

DEBTORS' PRISONS NEXT?

U.S. workers are the most indebted in the world. Now a new law says you can't claim personal bankruptcy anymore. Only the rich are protected from their creditors.

What if you lose your job or get sick? 3



UNIONS ON WALL STREET

AFL-CIO leaders and laid-off Enron and WorldCom workers went to the center

of capitalist high finance to say "NO BUSINESS AS USUAL."

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LABOR FOR REPARATIONS

Unions and community got together in Baltimore in support of a suit demanding that companies which profited from slavery pay reparations.

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A THIEF CRIES 'THIEF!'

Bush signed the Corporate Responsibility Act. How come he's not afraid he'll be the first to go to jail? The dirty saga of Harken Oil, and how he's managed to stay on the street.

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As war comes home

Violence grows against women

Ft. Bragg murders recall Vietnam era

By Minnie Bruce Pratt

In a pattern chillingly familiar to those who remember the Vietnam War, four soldiers stationed at Ft. Bragg, N.C., have killed their wives in the last six weeks. Three of the soldiers were members of the Army's Special Operations unit, veterans of the U.S. war against Afghanistan.

Ft. Bragg is the Army's headquarters for Special Forces and Special Operations units. Hundreds of soldiers have been deployed to Afghanistan from there.

The public has suffered a barrage of articles, photographs, opinion pieces and interviews claiming that President George W. Bush's so-called war on terrorism would liberate the women of Afghanistan. The message has been that one aim of Bush's "endless war" is to "rescue" women abroad—and protect families at home.

Now the men who have fought this war are returning home—and the brutal consequences of this aggressive imperial war are coming home with them.

Army officials have expressed surprise at the murders; headlines read, "Slayings of four soldiers' wives confound Army leaders." Sgt. Brian Sutton of the U.S. Army's Special Operations Command said, "This is something strange for the community of Fort Bragg. ... This does not happen." (Knight Ridder newspapers, July 27)

But activists who live in Fayetteville, N.C.—Ft. Bragg's civilian community—find nothing surprising in this onslaught of violence against women.

Rallies were held in more than 20 cities across North Carolina on July 25 to protest the fact that eight domestic

violence murders had occurred in the state within 22 days.

The year had begun with the January murder of Shalamar Franceschi, who was stabbed to death on one of the busiest streets in the town by her soldier husband. He had recently held her, her mother and child hostage. He committed the murder after a local judge released him from jail on bond.

Organizer Roberta Waddle, of the local chapter of the National Organization for Women, said, "Terrorism is being perpetrated right here in North Carolina ... on women by the very men who 'love' them." (Fayetteville Observer, July 24)

With each U.S. war of aggression, violence against women climbs to epidemic proportions in military towns.

In the 1970s, local people called Fayetteville "Fayetteville" as the level of abuse ratcheted up with the return of Vietnam veterans to Ft. Bragg. Murders of women by their soldier boyfriends and husbands were a common occurrence, sometimes taking on the aspect of public executions. A well-known example was the killing of a woman who fled from her husband to a counseling center, only to be shot there by him in front of the staff.

Women in the downtown area were subjected to a storm of catcalls and harassment, and some "literally became a type of war refugee, leaving town as soon as they became adults and never going back." (Catherine Lutz, "Homefront: A Military City and the American 20th Century")

According to the Miles Foundation, the rate of domestic violence is two to five times higher in the military than

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Class battle lines drawn on West Coast docks



WW PHOTO: BILL HACKWELL

Labor and community tell maritime bosses they'll support Longshore workers if they strike. See page 4

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News from Indian Country

Indian nations fight to save Zuni Salt Lake

Runners from the pueblos of Hopi, Acoma, Taos and Laguna led a protest at the utility headquarters in Phoenix July 17 against a plan to strip-mine Zuni Salt Lake sanctuary. They then ran 250 miles to Zuni Pueblo in New Mexico.

Zuni Salt Lake is among the Zunis' most sacred sites and home to their Salt Woman. Only a half-mile across and, during rainy season, varying from one-and-a-half to four feet deep, the lake produces salt for personal and ceremonial use. The 187,000-acre area around the lake is a well-preserved, ancient neutrality zone, traditionally shared among these pueblos of the Navajo and Apache nations.

The United States stole Zuni Salt Lake in 1877, but the Zunis won back 5,000 acres around the lake after years of struggle. The rest of the sanctuary remains in federal hands.

The lake and its annual salt production are threatened by a mining company called Fence Lake, which will use up to 600 gallons of aquifer water every minute for 50 years. The company plans to mine 80 million tons of coal on 18,000 acres of federal, state and private land. A planned access railroad threatens over 5,000 archeological sites, still-used ancient trails and over 500 burial sites in the area.

In May the Interior Department granted federal approval of the strip-mine plan. Though the sanctu-

ary is eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places, activists need more time to complete work on getting such federal protection for it. And while the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act allows for return of human remains to Native nations, no federal law protects burial sites. The utility can remove remains and force the pueblos to go through NAGPRA to get them back.

Zuni tribal councilor Arden Kucate said, "Zuni people will not sacrifice our Salt Woman for the almighty dollar or to provide electrical resources for Arizona or California, because she can never be replaced." Taos pueblo governor Vincent Lujan said: "It took us 60 years of fighting to get back our sacred Blue Lake at Taos. We are embarking on a similar battle."

Parents sue over drug-sniffing dogs in classrooms

Parents of 17 Indian students and the American Civil Liberties Union filed a class-action civil-rights lawsuit July 25 to stop the use of drug-sniffing dogs in the Wagner Community School and to seek damages. Wagner is 85 miles southwest of Sioux Falls, S.D., near Yankton Sioux Reservation. The Fourth Amendment lawsuit names the school board, Wagner police and Assistant Secretary of the Interior Neil McCaleb as defendants.

On two days in May the school

locked down students at their desks for hours while German shepherds sniffed every student at the K-12 school for drugs. Students were not allowed to go to the bathroom. They were told to keep their hands on their desks and not make sudden movements or look at the dog.

In one kindergarten classroom a dog escaped its handler and chased children around the room. Many were crying and at least one lost bladder control. Some of the terrorized children are afraid to return to class.

South Dakota schools have been using dog searches of lockers since the 1980s. The ACLU won a federal lawsuit on appeal against dog searches of California students, and settled another one out of court in New Mexico. The civil-liberties group believes this is the first case involving the use of dogs on elementary-school students. ACLU Drug Litigation Project Director Graham Boyd said, "Officials at this school, along with law enforcement officers, seem to be pioneering a practice of treating even the youngest students like hardened criminals."

Bernadette Raymond, mother of four of the students in the lawsuit, believes racism is behind the decision to use dogs to search the students. "How dare you intimidate my children for no reason?" she asked. A separate lawsuit was recently filed against Wagner's school board election procedures, which have barred representation to the 40 percent Dakota Sioux Indian population.

—Stephanie Hedgecoke

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WW CALENDAR

NEW YORK

Tue., Aug. 6

Reparations: A working class and anti-racist issue. Int'l Action Center Public Forum. 7 p.m. At 39 W. 14 St., Rm 206. For info (212) 633-6646.

Sat., Aug. 10

Meet Workers World/People's Video Network Youth. Preview their film about a 2001 trip to the Gullah Islands to learn about resistance to slavery. 7 p.m. At 39 W. 14 St., Rm 206. For info (212) 633-6646.

SAN FRANCISCO

Sun., Aug. 4

Workers World Party honors Jackie Kiernan, Hilda

Roberts, and Ricardo Leon, long-time activists in the struggle. The celebration will be held in the spirit of the Cuban Revolution to commemorate July 26 and raise funds for the campaign to free the five Cubans imprisoned in the United States. 2 p.m. At the Women's Building, 3543 18th St. For info (415) 826-4828.

WASHINGTON, D.C.

Sat., Aug. 17

Millions for Reparations Rally. For info toll free (866) 817-5729 or (212) 633-6646, email info@MillionsForReparations.com.

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New bankruptcy law

Rich get protection, workers drown in debt

By Monica Moorehead

Congressional negotiators agreed to a proposed bankruptcy law on July 25 that would make it difficult for individuals and families drowning deeper and deeper into debt to declare bankruptcy. Both the Senate and House of Representatives are expected to pass this bill no later than Aug. 2, laying the basis for President George W. Bush to sign it into law before Congress adjourns for the rest of the summer.

This new bankruptcy law is without a doubt a victory for the big credit card and lending conglomerates. On the other hand, it is a slap in the face to millions of people in low-income and middle-income brackets who will find it more difficult to utilize the bankruptcy option to get parasitical creditors off their backs.

Hundreds of thousands of people are now rushing to file for bankruptcy before the bill becomes law. Filing of bankruptcy petitions rose by 15.1 percent from March 2001 to March 2002. More than 1 million people normally file for bankruptcy every year.

Even before this draconian bill was approved, it was not easy for an individual or family to decide to declare bankruptcy. According to Loan Links, "Bankruptcy ... stays on your credit report for up to 10 years and can hinder your ability to get a job, establish new credit, get insurance and even a place to live. Furthermore, you will lose control over your finances since a Trustee will be appointed [by court] to oversee the completion of your filing. ... They charge an average of 8 percent to oversee the successful discharge of your bankruptcy petition."

This bankruptcy law comes at a time when the general population has become more and more incensed at the growing epidemic of corporate abuses and scan-

dalous behavior on the part of executives at Enron, WorldCom, Adelphia and many more who have "cooked the books" in order to attract more investments. The false profit margins have resulted in the massive theft of small-time investors' pension funds, not to mention workers' wages and benefits.

Some of these same global transnationals have filed for bankruptcy. But of course the new law will not apply to them. Corporations, large and small, declare bankruptcy every day. They can file Chapter 7 of the bankruptcy law that wipes out debt altogether, or they can file Chapter 13 that allows the debtor to keep some assets while simultaneously easing the balance of the remaining payments to their creditors.

The new law will virtually prohibit individuals and families from filing under a Chapter 7, depending on their state median income, and force them to file instead under Chapter 13. Yet for the big corporations, bankruptcy will continue to help protect them from their creditors—the big banks.

These same lending and credit card corporations helped give more than \$700 million in election campaign contributions to both capitalist parties, the Democrats and Republicans, in 1996. This proves once again that the two big business parties owe their allegiance to these class forces. And it sheds light on the lengths to which they will go to serve the super-rich, powerful hand that feeds them.

Debt is endemic to capitalism

After World War II, the U.S. was the number-one lender country in the world while much of Europe and Japan lay in ruin. But today it is the most indebted country in the world. In fact, the U.S. economy runs up an average daily deficit of

more than \$1.1 billion that has translated into over \$6 trillion. That is over \$6,000 billion!

Where does personal debt fit into this equation?

Eliminatedebt.org reports:

Almost one out of every 100 households in this country will file for bankruptcy.

According to the American Bankruptcy Institute, 302,829 people filed for bankruptcy in the first quarter of 2000.

The average U.S. household has 13 cards—including credit cards, debit cards and store cards. There are 1.3 billion such cards in circulation in this country.

The U.S. population made a total of \$1.1 trillion in credit card purchases in 1999.

Individuals in this country carry an average \$5,800 in credit card debt from month to month. If they were to make only the minimum payment on that individual debt every month, it would take 30 years to pay off and would include another \$15,000 in interest.

Making the minimum payment, an \$8,000 debt at an 18 percent interest rate would take 25 years to repay and cost more than \$24,000 in the long run.

On average the typical credit card purchases cost 112 percent more than if the payment were made in cash.

It is no wonder that Visa, MasterCard, American Express and so on lure people into accepting credit cards—using incentives such as little-to-no finance charges or low-interest payments for the first several months. All that matters to them is how much profit they make just from the interest payments alone, while people are slowly going under in the insidious quicksand known as debt.

Novelist Charles Dickens wrote about the horrors of 19th-century debtors' prisons in England in books like "Oliver Twist" and "David Copperfield." This particular

Bankruptcy profiles

Average age: 38;

44% of filers are couples;

30% are women filing alone;

26% are men filing alone;

Slightly better educated than the general population;

Two out of three have lost a job;

Half have experienced a serious health problem;

Fewer than 9% have not suffered a job loss, medical event or divorce;

Highest bankruptcy rates: Tennessee, Utah, Georgia, Alabama.

Source: The Fragile Middle Class: Americans in Debt; Elizabeth Warren, Harvard Law School; Smith Business Solutions

The typical family filing for bankruptcy in 1997 owed more than one and a half times its annual income in short-term, high-interest debt. A family earning \$24,000 had an average of \$36,000 in credit card and similar debt.

Federal Reserve (1997)

kind of jail does not exist here yet, although the prisons in this country have always been concentration camps for the poor.

But the new bankruptcy laws—along with growing layoffs, loss of benefits and pensions—will make people feel desperate to do whatever is necessary to stay afloat and survive. Instead of passing a corrupt bankruptcy law, Congress should be passing an emergency moratorium on layoffs and foreclosures.

New Jersey's ugly truth

Whitman 'tax cuts' imperil pension funds

By John Catalinotto

The wild gyrations in the stock market should raise alarm bells over the right wing's plan to get the government to invest Social Security money in the Wall Street casino.

Millions of workers are now looking at the experience of New Jersey, where pensions for state workers are in jeopardy because of just such a move.

Christine Whitman, now President George W. Bush's director of the Environmental Protection Agency, was the conservative governor of New Jersey in 1997. The Republican Party had a scheme to launch her as a national political figure: She would cut taxes while balancing the state budget.

How could that be done? By law, she had to come up with funds to back up the pension obligations to state workers. However, capitalist politicians, just like capitalist CEOs looking for a quick profit and an attractive balance sheet, don't hesitate to use questionable methods.

Whitman was no exception. In 1997, she proposed that New Jersey issue bonds to make a single big contribution to the pen-

sion fund and cover any shortfall. Interest on the bonds was to be 7.64 percent.

Whitman planned to invest the funds she raised through the bonds—about \$2.75 billion—in the stock market, which looked to many like a "sure thing." This combination of borrowing and investing, buying and selling, has been used by some big brokerage houses but rarely by government.

Even one of her allies, the Republican chair of the Senate Appropriations Committee, Robert Littell, called this a "wacko idea." Her plan won out anyway.

The state then invested most of the money raised through the bonds in stocks. Indeed, some 60 percent of the total pension portfolio is now invested in stocks.

For a while, it appeared that Whitman had made quite a coup. Stock prices increased rapidly. The state was making more money on the increase in stock prices than it was obligated to pay on the bonds. The first two years it earned over 19 percent, compared to 7.64 percent for the bonds.

Indeed, because the bonds were set up so that early payments to bondholders were low but later ones would be higher,

Whitman was able to cut taxes while still "balancing the budget."

Judith Cambria, an analyst for the League of Women Voters, recently wrote an extensive analysis taking the governor to task for her "irresponsible action over a long period of years." Whitman had shifted the tax burden into the future—at which time, conveniently, she would have moved to greener pastures as head of the EPA. (How long the pastures will remain green with the Bushites in charge of the environment is another story.)

As Cambria put it recently: "You think what's going on in the business world is bad? The last administration used every trick in the book."

What comes to light with the stock price drops, however, is not just Whitman's sleight of hand. It's her willingness to shoot craps with the workers' pension fund. It's how the rest of the state's politicians went along with her scheme while intoxicated by the rising market.

That portfolio was valued at \$94 billion two years ago. It was valued at \$72 billion this July 24—a loss of \$22 billion. The stock returns are now lower than the amounts promised for the bonds.

This loss means that the state may have to make payments of as much as \$1 billion a year to the pension fund to assure that workers get the pensions they are guaranteed by contract and by law. The only place to get this money is general tax revenues, which will also have to pay interest on the bonds.

It is likely that the state will now have to impose higher taxes or make severe cuts in social services, or both, thus making the working class pay for this gift to Wall Street. According to a Paul Krugman opinion piece in the July 30 New York Times, other states, such as Tennessee, may be in even worse trouble than New Jersey because of similar schemes.

In the light of all this, the Bush administration's attempt to impose a speculative burden on Social Security by tying the national fund's assets to the performance of the stock market is nothing less than criminal. Yet it has garnered support from both Republicans and Democrats in Congress.

The New Jersey experience should be a wake-up call to workers and their organizations around the country to fight to defend guaranteed pensions and Social Security payments.



Fred Mason

PVN PHOTO: JOHNNIE STEVENS

Labor joins call for reparations

By Workers World Baltimore bureau

An ad-hoc group of labor union and community activists united at a rally here on July 27 to call for reparations for the victims of slavery.

Standing under a banner that read, "An injury to one is an injury to all," Andre Powell—a coordinator for Labor for Reparations and co-chair of the rally—proclaimed, "Justice demands reparations: the payment for hundreds of years of unpaid labor. The wealth of this country was built by slave labor."

Fred Mason, president of the Maryland State and Washington, D.C., AFL-CIO, called on workers to support justice and the fight for reparations. He linked the struggle of reparations with the fight against global capitalism: "We can't be afraid of the 'c' word—capitalism—because this is what we are fighting."

Other rally speakers included Councilperson Dr. Kwame Abayomi; Eartha Harris, chair of the Local Organizing Committee for the Millions for Reparations March; the Rev. Graylan Hagler, senior minister at the Plymouth Congregational Church in Washington, D.C.; Larry Holmes, coordinator for International Action Center; Sharon Black Ceci, All Peoples Congress organizer; Omawale Clay, Non-Governmental Organization delegate to the World Conference Against Racism and New York City Millions for Reparations March; and Craig Newman representing Sally Davies, president of AFSCME Council 92 with 25,000 state workers.

Ceci, who is also a shop steward for United Food and Commercial Workers Local 27, stressed, "This was a historic meeting. It brought together trade unionists from all nationalities, young and old, and community activists to grapple with issues of racism and this country's legacy of slavery. This kind of unity built on truth has the potential to shake the foundations of all oppression in this country."

Labor for Reparations will continue to build for the Aug. 17 Millions for Reparations march in Washington, D.C.

Battle lines are drawn on West Coast docks

By Bill Hackwell
San Francisco

They took the struggle right to the bosses' door. On July 24, over 700 members of the International Longshore and Warehouse Union and their supporters rallied in San Francisco's financial district in front of the corporate headquarters of the Pacific Maritime Association.

Four weeks of negotiations on a new contract between the Longshore union and the PMA broke off July 21. Besides contesting health benefits and wage issues, the PMA is trying to take control of the union hiring hall, eliminate jobs and outsource work to more exploited, non-union labor.

The PMA has helped form a corporate coalition to try to break the union. It's called the West Coast Waterfront Coalition. It includes WalMart, Nike, K-Mart, The Gap, Home Depot and other mega-corporations that import \$300 billion of goods through West Coast ports each year—goods manufactured in their sweatshops in exploited countries.

These corporate thieves are usually in cutthroat competition with each other for resources and cheap labor abroad, but when it comes to union busting, they have no problem banding together.

Unionists have been reporting that the Bush administration has contacted them and made it clear that it will intervene if a

strike takes place, ostensibly because a strike would "jeopardize national security." These threats, under the guise of "homeland security," are part of the right-wing effort to weaken unions by overriding contracts that unions have struggled to win.

The Longshore union remains firm in the face of this attack. Support has grown in recent weeks. At the San Francisco rally, Teamsters brought a large flatbed truck and vowed not to transport any goods off the docks if there's a strike. Speaker after speaker exposed the PMA's greed and union-busting tactics.

Linda Chavez Thompson, executive vice president of the 14-million-member AFL-CIO, ridiculed the PMA for putting out "trashy proposals" and refusing to bargain in good faith.

Longshore Local 10 President Richard Mead responded to PMA statements that the port workers get better health benefits than members of Congress: "Why shouldn't we? We do more work than Congress."

The Journal of Commerce, an industry publication, recently reported that if the salaries and benefits of all 11,000 of the West Coast Longshore union members were doubled, the result would still be less than 1 percent of the shipping industry budget.

Trent Willis, business agent for Local 10 and a fourth-generation dockworker, said that, as in the 1930s, the labor movement

is in a war and has to be prepared to fight.

Other speakers included San Francisco Mayor Willie Brown and Board of Supervisors President Tom Ammiano.

The International Longshore and Warehouse Union has a long history of struggle and solidarity. Its members wouldn't unload ships from apartheid South Africa. They called a 1999 work stoppage in support of political prisoner Mumia Abu-Jamal.

Gloria La Riva, president of the typographical sector of the Media Workers Union, reminded the rally of the union's history of solidarity. "During the 1994 San Francisco newspaper strike, we set up picket lines the night before the strike and the next morning not one roll of newsprint went off those docks."

She pointed out that community groups, environmentalists, students and anti-war activists were present, standing with the dockworkers. The Port Workers Solidarity Committee pitched in on rally logistics. The group is composed of community activists and organizations, including ANSWER—the Act Now to Stop War & End Racism coalition.

It is clear that President Bush has put workers' right to collective bargaining, and the Longshore union in particular, in the crosshairs of his "endless war." This battle is part of the struggle against corporate globalization and on behalf of workers' rights everywhere.

Bus strike in second month

Billionaire mayor resists job guarantees for workers

By G. Dunkel
New York

The 1,500 drivers, mechanics and cleaners at Queens Surface, Triboro Coach and Jamaica Buses have been on strike since mid-June. Normally, between 100,000 and 150,000 people use these three bus lines daily to get to work and go about their lives.

The workers are represented by Transport Workers Local 100, which also represents the 35,000 public transit workers in New York.

While private companies formally own these Queens bus lines, New York City subsidizes half their income, owns the buses and many of the yards, and really calls the shots. But since the bus lines are private, employees can be paid lower wages. And the city can put pressure on

the workers by threatening to award the franchises to a different company, which could leave them out of a job.

An increase in wages and pensions for the bus workers was settled weeks ago. The city will "lend" the company \$2 million to pay for the pay hikes. The sticking point is job security.

Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg, who made his billions selling financial information to Wall Street, is not prepared to guarantee the workers their jobs and pensions past the end of this contract, which expires on Dec. 31. Bloomberg told the Daily News the city doesn't guarantee job protection to its own workers, much less to employees of private businesses.

Unless the capitalist economy unexpectedly picks up, Bloomberg plans fairly substantial layoffs next year, after the governor's race is over. He doesn't want to

cave in to a small section of a big union now when he has to negotiate a transit contract next year. New York state's Taylor Law prohibits public-sector strikes, but Local 100 has struck before. There would be a strong sentiment for striking again if the city offered a rotten contract.

On July 24 the City Council passed a non-binding resolution urging the city to compromise on the issue of job security by offering the workers a longer contract or some kind of job protection. Bloomberg scolded the council for meddling in the Queens bus strike—accusing them of pandering for votes.

Bloomberg couldn't admit that the council might be representing the wishes of its constituents. The working people would like to see the strike settled fairly so getting to work and going shopping is not such a chore.

Fight-back message embraced at Pride



Story and photo by Bob McCubbin
San Diego

San Diego's July 27 Lesbian, Gay, Bi and Trans Pride Parade was an excellent opportunity to reach out to people, gay and straight alike, with a message of resistance to the Bush administration's bellicose policy of endless war and unbridled racism.

The San Diego Union-Tribune said 100,000 people attended this year's event, but many felt it was at least as big as last year's, when the crowd estimate reached 150,000.

San Diego ANSWER—the Act Now to Stop War & End Racism coalition—organized a spirited, highly visible contingent

with the help of many of its member groups. Leading off was an ANSWER banner that read "From Stonewall to Palestine, people fight back!" Emblazoned over a beautiful graphic that blended the Palestinian flag and the rainbow flag were the words: "No pride in occupation. Palestine will be free!"

That was just the start of the powerful, multi-issue contingent. Next came a 17-foot truck covered with signs and banners reading "Stonewall means struggle," "No to war, no to racism" and "The greatest purveyor of violence in the world today—my own government." Martin Luther King Jr., 4/4/1967."

Following the truck, members of the San

Diego Free Mumia Coalition carried a large canvas portrait of political prisoner Mumia Abu-Jamal by local muralist Mario Torero. Other banners in the contingent represented the Peace & Freedom Party, San Diego Committee Against Police Brutality, Leonard Peltier Support Committee and San Diego Leonard Peltier Rainbow Support Group.

Mass applause and cheers greeted the contingent at many points along the march. Many people took copies of lesbian trans activist Leslie Feinberg's anti-war statement, delivered at the New York Pride Rally in June. Hundreds of copies of the socialist newspaper Workers World were also distributed.

AFL-CIO rally on Wall Street

'NO BUSINESS AS USUAL'

By Heather Cottin
New York

The old union song "Which side are you on?" with a few new words reverberated through the chasms of Wall Street on July 30:

"They say in New York City,
There are no neutrals there
You're either with the unions
Or with the millionaires."

Speakers at the noontime rally, called by the AFL-CIO, included laid-off workers and the head of the national labor federation. The event, while not extremely large or militant, marked the first time in decades that top leaders of the labor movement had brought the issue of jobs to the citadel of U.S. capitalism.

The youth division of Service Employees Local 32-BJ chanted, "We're fired up, can't take it no more," and "Workers' rights are under attack! What're we gonna do? Act up! Fight back!" The crowd stayed for an hour despite 96-degree heat.

Barbara Johnsoan, a laid-off Enron worker from Houston, spoke about the thousands of jobless workers like herself who have been fired without severance pay, health care or wages after the bosses stole their pensions. From the podium she said that Enron was non-union, but "If I had it to do again, joining a UNION would be my first call of duty!"

AFL-CIO National President John Sweeney called for government action in the face of rising layoffs and corporate

fraud. The Service Employees, Iron Workers, American Federation of Teachers, CSEA, UNITE and other unions had representatives in the crowd of hundreds that filled Broad and Wall streets opposite the New York Stock Exchange.

32-BJ kept up the chants. "The workers, united, will never be defeated," "I don't know but I been told, workers' wages are mighty low!"

Sweeney announced plans for a "No More Business as Usual" campaign to be kicked off on Labor Day, and a national day of action on Oct. 19 that would focus on the November elections. He urged unions to rally support for laws and legislators who would "play by the rules." He called on Congress to rescind tax breaks for the rich.

Sweeney said that 20 percent of the stocks on Wall Street were owned by the pension plans of U.S. workers. He noted that 40 million people live in union households. Although this represents a mighty number and a potential threat to Wall Street's power, Sweeney's talk was conciliatory in tone. More "corporate accountability," he said, would rid Wall Street of "pirates" and "put integrity back in the system." He urged legislation to protect workers' pensions. He did not speak of direct action by the workers in defense of their rights and economic interests.

The AFL-CIO leader said that the Wall Street "stewards of those [corporate] stocks" should "return to standards of decency and morality." He called on the

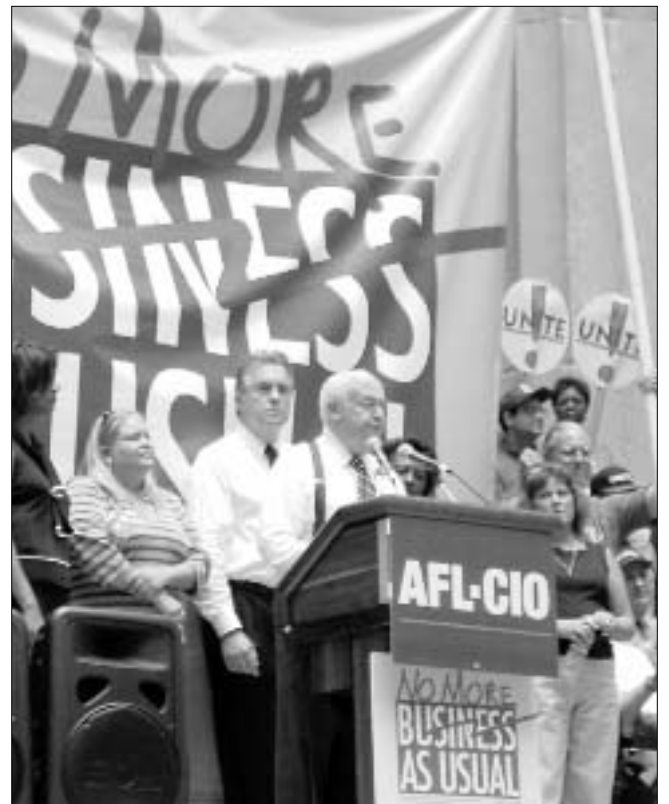
government to "restore confidence" in the system, and urged business to reform so that workers could have "faith in their employers."

As Sweeney spoke, a hand-lettered sign rose in the crowd, reading, "Corporate responsibility is not enough." In general, however, the crowd applauded his remarks. Wall Street employees from many levels walked by as the rally proceeded. There was none of the hostility that greeted anti-war rallies on Wall Street back in the 1960s and 1970s.

Lester Muata Greene, president of the Coalition of Black Trade Unionists, told Workers World that while the rally was not very large, workers will be pushing the unions to "do what needs to be done. There was a lull after September 11, but people are starting to realize they have to take action."

In a short interview, ex-Enron worker Johnsoan said she had been unable to get a job in Houston because of her outspoken opposition to the company. Johnsoan said that in bankruptcy cases, the workers ought to be paid off first.

She noted that the new bankruptcy law agreed to by Congress favors the bankers, the same people who have benefited from all the tax breaks and the Enron scandal. In addition, Johnsoan said, recent "Corporate Accountability" legisla-



WW PHOTO: DEIRDRE GRISWOLD

AFL-CIO President Sweeney at Wall Street rally.

tion passed by Congress lets boards of directors "get off entirely" when executive officers are caught in criminal acts. Meanwhile, unemployment and economic hardship are growing.

"If this economy doesn't come back," she said, "there's going to be a war here in the U.S."

The 32-BJ youth chanted, "No justice, no peace."



As mine safety worsens

Bush tries to cut inspections

By Leslie Feinberg

Shortly after nine Quecreek miners squinted at light, freed from their underground tunnel on July 28 after 77 hours in cold, wet darkness, reports about the avoidable cause of the accident were unearthed.

The nine workers had been caught in a cramped crawl space in the Pennsylvania mine, 240 feet below the earth's surface. As they dug, a wall gave way that led to the old, flooded Saxman Mine, abandoned since the 1950s. An estimated 60 million gallons of water suddenly spewed at roughly 60 miles an hour into the Quecreek underground passages.

Based on inaccurate state-issued maps, the miners had believed they were hundreds of feet away from the unused mine. State requirements mandate 200 feet of solid rock between mine tunnels.

The mining bosses are required to get certification of a map's accuracy. Who signed off on this map?

Some of the 10,000 or so mine maps gathering dust in the state archive are crudely hand drawn and more than a century old. There is a safe way around this problem. Miners can bore small holes ahead of them to get early warning of flooding. But Richard Stickler, state director of the Bureau of Deep Mine Safety, cautioned, "You have to look at what's practical."

His practicality tallies in dollars and cents. Stickler noted that such drilling slows the pace of production. (thepittsburghchannel.com, July 29)

Officials at Stickler's state agency and

the federal Mine Safety and Health Administration are full of promises that they will scrutinize the mining permit process, old map appraisal, safety issues and the role of Black Wolf Coal, the company that operates the mine.

But David Hess, secretary of the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection, hurriedly added that the inquiry would not focus on assigning blame. "This is an accident, pure and simple," he stressed. "What you do with an accident is you learn from them."

Black Wolf Coal bosses must be slow learners. The Quecreek mine had already had another accident in its short one-year history. And it owners have already been cited 26 times since March 20, 2001, for violations of federal mine safety regulations. (New York Newsday, July 30).

Officers at Black Wolf also operate the affiliated company RoxCoal/PBS, which has had 12 mine accidents since 1999. In May 2000, WTAE-TV's Team 4 investigators reported on July 25, RoxCoal had an accident eerily similar to the Quecreek disaster.

Team 4 revealed that it was unclear when MSHA last inspected Quecreek mine. The federal agency is supposed to check out mines four times a year. "Internal investigations have found the agency is not doing that."

The number of miner deaths has risen in the last three years, after decades of decline. United Mine Workers safety chief Joseph Main charged in March that the federal mine agency was backing away from enforcement of health and safety laws. Inspectors who do show up are

rushed and frequently lack backbone to stand up for the miners against their bosses.

Workers at Quecreek and other non-unionized mines have even less organized muscle to fight their bosses around health and safety issues. Now the Bush administration—trusted, longtime chum of the fossil fuel industry—has proposed a 25 percent cutback in the number of federal mine inspectors.

From roof cave-ins to black lung disease, mining is a dangerous way to cobble together a living. One historian determined that during the carnage of World War I, a U.S. soldier had a better statistical chance of surviving the battlefield than a West Virginia worker did in the coal mines. (West Virginia Archives and History)

It was the formation of the United Mine Workers in 1890 and its members' intrepid battles during the bloody "coal wars" of the bosses that won increased underground safety.

This dangerous job is not on its way out. The shiny black rock that accelerated the Industrial Revolution from a canter to a gallop still generates more than 50 percent of the electricity needs of the United States—a billion tons a year are burned here. There are still an estimated 275 billion tons of the 180-million-year-old fossil fuel buried deep underground.

The workers who excavate it need the collective clout of the union to protect their health and safety from the profit motive that fuels the mine owners.

Haitians protest mass detentions

On July 25, hundreds of people from Boston's Haitian community rallied at the downtown Immigration and Naturalization Services office to demand the immediate release of over 250 Haitians—children, men and women—locked up in Florida jails. Ten days earlier 37 of the detainees had begun a hunger strike.

These immigrants arrived by boat on Dec. 3, 2001, seeking political asylum because of U.S.- and corporate-orchestrated violence and poverty on their island.

Within days, the Bush administration secretly changed its policy toward Haitian asylum seekers, singling them out for indefinite detention in maximum-security prisons in the Miami area. This is a significant shift from previous policy, which allowed asylum seekers to be released to the custody of friends, relatives or immigration advocates.

Many at the spirited protest charged the INS with blatant racism and discrimination. They pointed to the case of Cuban "asylum seekers" who are immediately released from detention after a preliminary hearing. In a statement from the Boston Haitian Reporter distributed at the action, publisher William J. Dorena writes: "This is a human rights issue that all sectors must embrace. The Haitian community is under attack by the very leaders in the U.S. who ask us all to 'come together as a country in a time of war.' Well, the Bush administration is privately waging its own war, a very racist and ugly war against immigrants, specifically against Haitians."

—Story and photo by Steve Gillis

171-mile trek supports Jalil Muntaqim

Walk for Freedom for political prisoner

By Jack A. Smith
Albany, N.Y.

Four young supporters of freedom for African American political prisoner Jalil Muntaqim (Anthony Bottoms) walked 171 miles in eight days from the state prison in Auburn, N.Y., to the “correctional” facility in the New York state capital of Albany. The purpose of the July 18-26 Justice for Jalil Walk for Freedom was to draw public attention to Muntaqim’s parole hearing July 30 after 31 years in prison.

The four walkers—Lex Bhagat, Dylan Boyce, Jason Jette and Neil Brideaux—participated in a rally outside the state parole office July 26. Then they led 40 chanting supporters on a march to the State Capitol past lunch-hour crowds. The Albany Jericho Committee organized the event.

Muntaqim, a former Black Panther and Black Liberation Army member, and co-defendants Albert Washington and Herman Bell, collectively known as the New York 3, were convicted in 1971 of killing two New York City police officers. Defenders of the three maintain they were innocent victims of a government Cointelpro campaign to destroy the Black Panther Party.

Speakers at the rally included Safiya



WW PHOTO: JACK A. SMITH

Supporters of political prisoner Jalil Muntaqim at rally in Albany, N.Y., July 26.

Bukhari of the Jericho Movement, New York City Councilmember Charles Barron, Alice Green of the Center for Law and Justice, and Muntaqim’s

daughter, Antonette Bottoms, who was accompanied by her own 12-year-old daughter.

Bukhari charged that the prosecution

lied to convict Muntaqim. She told the crowd that “our presence here in front of the parole office is to make the state aware that we are not going away until all political prisoners are freed.” Barron said the crime of such political prisoners was that they fought back against oppression.

Bottoms, who was born a few months after her father was incarcerated, has only seen him behind bars. “My father is not a murderer, and he should be released along with all our political prisoners,” she said with feeling. “He is a good man, and I am proud of him.”

State repression & the Black struggle

Doing hard time

By Imani Henry

In the last installment, Bukhari told of her capture in January 1975 and trial that April by Virginia authorities.

Imani Henry: Did you have a defense committee?



Interview with Safiya Bukhari PART 5

IH: How was it you didn’t serve out your full sentence?

SB: In Virginia, if you are convicted for the first time, you only serve a fourth of your sentence. And you earn

good time. While I was there they came up with “a day for a day.” You earn a day “good time” for a day in jail. It comes off the front end of your sentence. With my escape, I ended up losing all my “good time” and then, because I didn’t get involved in anything stupid in prison, I ended up earning all my good time back.

All the same I was a troublemaker. At a drop of a hat, I’d file a lawsuit against those people. If they did something wrong, I didn’t go through the whole “motor mouth” thing. What is that going to do? And I didn’t take it out on no regular guards, they were just workers. It was the “white shirts” I took it out on. They were the ones with responsibility for doing the wrong.

So in time I created a situation where the guards saw me as a human being and not an inmate.

For example, I went on hunger strike, because they had me in maximum secure segregation for three years and seven months after the escape. They had never had a woman in segregation that long. The maximum before was six months.

In order to get out I had to go to court. I had to file a lawsuit against them for discrimination. While I was in there for the three years the guards were upset. This one correctional officer, her son was in prison in Alabama. She told me how her stepfather had abused him and she felt responsible and what could she do?

Well, I said, give me his address and I’ll write him. So I started writing her son. And she would bring me food from the outside because I was writing her son. And when he got out of prison he came to visit me.

When I went on the hunger strike, I knew exactly what I was doing. I went on hunger strike to get attention from the media for the lawsuit I had filed to get out of segregation.

IH: How long were you on hunger strike?

SB: Thirty-three days. This same guard would try to get me to eat, because she was very concerned. She would talk to me about her family and the problems she was having. When they finally took me to trial for the escape, this guard had talked to people in her community. This is a little town in Virginia and these people were on the jury from the community. The judge threatened them because they didn’t want to find me guilty and give me time for the escape.

My defense was “not guilty by reason of duress and necessity.” I represented myself. I told them one of the reasons for my escape was inadequate medical care. Because I had fibroid tumors. I was down South in the first place to have the surgery in my home [South Carolina].

The doctors in the North had diagnosed that I needed surgery. So I was on my way home, and we stopped in Virginia to take care of some political business, and that’s when the arrests went down.

Next—part 6

As war comes home

Violence against

Continued from page 1

in the civilian population. The foundation is an advocacy group for victims of domestic violence in the military. (New York Times, July 20)

The North Carolina Coalition Against Domestic Violence estimates that a domestic homicide occurs every four days in that state. (Fayetteville Observer, July 19)

Local activists are working to stop this epidemic of violence against women. Shortly after Shalamar’s brutal killing, activists took their protest to the steps of the Cumberland County Courthouse, chanting, “Stop the violence! Stop the murders!”

In addition to NOW, groups attending included the Women’s Center of Fayetteville, a Black women’s coalition, and members of a breast cancer resource center where Shalamar had volunteered.

The human cost of war

Virtually every day, articles and news broadcasts openly report on the Bush administration’s bellicose threats to militarily invade Iraq. With this threat of the opening up of a new front in the “endless war,” the Bush administration is calculating how much a new U.S. offensive will cost. News accounts speculate that it might run as much as \$80 billion. (New York

A thief cries 'thief!'

Bush signs Corporate Responsibility Act

By Richard Becker

There is a Chinese saying about “a thief crying thief” in order to divert attention from himself.

On July 30, President George W. Bush signed the Corporate Responsibility Act of 2002. “No more easy money for corporate criminals,” said Bush. “Just hard time.

“Free markets are not a jungle in which only the unscrupulous survive, or a financial free-for-all guided only by greed.... This law says to every dishonest corporate leader, you’ll be exposed and punished. The era of low standards and false profits is over.”

The quick action on the bill comes at the same time as a mountain of evidence grows proving that Bush, when a member of the board of Harken Oil, was himself guilty of insider trading and corporate fraud.

Not only Bush is culpable, but his vice president, Dick Cheney, as well. As CEO of Halliburton, one of the biggest government contractors, Cheney and his cronies “cooked the books,” grossly manipulating income/expense statements to artificially bolster the company’s stock price.

Don’t hold your breath waiting for Bush, Cheney or the long line of boardroom criminals to be led away in handcuffs. None of the executives of Enron, WorldCom, or Arthur Andersen are sitting in prison cells today. No, jails under capitalism are for the working and poor people. If you’re in a position to steal millions, you’re pretty much assured of evading any serious punishment.

Still, it’s important to understand exactly what Bush and Cheney, who dispense a lot of moralistic hypocrisy, did.

In the late 1970s, Bush went into the oil business in Texas, following in the footsteps of his father. Fifty wealthy investors, most associated with his family, put up the \$4.7

million for Arbusto Oil. (Arbusto is the Spanish word for “shrub.”)

With the collapse of oil prices in the early 1980s, Arbusto failed, but instead of going bankrupt, it was bought up by another oil company, Spectrum 7, in 1984.

In exchange for his nearly worthless failed business, George W. received 14 percent of Spectrum’s stock and was made president of the company. Key to this development was the fact that his father was now vice president of the United States. Spectrum was owned by two big backers of the Reagan/Bush administration, William DeWitt and Mercer Reynolds.

Within two years Spectrum 7 was on the brink of collapse, when it was bought by Harken Energy. When Harken’s founder was later asked what he was buying, he responded, “His name was George Bush.” (Quoted by Paul Krugman in the New York Times, July 2, 2002)

George W. received an initial \$227,000 in Harken stock, was named to the board of directors and to the board’s audit committee. He was also hired as a “consultant” at \$100,000 a year, permitted to buy stock at 40 percent below market value, and given a loan of \$180,000 which was later forgiven.

Harken’s payback was not long in coming. In 1990, this small, poorly regarded oil company was awarded the exclusive right to explore for oil off of Bahrain in the Persian/Arabian Gulf. The only other competitor was the much better-equipped and financed firm Amoco.

The choice of Harken over Amoco shocked corporate circles, and was widely attributed to the fact that one of Harken’s board members just happened to have a father in the White House.

But Harken, too, was a money-losing company, though it used an accounting trick, later to be made famous by Enron, to conceal its losses and fraudulently embellish its bottom line.

Harken “sold” a subsidiary, Aloha Petroleum, for \$12 million in 1989. The sale of Aloha reduced Harken’s loss for the year by three-quarters.

But the “buyer” of Aloha was really a

group of Harken directors and insiders who received a loan from Harken, and paid for Aloha with \$1 million in cash and an \$11 million IOU, with the first payment not due until 1992. Harken recorded the transaction as a \$10 million profit in 1989. The purpose of this maneuver was clearly to deceive stockholders and potential investors, including, of course, workers’ pension funds.

Eventually, the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) conducted an investigation and forced Harken to restate its bottom line for 1989.

Bush, it must be remembered, was not just a company director but a member of the board’s Audit Committee, directly responsible for overseeing such transactions.

At a press conference this July 8, Bush was asked about his role in the Aloha sale. He responded that reporters “needed to look back on the director’s minutes.” White House aides then refused to release the minutes, said they didn’t have them, and wouldn’t ask Harken to release them.

Insider trading

In his position as a member of the board’s audit committee, Bush was continually updated on Harken’s financial position and problems. On June 22, 1990, Bush sold most of his stock in Harken for \$848,000. Ever since, he has claimed that he had no idea that the price of the company’s stock was poised to nosedive shortly after his sell-off.

But according to a report by David Lazarus in the July 28 San Francisco Chronicle, “a newly unearthed memo sent by [Harken CEO Mikel] Faulkner to Bush and other board members on May 25, 1990, refers to Harken’s growing liquidity problems and the need to ‘prepare a listing of possible assets to be sold.’”

“Ordinary investors,” wrote Lazarus, “needless to say, did not have access to that information.”

And according to a confidential Harken chronology, obtained by the Center for Public Integrity, Bush was sent a “weekly flash report” on June 6, 1990, predicting that the company’s losses for the fiscal year ending June 30, 1990, would rise sharply.

Sixteen days later Bush sold most of his Harken stock.

Two months later, when Harken announced huge losses for the year, the stock plunged in value from \$4 to \$1 per share.

The SEC “investigated” George W. for insider trading, but no charges were filed. In fact, the SEC did not even interview Bush, despite the fact that “SEC investigators knew Bush had seen the flash report.” (Washington Post, July 14).

Although the law requires prompt disclosure of stock sales by corporate directors, Bush didn’t inform the SEC of his sale for 34 weeks. Still, no charges.

The head of the SEC at the time, Richard Breeden, and the SEC general counsel, James Doty, were both appointed to their positions by the first President Bush.

“Based upon our investigation, it appears that Bush did not engage in illegal insider trading because it does not appear that he possessed material nonpublic information,” said a 1992 SEC memo. The SEC knew at the time of the investigation that this was a false statement.

Fidel Castro on the Wall Street crisis

Of course, the fundamental cause of Wall Street’s corporate scandal is not corrupt individuals, but instead the inherently corrupt system of capitalism itself.

Capitalism, based as it is on the systematic theft of the surplus value created by the workers, is always rife with corruption. When the system is passing through a cyclical downturn, the competition among the capitalists to maintain maximized levels of profits leads to an intensification of lying and cheating, along with massive layoffs.

Speaking on July 26, Cuba’s national holiday, Cuban President Fidel Castro commented on the “profound capitalist crisis” underlying the current Wall Street scandals: “Today quite a number of us on this Earth are waiting to see how the developed capitalist world led by the United States disengages from the colossal and chaotic economic mess in which it is enmeshed.”

grows women

Times, July 29)

But the real cost will be wrung out of the lives of the Iraqi people at ground zero if the bombs fall and the troops attack. And U.S. GI lives will be lost, too. And there will be other unseen casualties as well, like Shalamar Franceschi and her husband and family.

The human cost will include abused or murdered women—and the broken lives of U.S. soldiers who come back shattered to the core after “following orders” and killing for their country, only to find they are unwittingly protecting the interests of big money and big business.

The real cost will be the public education funds cut, hospitals closed, summer recreation programs cancelled—and the lives lost or stunted—because the money is being spent on war.

The real cost will be the men, women and children of Iraq dying, again, in a country whose roads, hospitals and schools have been ruined—by yet another U.S. war of aggression.

Yes, stop the violence—the violence against women—and the violence done to humanity by U.S. imperialism. It’s time to stop the war against women—and to stop the war against Iraq before it starts.

Pratt was active in women’s liberation in Fayetteville from 1975 to 1981.

Fight against racist police chief sparks working-class unity

By Gavrielle Gemma
Keansburg, N.J.

More than 200 people gathered at the Keansburg, N.J., Borough Hall July 25 to demand that Acting Police Chief Michael Kennedy be dismissed for racist remarks made over a police radio. Black and white residents, including many youths, were joined by the Long Branch and Neptune chapters of the NAACP and the state National Organization for Women’s Committee Against Racism.

Keansburg is a town of 11,000 in Monmouth County, which is one of the wealthiest counties in the U.S.—very conservative and majority white. Keansburg is working-class with an average family income of \$38,000 a year. Black, Latino and Asian residents are about one quarter of the population. Keansburg neighborhoods are all integrated to one degree or another.

There is also a small, ideologically racist white element and a notorious history of government and police racism. For decades a few families who owned a lot of property

and a number of bars and liquor stores wielded control. There has never been a Black councilperson and the police force is all white. This old crony government was despised and feared by many white residents because of harassment, favoritism and open corruption.

In mid-May a new mayor/borough council slate called United for Change beat the old guard by a small margin. The new administration fired the police chief. But in mid-July the fired police chief released taped racist comments made on May 2 by the acting chief, Kennedy, while he had been a sergeant. The aim was to discredit the new administration.

It should have been easy for the United for Change administration to dismiss Kennedy and correctly pin his racism on the old regime, under which he had been trained. But instead they defended him. They merely fined him \$9,500, to be paid at his convenience out of a \$110,000-a-year salary.

Outrage and disappointment swept through the stunned Black community and

a substantial number of white residents. A number of anti-racist organizations in the county and state vowed to attend the borough council meeting on July 25. Strengthened by the announcements, Keansburg residents, both Black and white, came out to the protest.

The council, despite knowing in advance there would be a huge turnout for its meeting, held it in the usual small space. After convening the meeting with a packed crowd inside and out, the mayor announced it was cancelled due to overcrowding. A huge roar erupted, with shouting and chanting.

The crowd remained outside Borough Hall for over an hour. All vowed to attend the next meeting on Aug. 8.

In this working-class suburb there is a large and vocal section of the population that wants unity to work together and fight together for the benefit of all. At this time of economic uncertainty and layoffs, defeating racism is key to that working-class goal.

COLOMBIA ACTIONS

On Aug. 7, Alvaro Uribe Velez will be inaugurated as Colombia's next president.

Uribe has a bloody history of support for that country's paramilitary death squads.

Uribe and his masters in Washington are planning to escalate the war against the people of Colombia, including the rebel groups, labor unions, students and others. Urged on by the U.S., Uribe promises to double the size of the Colombian military and arm it to the teeth with U.S. weapons.

It is now more important than ever that people in the U.S. build a strong solidarity movement to defend the people of Colombia and their struggle for peace and social justice.

Opponents of war and racism plan demonstrations in several cities Aug. 7 to protest Uribe's inauguration and growing U.S. intervention in Colombia. In San Francisco, the protest will be held at Powell and Market streets starting at 5:30 p.m. For more information, contact the Committee for a New Colombia at (415) 312-9567.

In New York City, protesters will gather from 5 to 7 p.m. outside the Colombian Embassy on 57th St. between Lexington and Third avenues.

For more information on the New York protest or actions in other cities, contact the Committee to Stop U.S. Intervention in Colombia/International Action Center at (212) 633-6646 or visit the Web site www.iacenter.org.

U.S. implements plans for war in Colombia

By Andy McInerney

With little fanfare, the Bush administration is moving forward with its war plans for Colombia. On several fronts, U.S. plans for intervention—first called Plan Colombia under the Clinton administration, now known as the Andean Initiative—are unfolding according to plan.

On July 24, the U.S. Congress authorized a formal change in the funding already provided to Colombia's military. For the first time, the distinction between anti-narcotics aid—the fig leaf for the \$2 billion provided over the past three years—and counter-insurgency aid would be dropped.

The military aid “shall be available to support a unified campaign against narcotics trafficking and designated terrorist organizations and to take actions to protect human health and welfare,” according to the legislation. The U.S. government calls the two main Colombian insurgencies—the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia—People's Army (FARC-EP) and the National Liberation Army (ELN)—“terrorists.”

The legislation was part of the \$29 billion so-called Anti-Terrorism Package requested by the Bush administration.

The bill also includes another \$35 million on top of the money previously authorized as part of Plan Colombia; \$6 million of that is specifically designated for protecting U.S.-owned oil pipelines from guerrilla attacks.

Colombia is already the third-biggest recipient of U.S. military aid in the world.

While the main targets of that aid have been the FARC-EP and the ELN, prior legislation required that the counter-insurgency war be disguised as a “war on drugs.”

The Pentagon quickly endorsed dropping the disguise. The Bush administration's nominee to head the U.S. Army Southern Command, responsible for U.S. military operations in Latin America, testified on July 26 that he favored dropping the restrictions on counterinsurgency and favored expanding U.S. intervention there.

“It would be a terrible loss if democracy failed in Colombia,” said Lt. Gen. James Hill. By “democracy,” Hill apparently meant Colombia's corrupt, pro-U.S. capitalist class.

Also on July 26, U.S. Ambassador to Colombia Anne Patterson announced that a new U.S. Special Forces team would be in Colombia “over the next few weeks” to train a brigade of Colombian troops, according to the French Press Agency.

In another sign that the provisions of Plan Colombia are moving forward, the Brazilian daily newspaper *Jornal do Brasil* reported July 24 that the Chilean military is training 2,600 troops to join a U.S.-led multinational force that would be prepared to intervene in Colombia by January 2004. The account, described in the New York-based *El Diario-La Prensa* on July 25, claimed that Argentina, Chile, Uruguay, Peru and Ecuador had pledged troops.

Chile and Ecuador immediately denied the charges. But confirmation came immediately from a retired Ecuadorian general, René Yandún, who was previously

the head of the Joint Command of the Ecuadorian Armed Forces and is now the prefect of Carchi province, bordering Colombia.

The multinational force “is not a new proposal,” the general told *El Diario*. The Brazilian press report “is nothing to be surprised about.”

The recent troop mobilization on the Ecuadorian border “means that we are participating in the military maneuvers,” Yandún said.

Yandún also claimed that during a March visit, U.S. Army Chief of Staff Gen. Eric Shinseki reminded his counterparts in Colombia, Ecuador and Brazil “to respect the promises that each country made as part of Plan Colombia.”

Regionalizing the war in Colombia was one of the Bush administration's original goals. Initially this effort received little support from Latin American heads of state, at least not publicly. Now it appears that the U.S. government is taking advantage of the post-Sept. 11 climate to advance this strategy again.

These signs of increased U.S. military intervention come as the civil war in Colombia sharpens. Right-wing President-elect Alvaro Uribe, heavily backed by Washington, is set to take office on Aug. 7. Battles between the FARC-EP and government forces are on the rise. Government-sponsored death squads have stepped up their terror campaign.

Activists in cities around the United States are planning to stage pickets on Aug. 7 to protest this growing intervention.

Atlanta protest at Coke supports Colombian unionists

By Teresa Gutierrez
Atlanta

Some 200 people protested at the headquarters of Coca-Cola Corp. here on July 20. Community people and others joined labor unionists, AIDS and anti-war activists from the area to protest Coca-Cola policies. Specifically, protesters emphasized the deadly role Coca-Cola plays in Africa and Colombia.

The demonstration was part of an international campaign to expose Coca-Cola's collusion with the murderous right-wing death squads in Colombia. Three out of five trade unionists killed in the world today are Colombian. It is open season there for workers organizing union rights.

A lawsuit initiated by the United Steel Workers here in the U.S., in conjunction with the union in Colombia that represents Coke workers, is charging that the corporation is not only aware of the role the death squads play in Colombia, but is in cahoots with them.

ACT-UP, one of the sponsors of the Atlanta demonstration, is also demanding that Coke bosses provide health care for their workers in Africa. Coca-Cola, they say, is the largest private employer in Africa and it provides little or no health insurance for workers with AIDS. Africa has been



WW PHOTO: TERESA GUTIERREZ

devastated by the disease, which makes health insurance even more urgent.

The labor unionists who came to Atlanta from Colombia urged the progressive and anti-war movements here to join their call to demand the end of death squad terror in

Colombia. A follow-up tribunal on Coke's role in Colombia will be held in Brussels in October. In addition, the workers are organizing a tribunal in Bogota, Colombia, in December.

Mexican farmers keep a wary eye on Fox

By Adrian Garcia

In 1993 capitalist bosses in Mexico waged a nationwide propaganda campaign in an effort to garner support and ultimately acceptance for the North American Free Trade Agreement. Mexico's government, under Carlos Salinas de Gortari of the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI), promised its people that this agreement with Canada and the United States would bring Mexico rapid modernization and relieve poverty by creating many new jobs.

One of the most insensitive and explicitly racist pieces of pro-NAFTA propaganda was engineered by PEMEX, Mexican Petroleum. It was a poster

showing a man in Indigenous clothing and headdress with the caption: “Before NAFTA.” Below that was another photograph of the same man, but no longer wearing his Indigenous wardrobe. Instead he sported a baseball cap with the PEMEX insignia and a dark green work shirt. The caption read: “After NAFTA.”

This is a telling example of the maltreatment and disrespect that Indigenous people in Mexico have endured for centuries. It also lays the basis for understanding the current uprising in San Salvador Atenco, where the people have been unrelenting in resisting a force that views them as an obstruction to globalization.

The Indigenous peoples of Mexico have

arisen once again. They will not sit back and allow themselves to be denied the dignity they deserve.

The farmers of San Salvador Atenco, 15 miles northeast of Mexico City, have been putting up a valiant fight against the Mexican government's attempts to expropriate 13,300 acres of their land to construct an 11,000-acre, \$2.3-billion, six-runway airport. Yet, after street battles on July 11 and 12, they still face what appears to be a long struggle.

Yes, the Mexican government capitulated to the farmers' demands and freed their imprisoned comrades, coughing up the bail money for each. State Gov. Arturo Montiel claimed it was an act of good faith.

Yes, President Vicente Fox has stated

publicly that he might consider a new site for the proposed airport. “We are not going to trample the rights of anyone,” he told CNN. “There are alternatives for the airport.”

And yes, the government is even willing to increase its offer for the land from \$2,835 an acre to \$20,250 an acre.

But the farmers remain highly cautious, and with good reason. “President Fox promised to make the poor a priority. But he ignored our demands just like the PRI, until we raised our machetes against him,” commented Sergio Vasquez, a farmer from San Salvador Atenco who voted for Fox.

The farmers seriously question the sincerity of the Fox administration. As of July

Exploiters blame land reform, but

Roots of famine are in West's plunder of Africa

By G. Dunkel

The harvest is finished in southern Africa and the situation is grim. The United Nations World Food Program estimates that 300,000 people could die from starvation and related diseases over the next six months.

The U.S. Agency for International Development estimates that 14 million people in southern Africa will be affected. Figures from some European and African charitable organizations rise as high as 20 million.

Whichever estimate is most accurate, a major human tragedy is unfolding while the WFP goes from one Western capital to another, begging for the money it needs to buy food to save some of these people—if it comes in time.

The countries involved—Zimbabwe, Malawi, Mozambique, Lesotho, Zambia and Swaziland—are among the poorest in the world. Their agriculture could not stand the shock of floods followed by drought. The current famine, according to experts at the International Food Policy Research Institute, may have been sparked by bad weather, but it was fueled by poverty.

Southern Africa lacks the infrastructure—including roads and railways—to move food from where it can be grown to where it is needed. This is the result both of the legacy of underdevelopment caused by colonialism, and of decades of apartheid in South Africa and war by imperialist-financed bandits like UNITA in Angola and Renamo in Mozambique.

So-called experts like senior USAID official Roger Winter and Judith Lewis, the World Food Program's regional director for eastern and southern Africa, along with commentators from newspapers like the Baltimore Sun and the Wall Street Journal, ignore the grave effects of poverty and war. Instead they blame the governments of countries like Zimbabwe and Malawi for "failed policies."

Washington shirks responsibility

Zimbabwe is criticized for taking away the land seized by white colonial farmers and turning it over to the people. Lewis told the Washington Post May 10, "Land acquisitions in Zimbabwe have had a dramatic effect on the amount [of food] that should

have been produced in the country."

But another UN agency, the Integrated Regional Information Networks, posted a news story July 26 pointing to a different reason for the lack of affordable food: white farmers' hostility to government price controls.

Doug Taylor-Freeme, vice president of commodities for the Commercial Farmers Union, commenting on a recently announced government increase in agricultural prices, told IRIN, "We find it unrealistic." These big landowners say prices haven't risen enough. Vanessa McKay of the Zimbabwe Grain Producers Association said the new price was not likely to be an incentive, as costs had increased by 122 percent.

If the new higher prices are "unrealistic" and "not an incentive," then certainly the old prices were less of an incentive. What these white farmers—who still control a significant part of Zimbabwe's agricultural production—really meant was that they sat on their hands during the last growing season while small subsistence farmers were being devastated.

Much of the propaganda against Zimbabwe is coming from Britain, the former colonial power.

Winter, the USAID official, added another element in his attacks on Zimbabwe. He told the Associated Press July 26 that millions of people could suffer from starvation while Zimbabwean health and agricultural officials checked the safety of genetically modified grain shipped by the United States.

Zambia announced July 26 that it might refuse a loan of \$50 million if it was forced to buy genetically modified grain.

Malawi on front line

Malawi, a country of 11 million people between Mozambique and Zambia, is probably the country most affected. There the life expectancy is 42 years. Infant mortality is 134 deaths per thousand births.

Some estimates suggest that 70 percent of all Malawians suffer from hunger. Thousands have already died. About 3 million people are currently being fed from international donations. (Johannesburg Business Day, July 26)

Malawi has been harshly criticized by the imperialist countries for selling off its grain reserve of 600,000 tons of corn in October 2001. That is enough corn to feed

all of Malawi for nine months. Some press reports don't even mention that the government says the International Monetary Fund forced it to sell the reserve and open the corn market to private traders. Others report the IMF's claim that it was just a "recommendation."

But Business Day got the IMF to admit it told Malawi to sell part of the reserve.

A few months later the Malawian government had to take out a \$30 million loan from Absa Bank, one of South Africa's largest, at hugely unfavorable terms to buy back some of the reserves at a 500-per-

cent markup. Grain merchants in southern Africa know they can charge exorbitant amounts because people are starving and they can sell outside the region if price controls get in the way.

Instead of dealing with the coming human catastrophe, Washington, Europe and the IMF are using it to score political points against land reform in Zimbabwe. U.S. agribusiness giants like Archer Daniels Midland also see this as an opportunity to push genetically modified corn on the African market.

Nigerian women's takeover ends in victory



By Monica Moorehead

Nigerian women protesters who had taken over five fuel stations owned and operated by Chevron Texaco declared victory on July 25. The women said they decided to end their eight-day siege of the stations because management had agreed to meet their demands to build schools and hospitals and provide jobs, electricity and clean water to their poor villages. It remains to be seen if Chevron Texaco bosses will actually live up to their end of the deal.

This was the second siege of Chevron Texaco within a two-week span. The first took place at the Escravos station when another group of Nigerian women made the same demands on the multi-million-dollar conglomerate. These women won concessions as well.

The women were highly organized during both protests as they blockaded

entrances and took hundreds of mainly foreign oil workers hostage. The siege brought oil production to a virtual halt.

The Niger Delta, where both protests took place, is rich in oil reserves. But it is also one of the poorest regions of Africa due to the tragic legacy of colonialism and Western imperialist plunder.

The women understand the despicable role Chevron Texaco plays in taking the precious resource of oil from their community while not helping create an economic infrastructure for the well-being of everyone in the region. The women used direct action to say, "Enough is enough."

Esther Tolar, one of the protesters, said: "History has been made. Our culture is a patriarchal society. For women to come out like this and achieve what we have is out of the ordinary."

after concessions

17, no meetings had been scheduled with the government. The farmers did hold a meeting on July 17 at the Emiliano Zapata Auditorium in Chapingo University to voice their concerns. The federal government's negotiator for the airport project, Francisco Curi, was invited to the forum but announced he would be unable to attend.

The farmers are well aware of the obstacles they face, yet they are more militant than ever, says Ruben Lechuga, an anthropology researcher at the Iberoamericana University in Mexico City. The Indigenous people of San Salvador Atenco and other parts of Mexico will no longer accept the promises made to them in an attempt to quell

their resistance.

President Fox, former chief executive officer of Coca-Cola in Mexico, is a die-hard neoliberal intent on promoting globalization. Fox is currently trying to sell his version of NAFTA, titled Plan Puebla Panama. He claims this project will facilitate trade between Mexico and Central America.

The workers will not be fooled. María Concepción Yáñez, whose husband was one of the released prisoners, lucidly commented: "The government wants to blind us with the glitter of the city, that we'll be better off without the land and with development. But the truth is we're not going to let them take it from us."



The Afghan cover-up

How much longer can the Bush administration expect to keep fooling workers with its claims that U.S. empire expansion is really a “war on terrorism” to defend democracy and human rights?

Maybe not too long, if the latest news out of Afghanistan is an indication.

A preliminary United Nations investigation of the July 1 U.S. bombing of the village of Kakarak, Afghanistan, that killed 50 civilians—including 25 members of one family at a wedding party—has found evidence of a major Pentagon cover-up.

The investigation’s preliminary findings, first reported by the Times of London on July 29, found no corroboration of U.S. claims that its aircraft were fired on from the ground. It also points out how Washington has given conflicting accounts of what happened.

Most damning of all, the UN investigation team found “clear evidence” that U.S.-led coalition forces quickly arrived on the scene after the air strikes and “cleaned the area,” removing evidence of “shrapnel, bullets and traces of blood.”

Women in the area told investigators that their hands were tied behind their backs to prevent them from interfering in the “cleansing.”

Pentagon officials have claimed that cameras mounted on an AC-130 fighter plane showed gunfire coming from the ground. But the brass has not released the film for independent analysis. UN investigators found no evidence to back the claim.

The bloody attack angered people throughout the world and sparked the first street protest in Afghanistan against the U.S. since the military occupation began last October.

Earlier this year the U.S. bombed another wedding party, supposedly mistaking celebratory rifle fire for some kind of attack on the occupation forces.

According to statistics compiled by University of New Hampshire professor Marc Herold, U.S. forces killed at least 3,780 civilians between Oct. 7, 2001, and May 14, 2002. The Guardian of London reported that “indirect” casualties of U.S. intervention—victims of starvation, disease, etc.—could number 20,000.

A UN source told the London Times that the report on the July 1 incident was produced by a team of “experienced and reputable UN people, who have been in the region a while and know it well.”

Naturally, the United States is heading up its own investigation of the attack in collaboration with its Afghan puppets: President Hamid Karzai and the Northern Alliance mercenary army. After the Times of London report, Washington immediately denied there was any evidence of a cover-up, even though the Pentagon investigative team has not started to compile its report and has no timetable to finish.

“The more it drags on, the harder it is to prove and probably the people investigating want it to go slowly and die away,” an unnamed UN official told the Times of London.

Behind the scenes the Bush administration is undoubtedly twisting arms and threatening officials in an effort to make the UN team’s final report less damning, or to bury it altogether.

But the revolutionary workers’ movement, anti-imperialist and anti-war forces must use this and similar incidents to educate workers, communities and youths here about the real methods and aims of the U.S. “war on terrorism.” Then these criminal acts and human tragedies can be turned into a weapon to forge solidarity between people in the U.S. and Afghanistan against the occupation as well as new wars of imperialist aggression.

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Unionists learn how Cuba copes with conversion

By Bill Massey
Windsor, Ontario, Canada

More than 200 labor unionists and activists from Cuba, Quebec, Canada and the United States took part in a two-day conference here July 26-28. They came away with a greater understanding about how the harsh realities of a capitalist-dominated world affect Cuba—and how its revolutionary social system prepares the country to deal with these problems and pressures.

For example, participants heard how Cuba is dealing with rock-bottom low sugar prices on the world capitalist market. The downward pressure on prices is due in no small part to market speculation, and to rich countries like the United States subsidizing agribusiness.

The five-cents-a-pound price for sugar does not cover production costs. But companies that sell sugar to the United States and the European market receive protectionist subsidies. This, combined with the growth in synthetic sweetener production, has caused Cuba to convert the sugar industry and close half of the least productive mills. Former sugar-producing land will now be used to grow fruits and rice, and for livestock.

This move was taken only after long consultation with the affected workers. Beginning in September these workers will be enrolled in universities for retraining. Education is free in Cuba, and they will continue to receive 100 percent of their salaries until they are re-employed.

Will former Enron employees get to shape their futures this way?

What became clear at the Windsor conference is that Cuban unions and their members are a powerful force in determining how things are done in their country. Before a law that affects working people can be discussed in parliament it must first be discussed in all the work places. If rejected on the shop floor, proposals don’t become law.

Labor solidarity

The July 26-28 conference took place in the Canadian Auto Workers Local 444 hall. The U.S./Cuba Labor Exchange and Worker-to-Worker Canada/Cuba Labor Solidarity Committee organized the event.

The conference opened on the anniversary of the 1953 opening battle in Cuba’s revolutionary struggle that ended in victory six-and-a-half

years later.

Cuba sent an impressive delegation of labor leaders to the conference. They included General Secretary of the Confederation of Cuban Workers Pedro Ross Leal and other CTC officials, and General Secretary of the Public Administrative Workers Union Diana Maria Garcia. First they met with members of the African American community here and then with elected union officials from Canada, Quebec and the United States.

The conference had significant labor endorsement: the Canadian Labor Congress, the country’s steel workers, public employees, postal workers, and provincial and general employees unions, and the United Food and Commercial Workers.

In the Canadian labor delegation were the vice president of the Canadian Labor Congress, the national president of the Canadian Union of Postal Workers and the president of the Ontario Federation of Labor.

There was much discussion about the Free Trade Areas of the Americas. From Nov. 25 to Nov. 28 in Havana, Cuba will host the second conference against the FTAA—the attempt by U.S. imperialism to loot the domestic wealth of Latin America and the Caribbean.

At a closing conference panel, co-chair Ashaki Binta of Black Workers for Justice said she was inspired by the Cuban Revolution and saw it as an example for all the oppressed people of the world.

Her co-chair, Martha Grevatt, former national secretary of Pride At Work-AFL-CIO, pointed out that while there is still some backwardness about gay people in Cuba, there are no anti-lesbian/gay/bisexual/trans laws like the kind that are still on the books in some states in the United States, and that Cuba does not tolerate gay-bashing.

Leonel Gonzalez of Cuba and Gloria La Riva of the Free the Five Committee discussed the case of the five Cuban heroes currently imprisoned in the United States for the “crime” of monitoring right-wing terrorists training there to attack their island nation. An announcement was made at the conference that a Canadian Free the Five Committee would be formed to coordinate the campaign to win their freedom.

More information on the campaign to free the five can be found at a new web site: www.freethefive.org.

Free the Five gets Web site

By Gloria La Riva

In honor of the July 26 Cuban holiday, which is celebrated by people around the world, a new web page has been launched called www.freethefive.org

The name speaks for itself. It is dedicated to the liberation of five Cubans incarcerated in five U.S. federal prisons because they defended the people of Cuba from terrorism emanating from Miami and Washington. The five are Gerardo Hernandez, Fernando Gonzalez, Ramon Labanino, Antonio Guerrero and Rene Gonzalez.

Ultra-right terrorist groups based in Miami—Omega 7, Alpha 66, Brothers to the Rescue, CORU and Cuban American National Foundation—have rained terror on the people of Cuba for more than 40 years. They get praise, not jail, from the U.S. government.

The National Committee to Free the Five Cuban Political Prisoners Unjustly Held in the United States is using every means possible to publicize their case, which is being ignored by the commercial media. As part of that publicity campaign, the Free the Five web page was launched.

Many individuals have contributed their skills to make the page attractive and interesting. In

addition to photos and stirring speeches the five Cubans gave at their sentencing in December 2001, there are poignant talks by their wives, mothers and children.

It has two formats for petitions, one to be sent directly to George W. Bush at the White House, calling on him to release the five, and the other to be downloaded and mailed to the national office in San Francisco. It is bilingual with nearly all the information available in both English and Spanish.

There is solid documentation on the sordid record of the Miami terrorists against Cuba. It provides important background for activists who wish to speak on the case and build support.

Flyers can also be downloaded. A streaming video will be available soon.

As appeals are prepared by their legal team for filing in the U.S. 11th Circuit Court of Appeals in Atlanta, it is more important than ever that community support grow, with public meetings, protests and petitioning. Suggestions and contributions to the Web site are welcome. If you wish your committee to be listed, contact the Free the Five committee at: www.freethefive.org or call 415-821-6545.

Crisis in Turkey deepens as U.S. unfolds war plans

By Cemile Cakir and Frank Neisser

A political crisis has been growing in Turkey. Political stability there is important to Washington, which is depending on Turkey to play a big role in its planned war against Iraq as it did in the wars against Afghanistan and Yugoslavia. Turkey is currently taking over the military role in Afghanistan that Britain had been playing.

As of July 11 some 43 Parliament members from Prime Minister Bulent Ecevit's party had resigned, as had seven Cabinet ministers including Foreign Minister Ismail Cem, Deputy Prime Minister Husamettin Ozkan and Finance Minister Kemal Dervis.

Dervis had been a top official at International Monetary Fund headquarters in Washington. The IMF sent him to Turkey to impose IMF solutions during Turkey's economic crisis in 2001. He was subsequently appointed Finance Minister in the Ecevit government even though normally membership in Parliament is required for the post.

Before they resigned, these three ministers declared their intention to establish a new party. They demanded that Turkey prepare to join the European Union. Speculation abounds in the capitalist press that the Ecevit government will collapse. The second-biggest party in Ecevit's coalition government, the ultra-right-wing Nationalist Action Party (MHP), has demanded new elections by November.

Because of the economic crisis, the popularity of all parties in the governing coalition is very low. Polls indicate a likely election victory by a pro-Islamist party.

Behind the crisis

Immediate causes of the current crisis include U.S. plans to use Turkey for the upcoming war against Iraq, the economic collapse in Turkey and the intervention of the IMF. Also playing a role is imperialist ri-

valry between the United States and the European Union, which the Turkish government is trying to join.

Ecevit, who is 77 years old, has been prime minister of Turkey three times in all. In his first stint as prime minister, he initially showed some signs of anti-imperialist independence. In July 1974 he intervened militarily in Cyprus against U.S. wishes when a fascist Greek junta had overthrown the government of Archbishop Makarios and started persecuting the Turkish oppressed minority. In addition, at that time Turkey closed its U.S. bases.

The fascist Greek junta was overthrown shortly thereafter, but the Turkish military refused to withdraw from Cyprus and the character of the military occupation changed.

Ecevit was imprisoned in 1980 by a military junta that took power after his first period as prime minister. He later eliminated all progressives and leftists from his Left Democratic Party (DSP). In both his administrations since then, he has faithfully carried out all of Washington's wishes, including allowing the Pentagon to use bases in Turkey to attack Iraq and to take part in the war on Afghanistan.

But the Pentagon's current plans for attacking Iraq have created problems for the Turkish ruling class. It fears the establishment of a Kurdish state in northern Iraq. Immediately after Washington's war plans were announced, Ecevit responded by saying that Turkey didn't want to change the Iraqi state, didn't want to see the emergence of a Kurdish state and could not support the economic impact of another Gulf War. After this statement, the government crisis ensued.

Another key factor is the economic crisis that has engulfed Turkey for the last two years. The Turkish lira has suffered 20-percent inflation and the stock market has sagged an equal amount in the last two months. The IMF plans call for austerity

measures that target workers' wages.

Coalition gov't bows to military

Ecevit's party, the DSP, can be described as a center-right-wing party even though Ecevit himself was the symbol of the social-democratic movement and anti-U.S. politics in the 1970s.

The second-biggest party in the coalition government is the ultra-right-wing Nationalist Action Party (MHP). It is known that the CIA founded the MHP to fight against the leftist movement in Turkey. The third party in the coalition is the center-right-wing Motherland Party (ANAP).

But the real power in the government is the Turkish army, which acts as a member of the coalition and dictates what the government will do. The Turkish military enforces U.S. foreign policy but is afraid a U.S. attack on Iraq might lead to a Kurdish state in northern Iraq that would inspire the oppressed Kurdish minority now ruled by Turkey.

When the president appointed Ecevit prime minister in 1999, his party had only 13 percent of the votes in Parliament. But then the CIA captured Abdullah Ocalan, the leader of the Kurdish liberation struggle, and handed him over to the Turkish government.

At the next election, Ecevit's party won the majority of votes. He became prime minister of the current three-party coalition government.

Underneath the surface political crisis, there is a deep social and economic crisis. There has been an intense class struggle and flagrant human-rights violations, including the deaths of hundreds of political prisoners on hunger strike. The Turkish government has continued to suppress and repress the Kurdish people, who are seeking basic rights and self-determination.

Historical background

The Ottoman Empire, a Muslim feudal empire, collapsed in 1923. The military leader and general Mustafa Kemal Ataturk

founded a new government, the Republic of Turkey. He described Turkey as a laic or secular country. Then he led Turkey into the capitalist bloc. These three points have become the three main problems for Turkey.

The first issue was the direction he chose for the country. A socialist revolution had just changed neighboring Russia, but the new Turkish government kept the country on the capitalist path, rather than the road to socialism.

The Republican Populist Party (CHP), established by Ataturk, was the only party in Turkish political society until 1950. Its ideology was based on government-created capitalism. It took more than 60 years to create capitalism and eliminate pro-feudal elements from power.

Until 1950, Turkey was a semi-independent government. But because this was the imperialist century, to create an independent capitalist country was impossible. Even though the Turkish republic was created against the imperialist powers of Britain, France, Italy and Czarist Russia, its relative industrial backwardness made it inevitable that it would become a colony of the imperialist West.

The second problem was the Kurdish struggle for self-determination. During the independence movement, before and during World War I, Kurds and Turks fought side by side. Ataturk promised autonomy to the Kurdish groups at that time.

But after the war was over, the Turkish government declared that all peoples who live in Turkey are Turkish, that there are no Kurds and no Kurdish language—just a dialect of the Turkish language.

The Turkish rulers said that some Turks live in mountainous areas. When they walk on snow, their feet make a sound like "kurt, kurt," and because of this sound they call themselves Kurds.

Using such ludicrous arguments, the Turkish army, in the first two decades of the Turkish republic, crushed all Kurdish rebellions, including in Shih Said, Kocgiri and Dersim.

To be continued.

Summer reading doesn't have to be junk

By Matthew Schwartz

Every now and then everyone needs to take a break from the standard reading we all do to educate ourselves and read just for enjoyment. Summer reading doesn't have to be junk. Here are a few progressive books recommended by our readers.

Rex Stout, "The Doorbell Rang: A Nero Wolfe Mystery." Not normally a progressive character, in this book Nero Wolfe exposes the covert practices of illegal searches and other wrongdoings of J. Edgar Hoover's FBI.

Patricia Cornwell, the Kay Scarpetta Mysteries. Follow along with Kay Scarpetta and her lesbian niece as they solve mysteries together using forensic science.

Barbara Neely, the Blanche White mysteries. "Blanche on the Lam," the first of these clever books, introduces the unorthodox detective, a Black woman escaping welfare and prison who uses her inside position as a domestic worker to crack a murder. Takes the mystery genre and demolishes stereotypes.

Michael Moore, "Stupid White Men ... and Other Sorry Excuses for the State of the Nation!" Michael Moore does it again with this best-selling book, writing against the "Thief-in-Chief" otherwise known as George Bush and his power elite.

Sembene Ousmane, "God's Bits of Wood." A novel about the great 1947 railroad workers' strike in Senegal. An African perspective on class and colonial oppression and why resistance cannot be crushed.

Alistair MacLeod, "No Small Mischievous." The hard lives of coal miners, fishers and timber cutters in Nova Scotia whose ancestors were driven out of Scotland by poverty. Not a clinical, sociological view; the author bares his heart tracing the characters' debt to their cultural roots.

Lurene Cary, "The Price of a Child." A woman slave escapes to Philadelphia on the Underground Railroad, but one of her children is still in the South. The price of her freedom is her child. From the author of "Black Ice."

Jamie James, "Andrew and Joey." We follow the progress of their gay relationship with its ups and even bigger downs, told entirely by the characters via email correspondence.

For younger readers:

Patricia Hilliard, "One Pledge Unspoken." We follow a high school student, Elizabeth Ellen Anderson, who takes a stand against the war in Vietnam and learns about the oppression of those who speak out.

Sandra Cisneros, "The House on Mango Street." A stunning tale about a young girl growing up in the Latino part of Chicago.

Milosevic trial

Another witness turns tables on NATO

By John Catalinotto

The International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia—NATO's court in The Hague—got another surprise from a witness it had called to testify against former Yugoslav President Slobodan Milosevic just before it recessed for the rest of the summer.

The witness was Rade Markovic, former head of the Department of State Security of the Serbian Ministry of the Interior. Since Markovic was a prosecution witness, Milosevic, who is conducting his own defense, was allowed to cross-examine him on July 26.

The surprise was that all of Markovic's testimony was in Milosevic's favor. He testified that far from ordering that ethnic Albanians be driven out of Kosovo, Milosevic ordered the security forces to stop the flow of refugees.

Markovic also said Milosevic insisted that Serb forces avoid any hate crimes against the ethnic Albanians: "More than

200 criminal charges were filed against members of the police, and I think a similar figure stands for the army." (Associated Press, July 26)

Markovic had been held in a jail in Belgrade for the 17 months before he appeared in court. At The Hague, he testified that he was tortured in that jail to force him to agree to give false testimony against Milosevic, says the International Committee for the Defense of Slobodan Milosevic.

He also said the new police authorities in the pro-NATO government in Belgrade took him out of jail and to dinner and offered him a change of identity and a comfortable new life in a foreign land if he would testify against Slobodan Milosevic.

Prosecutor Jeffrey Nice tried to get Judge Richard May to stop this part of Markovic's testimony during the cross-examination. Apparently Markovic's defiance of NATO authority after the combined torture and bribe offers surprised the ICTY.

Quiebra de WorldCom

Ecós del colapso de la industria del ferrocarril de 1873

Por Gary Wilson

La quiebra de la WorldCom no tiene nada que ver con los ladrones directores. Este hecho puede ser sorprendente para muchos que han dependido en los reportes de los medios de comunicación que dejan la impresión de que el fallo es producto de algunas “manzanas malas,” como lo ha expresado el Presidente George W. Bush.

Sin embargo, este es el hecho más importante sobre la quiebra de WorldCom.

WorldCom es una de las empresas de telecomunicaciones más grandes en los Estados Unidos. Es la segunda empresa telefónica de servicio de larga distancia más grande del país, conduciendo más de un 70 por ciento del tráfico del Internet, aproximadamente un 30 por ciento de servicio telefónico de larga distancia para los consumidores del público, y un 50 por ciento de toda la comunicación corporativa en los Estados Unidos.

Seleccionando al azar el montón de reportes sobre la quiebra, parece que ninguno llega a la cuestión fundamental. Un reporte tuvo algo un poco distinto. Fue una breve mención en el programa redial Morning Edition del 23 de julio de la red nacional National Public Radio en una entrevista con un especialista de la industria de telecomunicaciones, Scott Cleland.

El Sr. Cleland dijo, “La gente ve a WorldCom como la historia de un fraude corporativo enorme, porque es un fraude de proporciones record. Pero las acciones de WorldCom estuvieron a un solo dólar antes del descubrimiento del fraude y estaba en quiebra antes de eso”.

Sobreproducción en fibra óptica

Hace más de un año, comenzaron a salir en la prensa empresarial sobre un exceso en la industria de telecomunicaciones. En particular, había una superabundancia de fibra óptica.

Para el comienzo de 2002, los gigantes de esa industria se iban derrumbando. La edición del New York Times 17 de febrero reportó:

“Como un elemento del colapso generalizado de la industria de telecomunicaciones que hace poco ha salido a la luz, parece que el mercado para acceso a la red por medio de fibra óptica ha sido un ingrediente común importante en el epidémico de fracaso de contabilidad estallando por todos lados. Seguramente ha jugado un papel mayor en el colapso de Global Crossing, que presentó por protección bajo condiciones de quiebra el mes pasado. Tratos involucrando fibra óptica dañaron otras empresas de comunicaciones grandes como Qwest Communications e International Cable and Wireless. Y también jugó papeles en los problemas cayendo en cascada de Enron y Tyco International”.

De verdad, cinco de las 10 quiebras más grandes en la historia de los EE.UU. han ocurrido el año pasado y todas están relacionadas a la supuesta superabundancia en telecomunicaciones.

Los cinco son:

(Fuente: BankruptcyData.com)

- Worldcom, con \$103,9 billones de activo, bancarrota el 21 de julio
 - Enron, con \$63,3 billones de activo, bancarrota el 2 de diciembre
 - Global Crossing, con \$25,5 billones de activo, bancarrota el 28 de enero
 - Adelphia Communications, con \$24,4 billones de activo, bancarrota el 25 de junio
 - NTL, con \$16,8 billones de activo, bancarrota el 8 de mayo
- ¿Qué pasó?

El reporte en la revista Business Week del 31 de agosto de 2001 sobre “El Exceso de Fibra Óptica” dijo:

“Desde los años 1980, las empresas de telecomunicaciones han depositado 283 millones de millas de cable de fibra óptica en la tierra, según la empresa consultora KMI Corp. Ese cable deja funcionar redes telefónicas y del Internet, haciendo posible la mayoría de las comunicaciones de alta velocidad de la Edad Informática. Conectados el uno al otro, esos cables pudieran rodear al mundo 11.320 veces”.

Esta superabundancia fue propulsada por especulación de alto nivel entre los gigantes de telecomunicaciones que comenzaron a intercambiar capacidad—quiere decir, vendiendo proporciones de capacidad futura entre si.

Esto condujo directamente a una burbuja especulativa que algunos han comparado a la manía de tulipanes que agarró a Holanda del Siglo 17. Especuladores de esa época impulsaron los precios de bulbos de tulipanes hasta el punto que un solo bulbo costaría varios cientos de dólares. Y eso es calculado en dólares del Siglo 17; la cifra sería mucho más alta hoy. Entonces, todo el mundo comenzó a sembrar tulipanes hasta que de pronto el mercado se derrumbó.

La manía de tulipanes fue una de las crisis de sobreproducción capitalista de la historia.

Exceso de ferrocarriles de 1873 condujo a la depresión

El New York Times del 17 de febrero ofrece otro ejemplo de la crisis de hoy, que es también un ejemplo de una crisis capitalista de sobreproducción:

“Una pista puede yacer en la historia de los ferrocarriles del país, que son comparados frecuentemente con los sistemas de fibra óptica que son relativamente jóvenes. Algunos de los operadores, como por ejemplo Qwest, comenzaron hasta por utilizar a las vías de los ferrocarriles para enterrar a sus cables”, concluyó el New York Times.

“Ya es casi olvidado que las empresas de ferrocarriles se expandieron tan ferozmente en el auge después del fin de la Guerra Civil de los Estados Unidos que resultó en un colapso financiero espectacular,



lar, conocido como el “Pánico de 1873”.

“Muchos pequeños inversionistas sufrieron quemaduras económicas por las actividades escandalosas de las empresas como la Union Pacific Railroad, que como la Global Crossing, estiró los límites de las conductas empresariales en sus días.”

¿Es esa la única similitud? El año 1873 marca el comienzo de una de las peores depresiones capitalista en la historia.

Howard Zinn escribe en su libro “La historia de un pueblo de los Estados Unidos, “en 1873 otra crisis económica devastó a la nación.” Esta fue la depresión económica que duró hasta 1880.

Zinn hace observar de que, “la crisis fue fabricada en un sistema el cual es de naturaleza caótica, en el cual solo los ricachones estaban seguros. Fue un sistema de crisis periódicas—1837, 1857, 1873, 1893, 1907, 1919, 1929—que acabaron con las pequeñas empresas y trajeron frío, hambre y muerte para la gente trabajadora mientras que las fortunas de las familias Astor, Vanderbilt, Rockefeller, Morgan, seguían creciendo en guerra o en paz, crisis y resurgimiento. Durante la crisis de 1873, Carnegie se apoderaba del mercado del acero, Rockefeller acababa con sus competidores del petróleo.”

Estas crisis periódicas, la que los medios de noticieros llaman “sobre capacidad o exceso”, son las que Marx llamó sobreproducción.

La sobreproducción es un fenómeno desconocido en la historia antes del capitalismo. La sobreproducción no tiene nada que ver con las necesidades o requerimientos de la gente. La crisis de las telecomunicaciones no es porque no pueden encontrar más gente que quieran acceso al Internet con conexiones de alta velocidad o sistemas de comunicaciones con voz.

No existe el exceso de capacidad, si lo vemos desde el punto de vista de las necesidades de la gente. De hecho, más y más conexiones al Internet y telecomunicaciones como las ventas por WorldCom

se están vendiendo hoy a más empresas e individuos que nunca antes. La demanda nunca antes ha sido más fuerte.

Sin embargo esta es una crisis de sobreproducción. La crisis resulta del hecho de que el acceso a la telecomunicación ya no se puede vender con la misma tasa de ganancias que los grandes propietarios de acciones de empresas están demandando. Hace unos pocos años, los índices de ganancias eran astronómicos; ahora son más pequeños. Cuando los márgenes de ganancias comienzan a declinar, los ricos retiran y mueven su dinero a otra parte donde el índice de ganancias es más alto.

Esa es la fuente de la crisis in la industria de la telecomunicaciones—una de sobreproducción.

El índice de ganancia menguante

Pero esta crisis se complica por una crisis mucho más amplia en el capitalismo, una crisis creada por una caída general en el índice de ganancias. Esta es la crisis que se está dando en el mercado de acciones.

Mientras que el gran capitalista mueve rápidamente sus bienes de una industria que está entrando en crisis de sobreproducción a otra totalmente diferente donde los índices de ganancias van en alza y no en declive, eso no es tan fácil de hacer cuando todas las empresas son golpeadas por el declive en los índices de ganancias. Y el declive en las ganancias es lo que han forzado a los grandes ejecutivos de muchas corporaciones y bancos a “quemar los libros” para poder esconder la situación verdadera que enfrentan.

Esta es una crisis que parece similar al Pánico de 1873 y las otras crisis periódicas capitalistas que ocurrieron durante el siglo de 1800 y la primera parte del 1900.

Estas crisis fueron el resultado de crisis de sobreproducción capitalistas y el declive en el índice de ganancias. Ellos infectaron a los países capitalistas hasta el fin de la Segunda Guerra Mundial. Solo la economía socialista de la Unión Soviética pudo romper este ciclo. En la lucha por derrocar el socialismo soviético, las potencias capitalistas utilizaron gastos de gobierno para suavizar el impacto del ciclo de alto y bajo para que esconder las profundas recesiones o depresiones.

Fue un sistema de beneficencia pública para el rico como para la clase obrera. Pero el sistema de beneficencia de la clase obrera ha sido desarmado en el período post-soviético.

El presidente y los intereses empresariales que controlan al Congreso están ocupados asegurándose de que los intereses de los ricos estén protegidos. Bush y el Congreso están firmando leyes para introducir reformas de contabilidad. Pero no se oye hablar sobre la protección de empleos o los ahorros de jubilación del pueblo trabajador que está perdiendo todo a competencia con las grandes empresas y los grandes bancos.

Es claro de solo una intervención independiente por la clase obrera podrá proteger sus propios intereses mientras la crisis se agudiza.