a Detroit city worker who recently had a 10-percent pay cut imposed on her by the city administration. She became a revolutionary activist out of her opposition to the war in Iraq, where her daughter was sent with the National Guard. □



## IRAQ, AFGHANISTAN, NEW ORLEANS

# U.S. bankrolls mercenary army

By Leslie Feinberg

As Democrats and Republicans debate about how to tinker with the number of GIs stationed in Iraq—whether to increase or decrease—neither big business party is “anti-war.” They may tactically differ on how best to expand the profits of imperialist finance capital, but both parties continue to fund war and occupation to achieve capitalist interests.

Sharp evidence of that “fact on the ground” is the blank check that politicians on both sides of the aisle in Congress continue to sign that bankrolls a growing, massive, private force of mercenaries. This shadow army flies under the radar of legislation, scrutiny, accountability and liability.

When the Pentagon unleashed its “shock and awe” invasion of Iraq in March 2003, it brought the biggest army of private contractors ever deployed in a war, according to political journalist Jeremy Scahill, who has researched and published in-depth articles about these corporate commando units.

With no domestic compulsory military conscription already in place, the State Department quietly put these tens of thousands of mercenaries on its contracted payroll to fight the decidedly unpopular war.

Tens of thousands of mercenaries have been deployed to Iraq from Blackwater and at least 25 other private military corporations, including DynCorp International and Triple Canopy. Some of these soldiers of fortune pull down as much as a thousand dollars a day.

In recent bloodshed in Baghdad’s Nisour Square, Blackwater commandos reportedly shot randomly into civilian cars, killing numerous Iraqis—including a driver, a passenger and her baby. The news created such boiling anger in the Iraqi population that the puppet government called for a halt to Blackwater operations in the country.

That ban only lasted four days, however, before the U.S. emperors who rule Iraq by force of arms overturned the sus-

pension. And these private armies are immune from prosecution under any Iraqi laws, based on a decree by the first U.S. overlord in Iraq after the invasion, L. Paul Bremer.

Casualties among this foreign legion usually go unreported. But when, in March 2004, enraged Iraqis dragged the bodies of four dead Blackwater operatives through the streets of Fallujah in March 2004, Washington used the “Blackhawk Down” incident as a propagandistic cover for unleashing a bloody siege on the city.

Scahill noted that after the publicity when the four soldiers of fortune were killed, Blackwater’s CEO and co-founder Erik Prince “hired the Alexander Strategy Group, a PR firm with close ties to GOPers like [Tom] DeLay. By mid-November the company was reporting 600-percent growth. In February 2005 the company hired Ambassador Cofer Black, former coordinator for counter-terrorism at the State Department and former director of the CIA’s Counter-terrorism Center, as vice chairman.” (The Nation, Oct. 10, 2005)

The CEO and general counsel of Blackwater’s parent company, the Prince Group, is former Pentagon Inspector General Joseph Schmitz.

### Privatizing class warfare

Capitalist use of private hired guns in carrying out class warfare is not new. The Pinkerton National Detective Agency was used as a vicious strikebreaking armed force against coal, iron, labor and lumber workers and farmers in the late 19th century. At its zenith, the number of Pinkerton agents outnumbered the standing army of the U.S.

The Department of Justice contracted services from Pinkerton.

With the end of the “Cold War” period, when U.S. imperialism with a vast nuclear arsenal enjoyed military hegemony and worldwide capital expansion, the force of active duty U.S. military personnel dropped from 2 million to 1.4 million. As a result, Scahill wrote, a glut of retired officers flooded the private sector.

The “Rumsfeld Doctrine” gave the

privatization of military contracting a shot in the arm. Former Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld’s strategy was to shrink the ground forces and beef up high-tech warfare.

Scahill described Rumsfeld’s speech to the Pentagon brass the day before 9/11. “That day, Rumsfeld announced a major initiative to streamline the use of the private sector in the waging of America’s wars and predicted his initiative would meet fierce resistance.” (The Guardian, Aug. 1)

It did. While Rumsfeld was a militarist, he was an obstacle to those who wanted more U.S. troops on the ground in Iraq. After he was pushed out, the Pentagon carried out the “surge” to try to win its imperial war. But now there are more troops than ever mired in the muck of occupation in Iraq, and fewer troop reserves on which to draw.

### Global Pinkerton force

Currently, the U.S. shells out \$42 billion annually on private intelligence contractors, investigative blogger R.J. Hillhouse posted on her research website, TheSpyWhoBilledMe.com. That’s a helluva bump from \$18 billion in 2000. Scahill reported that current spending is 70 percent of the U.S. intelligence budget.

Congressional sources estimate that the U.S. has coughed up at least \$6 billion so far on private forces in Iraq.

The U.S. government contracts some 630 private companies to support the military occupation in Iraq.

Vice President Dick Cheney’s Halliburton, as well as KBR and Fluor and other contractors, hire personnel from a total of more than 100 countries to do tasks that range from the mundane, like laundry and cooking, to the dangerous, like driving supply convoys. An estimated 118,000 of the some 180,000 people contracted to do the dirty work of the occupation are Iraqis.

Naomi Klein, author of the soon-to-be-released book “The Shock Doctrine: The Rise of Disaster Capitalism,” explained, “Much as with so-called hollow corporations such as Nike, billions are spent on

military technology and design in rich countries while the manual labor and sweat work of invasion and occupation is increasingly outsourced to contractors who compete with each other to fill the work order for the lowest price.”

But increasingly, Scahill stressed, private forces are being used in armed combat, interrogation of prisoners, intelligence operations and rendition flights. (Sept. 24)

He noted, “The precise number of mercenaries is unclear, but last year, a U.S. government report identified 48,000 employees of private military/security firms.” (The Guardian, Aug. 1)

Iraq War commander Gen. David Petraeus has publicly acknowledged that at times his bodyguards have been “secured by contract security.”

This private army is being globalized.

Blackwater’s private army operates in nine countries. Its forces have been “deployed in the oil-rich Caspian Sea region, setting up a ‘command and control’ center just miles from the Iranian border.” (The Guardian, Aug. 1)

The State Department hired DynCorp to train police in Afghanistan, and to protect the titular head of the country, Hamid Karzai.

DynCorp, whose profits doubled to more than \$1.9 billion in 2005, is deployed in countries in Africa, in the Balkans, Bolivia and Colombia. U.S.-based private contractors garner almost half the \$630 million in U.S. military “aid” to Colombia, and this foreign legion is on the ground in Somalia, Congo and Sudan. After the U.S. deposed and kidnapped elected Haitian President Jean-Bertrand Aristide in 1994, DynCorp trained the police there. (Sept. 24)

DynCorp “spotters” who “misidentified” a civilian flight over Peru in April 2001, which led to the deaths of a U.S. Baptist missionary and her infant, “were on the payroll of the CIA,” admitted Jonathan D. Tepperman, former deputy managing editor of “Foreign Affairs” magazine. (The New Republic, Nov. 18, 2002)

Within the U.S., DynCorp forces and  
*Continued on page 10*

# U.S. sics death-squad diplomat on Pakistan

By Heather Cottin

John Negroponte is at it again. This time he is conducting coercive diplomacy in Pakistan, a possible weak link in U.S. imperialism’s expansionist strategy for the Middle East and Asia.

The man who ran the contras in Nicaragua, built death squads in Central America, and hid the torture, rape and murder of U.S. missionaries in Honduras in the 1980s has been very busy since the Bush administration began.

Three days after 9/11, the Senate confirmed Negroponte as U.S. ambassador to the United Nations. In Senate hearings on his nomination, Negroponte claimed to have forgotten what he did in Central America. He forgot that more than 300,000 Central Americans were murdered under his watch.

In 2004 George W. Bush appointed Negroponte to be U.S. ambassador to Iraq. Under his watch, the death squads emerged.

PBS NewsHour of Feb. 2, 2005, confirmed that it was Negroponte who, as U.S. ambassador to Honduras in the 1980s, had “helped carry out the Reagan

administration’s covert strategy to crush the Sandinista government in neighboring Nicaragua.”

In February 2005, Negroponte was made the first director of national intelligence, a sort of CIA/FBI/NSA/Homeland Security czar. He set up “mission managers” to plan strategy against Venezuela, Cuba, the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea and Iran.

By this January he was back in the State Department as deputy secretary of state, troubleshooting for U.S. imperialism in South Asia. Negroponte had been pulled out of his position as security czar in the U.S. to deal with another crisis. Pakistanis had begun to come out into the streets to demand freedom from their dictator, Gen. Pervez Musharraf. Washington was worried Musharraf could not keep the lid on popular protest.

Pakistan is a key country for U.S. imperialism in Asia. Bordering Afghanistan, Iran, China and India, this nation of 160 million people has the fifth-largest army in the world. Its population is seething with anger against U.S. imperialism for its brutal war against the Iraqi people. They are especially angry because longtime

U.S. support for military dictatorships in Pakistan has left 40 percent of the people living on less than one dollar a day and another 40 percent on less than two dollars a day. Pakistanis lack public health, education and decent housing; they get low wages and face massive joblessness.

In January, the U.S. killed many civilians when it bombed a region in Pakistan that was allegedly a Taliban stronghold. President Musharraf did nothing to stop the bombing.

Back in the early years of the Afghan war, the Pakistani army balked at attacking its own people in northern Pakistan. Washington is worried that the huge army will not follow its orders, and this concerns Negroponte, too. Pakistan is near the oil fields of Eurasia, not just in Iran but in neighboring Tajikistan, one of the former Soviet republics rich in oil and natural gas.

The U.S. war on Iraq and the threat of war against Iran is, as former Federal Reserve Bank head Alan Greenspan just admitted, about oil. And key to the imperial game the U.S. is playing for oil is its control over Pakistan.

The foreign policy establishment is working to destroy the historical connec-

tions between Pakistan and China, because imperialism has its sights set on China, too. “The U.S. needs Pakistan to acquiesce to a U.S. encirclement of China,” said one Pakistani militant, “but the Pakistani people see the Chinese as their brothers and sisters.”

Washington desperately needs all its pawns in line for Project Checkmate, a highly confidential strategic planning group at the Pentagon tasked with “fighting the next war,” with its focus on Iran. (London Sunday Times, Sept. 23) Project Checkmate is a successor to the group that planned the 1991 Gulf War air campaign. It was quietly reestablished in June.

Negroponte is “Johnny on the spot” for Project Checkmate. His object is to facilitate the next war against Muslim people and, if Musharraf proves too unstable, to bring in a government in Pakistan that will submit completely to U.S. demands.

Pakistanis are weary of their government and their poverty. They oppose U.S. wars against Afghanistan, Iraq and Iran. They are no longer silent and are not under control. They are awakening and nothing John Negroponte can do will change that. □



## War crimes against Gaza

Since the Israeli settler state seized the West Bank and Gaza Strip in 1967, it has treated the two territories populated by Palestinians in the tradition of a colonial power. It imposes Israeli rules, treats the residents as if they have no rights, reacts with violence against those who resist being a colonized people, arrests thousands indiscriminately and jails without trial other thousands. It murders scores of leaders with “targeted assassinations.”

Tel Aviv has broken all its interim agreements with the Palestinians. It has erected a wall over 430 miles long that runs through the West Bank and divides Palestinian villages; disguised as security, it has been used to seize another 7 percent of that already small piece of territory.

Now it has added further crimes against humanity to its already long list. The Israeli state has imposed a siege on Gaza, allowing into the territory only small amounts of food and water. And it has gone a step further: it has declared Gaza an “enemy entity” which promises even more suffering for the Palestinians there as the Israelis restrict even humanitarian aid.

Israel made this new definition at the same time Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice was visiting the Middle East with the alleged objective of organizing an “International Conference of Peace.” It is all part of U.S. plans to reorganize that part of the world to serve the interests of

U.S. monopoly capital. Washington and Wall Street rely on Israel as an adjunct military force in the region that has always sided with the imperialists against the efforts of Arab and other Muslim peoples to liberate their national territory and resources, especially the oil, from Western domination.

Rice even echoes the Israeli definition of Gaza as an “enemy entity.” She called Hamas, the party the Palestinians elected to head their government, a “terrorist organization.”

This new U.S.-Israeli criminal action to define 1.5 million Palestinians in Gaza as enemies is a form of collective punishment, which was condemned in world forums when the Nazi imperialists did it. It can only increase the suffering of this people, who today are forced to live with daily restrictions on electricity, lack of drinking water, medicines and fuel. The Israeli policy also deprives Palestinian farmers of products essential to the production of food.

This is both a crime against humanity and part of the U.S.-European Union-Israeli strategy to divide the Palestinian people. Now the tactic is to promote Fatah, which not too long ago was itself being assailed by Washington as “terrorist,” against Hamas while trying to break the people’s spirit through starvation.

The Palestinian people need the support of the people of the world now more than ever. U.S. and European Union out of the Middle East. Long live Palestine! □

## U.S. bankrolls mercenary army

Continued from page 9

heavily armed Blackwater commandos were sent into New Orleans by the federal government after Hurricane Katrina. Blackwater reportedly hauled in \$240,000 a day for that operation. One Blackwater operative said he was deputized by the Louisiana governor. Another said, “We can make arrests and use lethal force if we deem it necessary.” (The Nation, Oct. 10, 2005)

New Orleans capitalist James Reiss, chair of New Orleans Regional Transit Authority, reportedly hired Israeli private commandos from the company ISI—Instinctive Shooting International—to stand guard over a wealthy gated neigh-

borhood in New Orleans. ISI describes its forces as veterans of Israeli military, police and intelligence operations. The firm brags on its website: “ISI is currently an approved vendor by the U.S. Government to supply Homeland Security services.”

Blackwater wants to start a new base near San Diego, by the border with Mexico.

So it isn’t enough to call for “U.S. troops home now.” The demand must be to stop U.S. finance capital’s wars on every front—at home and abroad. That can only be won by an independent movement conscious of the fact that the secret “Republican Guard” enjoys the financial backing of Democrats, too. □



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## UN: On the rights of Indigenous peoples

By Stephanie Hedgecoke and Mahtowin Munro

After a decades-long struggle, the United Nations General Assembly on Sept. 13 approved the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. Among other points, the non-binding Declaration states that Indigenous peoples have the right to maintain their cultures and remain on their land.

Only four countries in the UN General Assembly—the United States, Canada, Australia and New Zealand, all settler states—voted against the Declaration.

Reaction from Indigenous peoples and their organizations around the world was mixed, but most recognized it as a partial victory resulting from a long struggle. A selection is reported on below:

The International Indian Treaty Council stated: “This is the first time that Indigenous Peoples have been recognized as ‘Peoples’ without qualification in an international instrument. [It] recognizes Indigenous Peoples’ inherent rights to self-determination, traditional lands, territories and natural resources, cultures and sacred sites, means of subsistence, languages, identities as well as their traditional life ways and concepts of development based on free, prior and informed consent, among others.”

The IITC noted that Indigenous representatives were not allowed to participate in the most recent negotiating process between representatives of the co-sponsoring states—in particular, Mexico, Peru, Guatemala and African states—during which there were nine negotiated text changes in the Declaration language.

But, according to the IITC, the modifications “did not include any changes to key provisions upholding self-determination, land and natural resources, free prior informed consent, Treaties, and others. On that basis, and to protect those essential provisions from being undermined, most Indigenous Peoples either expressed their support for adoption of the modified text, or stated, as did IITC, that they would not oppose it under the circumstances.”

IPS news service reported criticism from Indigenous leaders Manuel Castro of Ecuador and Luis Andrade of Colombia. “Twenty years of debate to produce this document, and we end up with a non-binding declaration that does not force governments to do anything; this is a disgrace,” said Castro, spokesperson for the Confederation of Indigenous Nationalities of Ecuador. “Very few Indigenous people are even aware of the existence of this document.”

Andrade, president of the National Indigenous Organisation of Colombia, said that “the level of representation of most Indigenous peoples was extremely low.” He criticized Colombia’s abstention, the only one in Latin America. “The administration [of right-wing President Álvaro Uribe] threatens the right of Indigenous people and is their enemy.”

Rigoberta Menchú Foundation spokesperson Elmer Erazo said the Declaration is an advance “to the extent that Indigenous people make use of it. It’s nothing to jump up and down about.” He said it is “a weapon to be used by the people.”

In recent years, Indigenous struggles in the countries of Latin America have gained substantial ground, especially in Ecuador and Bolivia. Indigenous movements played a role in removing President Jamil Mahuad in Ecuador in January 2000 and President Gonzalo Sánchez de Lozada in Bolivia in October 2003.

Bolivia’s first Indigenous President, Evo Morales, said he welcomed the vote. “These standards will help ensure that everyone has the same rights and that we will stop being marginalized.”

### Settler states vote against the Declaration

All four countries that voted against the Declaration are founded on the historic and ongoing dispossession of their Indigenous peoples. Indigenous populations in these countries are the most impoverished segments of the population and are in the poorest health.

CBC News widely reported First Nations condemnation of Canada’s refusal to support the Declaration. Mary Simon, president of the Inuit organization Tapiriit Kanatami, worked with other Indigenous groups at the United Nations to draft the declaration during the mid-1980s and early 1990s. She described Sept. 13 as a proud day for Inuit and Indigenous peoples around the world, but said the negative votes reflects badly on Canada and the other three dissenting governments.

Western Arctic Member of Parliament Dennis Bevington accused Canada of selling out to multinational businesses that want access to resources on aboriginal lands around the world.

Native Women’s Association of Canada President Beverley Jacobs said, “I think they’re afraid of Indigenous people having some measure of control of our own processes, of our own institutions, and dealing with our own laws within our own territories.”

An IITC statement also criticized Canada’s vote.

“This day will be a red-letter day for Indigenous peoples of Aotearoa and the globe,” said New Zealand’s Maori Party co-leader Tariana Turia. “How can this government oppose a declaration which promotes and protects what is meant to be merely a minimum standard of human rights for Maori?”

The Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Justice Commissioner, Tom Calma, welcomed the Declaration as a “milestone for the world’s Indigenous peoples” and said it was “a matter of great regret” that it was opposed by the Australian government.

Robert “Tim” Coulter, director of the Indian Law Resource Center in Helena, Mont., was at the United Nations in New York City for the vote and was quoted in The Spokesman Review newspaper (Spokane, Wash.) as saying, “It was not a good day for the United States, but it was a good day for Indigenous peoples.”

Coulter referred to recent U.S. attempts to legalize torture and said, “The Bush administration in particular is contemptuous of human rights rulings.”

At a recent United Nations news conference about the vote, Joseph Ole Simel, Coordinator of the African Regional Indigenous Caucus, recalled why the text of the Declaration had not been adopted in 2006. “The developed nations, in particular Canada, New Zealand, Australia and the United States, had been dictating to African countries and developing countries in general about human rights, accountability, democracy and transparency.”

“However, Third World countries have now taken a very progressive step in terms of human rights and demonstrated a lot of goodwill and commitment to the rights of Indigenous peoples, leaving the United States, Canada, Australia and New Zealand behind.” □

# Western rulers imposed anti-gay laws throughout world

By Leslie Feinberg

Wherever class-divided societies overturned matrilineal communal groupings, laws began to punish sexualities, gender expressions and bodies that did not fit the new patriarchal family models. The status of women, who had played a pivotal role in pre-class societies where the blood line was traced through females, not males, was degraded with the ascendancy of patriarchal class rule.

The ruling class mandated adherence to a father-dominated family unit, rather than the ancient mother-right gens, because it assured the transmission of wealth to male heirs.

As ruling classes grew stronger and expanded their territories by overthrowing neighboring communal societies by force of arms, they violently enforced their legal codes and social order on militarily conquered peoples.

European ruling classes, however, exported and enforced laws against same-sex love all over the world as they established their colonial empires. European colonialism used Inquisition terror to enforce these laws against same-sex love and sex/gender variance all over the world. This violent legal restructuring of Indigenous societies—which affected economic organization, kinship, family/community organization, sexualities, gender and sex roles—served enslavement, exploitation and oppression.

These Indigenous societies under siege were diverse. For instance, the Gay American Indians History Project, first published in the germinal 1988 book “Living the Spirit,” lists 135 Indigenous peoples on the North American continent who made room for many more sex/gender roles than the European nations did.

Midnight Sun (Anishnabe) provides a historical materialist view of sex/gender systems in these varied Native societies in one of the book’s essays. Entitled “Sex/Gender Systems in Native North America,” it explains: “Social, and specifically sexual, life is embedded in the economic organization of society—an organization that gives rise to a variety of cultural forms. The cultural construction of gender and sexuality must be seen in terms of the sexual division of labor, subsistence patterns, social relations, and male-female relations. Within this context, ideology is not an arbitrary, discrete force—rather, it serves to reproduce and perpetuate social forms, behaviors, and individuals suitable to a particular mode of production.”

## The roots of Abu-Ghraid

European colonialism exported its domestic, counter-revolutionary Inquisition around the world, starting with Portuguese expansionism around 1500 C.E. The early epoch of direct colonial rule reached its zenith more than three centuries later with British domination of India in 1857.

Queer Heritage reports that in 1551, “Portuguese missionary Father Pero Correia, writing from Brazil, asserts that same-sex eroticism among indigenous women is quite common, in fact as widespread as in Africa, where he was previously stationed. Native Brazilian women, he observes, carry weapons and even form same-sex marriages.”

In 1646, Portuguese colonial overlords expanded their laws against same-sexuality to include females, as well as males. The sentence was being burned alive at the stake.

Max Mejía states that with the arriv-

al of the Spanish conquistadors in the Western hemisphere, “An absolutist discourse enveloped homosexuality in the concepts of ‘infamous sin,’ ‘sin against nature,’ corruption of the soul and alliance with the devil. They punished the practice without distinctions, among both lay people and clerics.

“Furthermore,” Mejía concludes, “the conquerors treated ‘sodomy’ as a special Indian sin and hunted it down and punished it as such on a grand scale. They orchestrated crusades like the Holy Inquisition, which began burning sodomites at the stake as a special occasion, as in the memorable auto-da-fé of San Lázaro in Mexico City.”

During Vasco Núñez de Balboa’s colonial expedition across Panama he “saw men dressed like women; Balboa learnt that they were sodomites and threw the king and 40 others to be eaten by his dogs, a fine action of an honorable and Catholic Spaniard.”

The Spanish colonial authorities in Cuba castrated those they considered “sodomites,” and forced them to eat their own testicles coated with dirt.

When the Spaniards invaded the Antilles and Louisiana, “they found men dressed as women who were respected by their societies. Thinking they were hermaphrodites, or homosexuals, they slew them.”

Wealthy Dutch merchants imposed pre-Napoleonic Roman-Dutch common law, which criminalized “sodomy” and “unnatural sex offenses,” from Indonesia to South Africa.

The colonial legislation that the Dutch merchants brought with them to the Cape of Africa in the 17th century still forms the basis of laws in Namibia, Zimbabwe and Lesotho.

## Sun never set on British anti-sodomy laws

The British imposed on the people of Ireland a 1634 law that made same-sex relations between males punishable by death. Later, the 1885 British Labouchère Amendment was the law under which feminine homosexual writer Oscar Wilde was sentenced to hard labor.

Laws criminalizing same-sex relations in India, Malaysia, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Myanmar, Singapore, Malaysia and Brunei all have the same name—“Article 377”—because the same colonial power wrote the law: Britain. The colonial-drafted legislation is misleadingly named the “Indian Penal Code.” Hindu law had not

punished consensual sexual relations.

Historian Douglas Sanders explains: “Article 377 of the Indian Penal Code of 1860 made ‘carnal intercourse against the order of nature’ an offence.”

The British imposed this legislation in the Straits Settlements of Singapore, Penang and Malacca in 1872. By the late 19th century, Britain also enforced the law in Hong Kong, Fiji, the Malay Peninsula and Burma.

Korea Herald journalist Benjamin Jhoty quotes Utopia-asia.com, which offers information about the same-sexuality scene in Asia: “Asia has rich and unique homosexual traditions almost everywhere you look. The true enemy of homosexuality in places like Korea, Singapore, Indonesia, Malaysia and the Philippines are antique colonial laws and homophobic non-Asian religions that bully citizens with skewed views of the natural world.”

Sanders notes, “This provision, or something very close to it, is presently in force in all former British colonies in Asia with the exception of Hong Kong.” He adds: “Sri Lanka, Seychelles and Papua New Guinea have the key wording from 377, but different article numbers. Parallel wording appears in the criminal laws of many of the former colonies in Africa.”

Historians Kevin Botha and Edwin Cameron write, “The systems of law the colonial powers (both Dutch and later English) introduced significantly influenced the customary law of the African communities they subjugated.”

The British “Queensland Penal Code” of 1899 was “adopted in Northern Nigeria in the nineteenth century, later becoming the basis for a uniform federal code in Nigeria in 1916. The Indian Penal Code had been used in Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania, but those laws were later replaced by drafts based on the Nigerian criminal code. Sudan used the Indian Penal Code. In 1960 Northern Nigeria enacted a separate criminal code, based on the Sudan code.”

Similar laws were forced on “British” Honduras (today Belize), Jamaica, Anguilla, the “British” Virgin Islands, the Cayman Islands, Montserrat, Bahamas, Tobago, Turks and Caicos, and St. Lucia.

The British also imposed anti-“sodomy” legislation on Canada in 1892, New Zea-

land a year later, and Australia in 1788 and again in 1899.

## Capital offense in colonized North America

Civil liberties historian Tom Head explained: “As Spanish, French, Dutch, and English colonists began to settle North America during the 17th century, they brought with them a catalog of highly specific laws proscribing various sexual acts. The purpose of all of these laws was to enforce monogamous, same-race, heterosexual marriage as a mandatory institution, and to punish any and all sexual activity outside of that institution.”

The earliest anti-“sodomy” legislation was passed in the Virginia Colony on May 24, 1610, and soon spread to all the colonies, and later to all of the states.

Historian John D’Emilio wrote: “In every colony, sodomy was a capital offense—at least five men were executed during this era—and other homosexual acts, from ‘sodomitical practices’ to lewdness between women, were punished with whippings and fines.

“After the American Revolution, although the states reformed their criminal codes in the spirit of Enlightenment philosophy, revision of the sodomy statutes and the ‘crimes against nature’ laws came very slowly; North Carolina did not eliminate capital punishment until 1869. Thomas Jefferson proposed that death be replaced by castration. Moreover, as time went on, legislatures and courts broadened the statutes to include a wider range of acts, such as oral sex between men and sexual activity between women,” D’Emilio concluded.

In the U.S., anti-homosexual and anti-miscegenation law was also a weapon of state repression against African and Native peoples, who became internal colonies. In 1898, U.S. imperialists also brutally enforced these laws in countries they subjugated militarily.

After seizing Puerto Rico as a colony in 1898, the U.S. imposed a law against same-sex love on the island that was a carbon copy of the California state legal language. And in 1938, under U.S. domination, the Cuban Penal Code—the “Public Ostentation Law”—was enacted.

Next: *Resistance!*

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To help publish Feinberg’s book **Rainbow Solidarity in Defense of Cuba**, a compilation of articles from the Lavender & Red series showing how the Cuban Revolution has worked to overturn prejudice against same-sex love inherited from the colonial and imperial eras, write to: World View Forum “Rainbow Solidarity,” 55 W. 17th St., 5th Fl., NY, NY 10011 or call: 212.463.7146

# Communists gain in Greek election

By John Catalinotto

When the rightist prime minister of Greece, Constantine Karamanlis, called for early national elections, he thought it would help his New Democracy Party. But his tactic boomeranged on Sept. 16 when his party’s majority dropped from 165 to 152 seats in the 300-member Greek Parliament. The NDP got 42 percent of the popular vote.

As in most West European countries, the center-right NDP has been carrying out open attacks on workers’ rights, while the center-left party—in Greece it’s called PASOK—carries out similar attacks at a slower pace.

Fed up with both parties, which have ruled alternately over the last few decades,

Greek voters also reduced PASOK’s representation from 117 to 102.

The gainers included the Communist Party of Greece (KKE), which went from 5.9 to 8.2 percent and from 12 to 22 representatives. As it made clear in a recent statement, the KKE has maintained its roots as a party in the tradition of the 1917 October Revolution in Russia and with respect for its leader, Lenin. (see [inter.kke.gr/News/2007news/2007-07-90th-october/](http://inter.kke.gr/News/2007news/2007-07-90th-october/))

KKE Secretary General Aleka Papanicolaou commented: “The KKE’s dynamism did not arrive at the last moment. It was created in action and struggle, it is solid and represents a new and broad radicalism. We have swum against the stream, we have given the signal to struggle against the two parties that won’t change whether they gain or

lose, and the signal remains in effect.”

Syriza, another left coalition that lined up with the reformist “Left Parties” of the European Parliament, also gained, going from six to 14 seats in the Greek Parliament. A Greek rightist newspaper reprinted in the Greek-American Herald bemoaned that “about one out of eight Greek voters votes Marxist Left today.”

The only seriously negative aspect of the election was that a far-right party for the first time got more than 3 percent of the vote, thus winning 10 seats.

A series of forest fires—which are tied into reactionary land laws that make burning down forests profitable for some landowners—took 67 lives in late summer and helped discredit the NDP and PASOK.

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# MUNDO OBRERO

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## Cómo el Congreso podría para la guerra, si quisiera

Por Sara Flounders

¿Qué pasaría si la vocera de la Cámara de Representantes Nancy Pelosi rehusara presentar al Congreso un proyecto de ley que diera más fondos a la criminal ocupación estadounidense de Irak? La posibilidad de un veto por el presidente Bush no tendría importancia.

Aunque miles de millones de dólares todavía estén en camino, el Presidente George W. Bush y el Pentágono, frente a una nueva realidad política, se verían forzados a comenzar planes para un retiro de las tropas.

Como vocera de la Cámara de Representantes, Pelosi tiene control total sobre cuál proyecto de ley llega para votarse. La mayoría del Partido Demócrata en el Congreso podría simplemente dilatar sus deliberaciones sobre cualquier proyecto de ley que pretenda dar más dinero para la guerra y así no habría más fondos para la guerra.

En noviembre del año pasado cuando millones de personas votaron por l@s políticos del Partido Demócrata que dijeron estar contra la guerra, esta sería exactamente la clase de legislación que esperarían de ést@s.

Es importante desafiar el fraude deliberado que los líderes demócratas, quienes constituyen la mayoría en ambas cámaras del Congreso, están presentando mientras se preparan para dar más fondos para la guerra. Desde las elecciones, han estado dando excusas sobre cómo les hacen falta votos para hacer lo que prometieron hacer.

L@s demócratas dicen que porque no tienen dos tercios de la mayoría, no tienen el poder de revocar un esperado veto de Bush sobre los fondos para la guerra que programaría una fecha para el retiro. Y por eso deben pasar una legislación que Bush aprobaría.

Pero ell@s podrían simplemente rehusar presentar cualquier legislación que sirva para financiar la guerra.

Ell@s tienen claramente la autoridad constitucional, el poder legislativo y el mandato político.

Uno de los primeros actos de Pelosi como vocera de la Cámara de Representantes fue la de declarar que el proceso judicial de destitución en contra de Bush no iba a proceder. Ella rehusó permitir que este tema tan importante llegara a ser debatido en la Cámara. ¿Por qué en su lugar no declaró que el financiamiento de la guerra no iba a proceder?

Pero se necesitaría un movimiento independiente con determinación y coraje para forzar a la mayoría demócrata en

el Congreso a que ponga la denuncia de Bush en la mesa y se quite el tema del financiamiento de la guerra.

### La complicidad de la prensa en la guerra

L@s demócratas, con la perpetua ayuda de la prensa corporativa, han presentado un dramático fraude acerca de cómo carecen de votos suficientes para tomar cualquier acción contra la guerra.

Cada medio de comunicación importante ha utilizado tiempo y espacio considerable para describir cómo l@s demócratas necesitan hacer concesiones a Bush y a l@s republican@s. Nos dicen que para pasar cualquier legislación, l@s demócratas debe quitar las fechas obligatorias para el retiro y dar a Bush todo el dinero que está exigiendo para continuar la guerra, todo para obtener una aprobación bipartidista. Todos estos expertos dicen que la constitución hace imposible que el congreso pare la guerra.

Pero la verdad es todo lo contrario.

Los medios de comunicación corporativos están completamente entrelazados con las corporaciones petroleras y militares. Cinco años atrás esos medios proporcionaron cobertura interminable sobre las inexistentes "armas de destrucción masiva" iraquíes. Siguen publicando sin cesar la supuesta preocupación del Pentágono por la paz y la estabilidad en Irak. Ahora argumentan que no hay más remedio que continuar gastando cientos de miles de millones más para la guerra.

En mayo, el Congreso controlado por l@s demócratas dio a Bush más dinero para la guerra de lo que él había pedido. Ese ciclo de financiamiento termina el próximo primero de octubre. El Congreso seguramente va a repetir su colaboración con la guerra votando a favor de los fondos, mientras mantiene que no hay otra alternativa.

El boletín del grupo "Fairness and Accuracy in Reporting" (Justicia y Precisión en el Reportaje) da ejemplos de este engaño constante practicado por el New York Times, el Washington Post, la Prensa Asociada, MSNBC, y el programa de la NBC el Chris Matthews Show.

### Demorándose en una propuesta de ley para eliminarla

Dejado fuera de toda esta cobertura son los hechos bien conocidos a tod@s l@s políticos de Washington, cabilder@s, comentaristas y periodistas sobre cómo el financiamiento de la guerra en Irak puede ser parado en varios puntos, tanto en la Cámara de Representantes como en el Senado.

Según la Constitución de EEUU, las propuestas de ley para financiamiento tienen que originarse en la Cámara de Representantes. El Congreso tiene el control decisivo sobre los fondos para la guerra.

No sólo la vocera de la Cámara de Representantes, actualmente una demócrata, controla cuáles propuestas de ley van a la mesa para un voto, sino que l@s demócratas, como el partido mayoritario, ahora presiden todos los comités en ambas Cámaras del Congreso.

Las propuestas de ley para financiamiento se originan en el Comité de Apropiaciones de la Cámara de Representantes. Dave Obey, demócrata de Wisconsin quien preside este comité, puede simplemente rehusar iniciar el movimiento legislativo para pagar los gastos de la guerra. Este es el destino de cientos de propuestas de ley presentadas al Congreso cada año. La mayoría de las propuestas "mueren en el comité".

El Comité de Apropiaciones tiene un subcomité sobre defensa presidido por John Murtha, un demócrata de Pennsylvania. Murtha dice que quiere que las tropas regresen a casa. Esto él lo puede hacer realidad rehusando promover una propuesta para financiar la guerra.

Después de que una propuesta de ley de financiamiento está aprobada en la Cámara de Representantes, es transferida al Senado. El senador Robert Byrd de Virginia, que encabeza al Comité de Apropiaciones del Senado, se ha opuesto a la guerra con elocuencia. Él podría rehusar actuar sobre la propuesta de ley en el comité. Harry Reid, líder de la mayoría del senado, podría rechazar traer la legislación al pleno del senado. Cualquiera de esas acciones eliminaría la propuesta de ley multimillonaria para financiar la guerra.

No habría la necesidad de una mayoría del 60 por ciento para parar una obstrucción republicana a la ley, ni una mayoría de dos-terceras partes para superar el veto presidencial.

### Justificando la colaboración

Para justificar más su colaboración con Bush en la guerra, l@s miembr@s del Congreso usan su supuesta preocupación por las tropas estadounidenses como un escudo humano. Se están escondiendo detrás de l@s soldados y de la amenaza de que l@s soldados estadounidenses podrían despertarse mañana sin alimento,

ni agua, ni fondos para retirarse.

Esto es también un fraude. El Pentágono no vive de cheque a cheque como viven l@s trabajador@s. El presupuesto y el proceso de aprovisionar las tropas es decidido meses y años en antelación.

El Pentágono está utilizando fondos asignados a la guerra en Irak para planear y preparar una nueva guerra contra Irán. La mitad de la Marina estadounidense se ha movido a las cercanías de Irán. Los planificadores del Pentágono han apuntado a más de 10.000 sitios para bombardearlos.

¿Entonces por qué l@s demócratas del Congreso no hacen lo que prometieron? ¿Por qué son totalmente cómplices de la guerra?

Cada político capitalista, republican@ o demócrata, necesita decenas de millones de dólares para correr para un puesto nacional. Ell@s tienen, o los bolsillos profundos de una herencia de familia multimillonaria, o la necesidad de enormes donativos de las corporaciones. Necesitan muchas horas de cobertura positiva en los medios corporativos.

La clase dominante entera de los EEUU tiene un enorme interés en el esfuerzo desesperado de asegurar la dominación y el control continuado de las reservas de petróleo más grandes en el planeta. Las súper ganancias que impulsan la economía capitalista estadounidense son obtenidas de un imperio mundial.

L@s políticos pueden lamentar las muertes de l@s soldados estadounidenses y los altos costos que están vaciando cada programa social no importa cuán desesperadamente necesario sea para el pueblo. Pero los partidos políticos son leales al sistema capitalista.

El Congreso y los medios saben la firmeza de Estados Unidos corporativo de quedarse en Irak por una generación o por más tiempo.

Al acercarse el límite del primero de octubre para nuevamente financiar la guerra, un reto político está siendo preparado por la Coalición Tropas Fuera Ya. La contribución más grande del Campamento que tendrá lugar frente al Congreso desde el 22 al 29 de septiembre es mostrar que la acción masiva independiente es lo que se necesita para verdaderamente terminar la guerra. Una parte esencial de la lucha para terminar la guerra es aprender a través de la experiencia el rol de los dos partidos capitalistas. □

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