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Women speak out 7

WORKERS WORLD



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fraudulenta 12

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As Clinton/Gore speak of 'democracy'

Los Angeles police riot

Convention protests continue despite tear gas, rubber bullets

By Workers World Los Angeles bureau

Hundreds of heavily armed police rioted outside the Democratic Convention Aug. 14, attacking peaceful demonstrators and concert-goers as President Bill Clinton delivered his nationally televised speech to the delegates.

The police assault was a further escalation of the government's war against the new anti-capitalist, anti-racist youth movement following the arrests of more than 450 protesters during the Republican National Convention in Philadelphia.

While Clinton praised himself and Vice President Al Gore inside the plush Staples Center, police fired tear gas, rubber bullets and concussion grenades at 10,000 youths and others who gathered outside to hear a free concert by Rage Against the Machine and Ozomatli.

Between 10 and 15 people were reported arrested. Paramedics treated three dozen for serious injuries. Many more suffered head wounds from rubber bullets, the effects of tear gas and other injuries.

"Scores of people [were] hit by rubber bullets or other projectiles," reported the Aug. 15 Los Angeles Times. "Many of those who were hit were bleeding or displayed deep, silver-dollar sized bruises."

The police "fired indiscriminately for more than an hour," according to the Times.

CLINTON'S REAL LEGACY

Deeds expose words 7

There was no condemnation of the LAPD brutality by Clinton, Gore or other Democratic leaders.

"All along the media have been praising the so-called 'restrained, peaceful' role of the Los Angeles Police Department," said Workers World Party presidential candidate Monica Moorehead, "especially during the Aug. 13 demonstration demanding a new trial for Mumia Abu-Jamal."

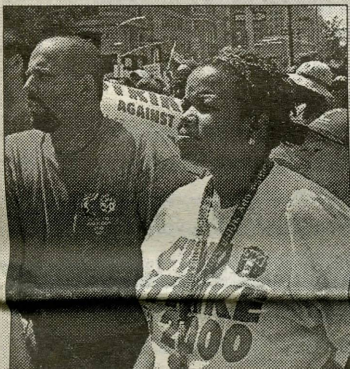
"Tonight the police showed their true colors," she charged. "The LAPD is a repressive force against workers, the oppressed and young people."

"This kind of blatant police repression won't stop us from protesting," she added. "It will only serve to make this new movement

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WW PHOTO: G. DUNKEL

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5,000 march for Mumia at Democratic Convention

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Los Angeles police tried to stop it. But activists fought and won the right to march for Abu-Jamal Aug. 13

WW PHOTO: BILL HACKWELL

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NEWSPAPER

Cape Cod drives Army out of Camp Edwards

By Richard Hugus
Cape Cod, Mass.

After almost 90 years of environmental abuse, the people of Cape Cod, Mass., have forced the Army and Department of Defense to end mortar, rocket and artillery fire bombardment of the Camp Edwards impact area. The Pentagon has also agreed to clean up the unexploded ordnance, contaminated soil and polluted groundwater it left behind.

The cleanup will be enforced under the Safe Drinking Water Act by an Environmental Protection Agency administrative order that went into effect on Jan. 14. This order followed two from 1997 that required an environmental study of Camp Edwards and a "cease-fire" of the guns that have been firing steadily there since World War I.

This retreat came only after years of struggle by residents living around the base concerned about noise, high cancer rates, and contamination of air and drinking water. The Defense Department had fiercely resisted setting a legal precedent by which it could be held responsible for remediation of as much as 65 million acres of active and inactive firing ranges it owns in the United States.

And with the struggle against U.S. bases now white hot in Puerto Rico, south Korea and Okinawa, this development has international implications, too.

Because Camp Edwards sits at the very top of a big mound-shaped aquifer, explosives left behind from military training have traveled in all directions toward nearby ponds, wetlands and water-supply wells. Among the munitions-related contaminants detected in groundwater at Camp Edwards are RDX, TNT, HMX, DNT and nitroglycerine.

Levels of RDX in groundwater are as high as 370 parts per billion. The EPA's "lifetime health advisory" for this compound is two parts per billion.

Camp Edwards comprises two thirds of the 21,000-acre Massachusetts Military Reservation, which also hosts Otis Air Base. The historic dumping of toxic fuels and solvents at Otis has already destroyed large areas of western Cape Cod's aquifer, with many big plumes of contaminated groundwater. This aquifer is the sole source of drinking water for the region's 200,000 year-round and 500,000 seasonal residents.

In the fall, F-15s from Otis are scheduled to go to Iraq to enforce the illegal no-flight zones. Though some people oppose the base only because of environmental concerns, in September members of the group Cape Codders against the Iraq War will demonstrate against this deployment of the Massachusetts Air National Guard at the entrance to the base.

Cape Codders have also been active in opposing an "upgrade" of a military mega-radar facility called PAVE PAWS. This upgrade could make Cape Cod home to

one of three radar systems planned for the National Missile Defense "Star Pork" program. The other two radars are in Alaska and California.

Besides opposing the program as an escalation of the arms race, residents are outraged at the prospect of being exposed to another 20 years of low-level microwave radiation from the radar.

Last November, an activist from Cape Cod visited Vieques, Puerto Rico, to share with resisters there information about environmental laws that might be used to bring about an end to U.S. Navy bombing, a study of the effects of this bombing, and full restoration of the land.

However, last January President Bill Clinton signed a directive that lets the Navy bomb Vieques until 2003. At that time, should the people of Vieques decide against permanent bombing, "the Live Impact Area will be swept for ordnance and fenced." In other words, if Clinton has his way at Vieques there will be no cease-fire, no environmental study, and no cleanup of an impact area that has seen far worse damage than Camp Edwards.

Why does Massachusetts merit a cleanup but Puerto Rico doesn't? Simply put, Puerto Rico is a colony of the United States.

Clinton's directive states that the Vieques impact-area closure will meet the same range standards used by the Navy at Nomans Land, just south of Martha's Vineyard. Nomans is a small, uninhabited island bombed by the Navy from 1943 to 1997. It is an ancestral land of the Wampanoag Tribe of Aquinnah on Martha's Vineyard.

At Nomans, the Navy simply set its own standard, which was to find whatever unexploded ordnance was lying about, pick it up and leave. No one was watching. The Wampanoag Tribe is struggling with the Navy for a proper cleanup.

U.S. bases and bombing ranges are now known to cause severe environmental problems. Gradually, people living around bases in the United States are fighting back, just like the people of Vieques, Maehyang-ri in south Korea and Okinawa.

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WW CALENDAR

BALTIMORE

Thu., Aug. 24

Report from Korea. Representatives from the Baltimore-Washington area who participated in an international delegation to investigate U.S. war crimes in Korea will discuss their trip. Hear Sharon Black-Ceci, co-coordinator of the Baltimore-Washington International Action Center; Walter Black, Korean War veteran; Jeff Bigelow, labor organizer and All-Peoples Congress; Rev. Kiyul Chung, general secretary, Korea Truth Commission. 7 p.m. At All-Peoples Congress Hall, 426 E. 31st St. For info (410) 235-7040 or email apcbaltimore@pipeline.com.

NEW YORK

Wed., Aug. 30

Protest U.S. war plans for Colombia during Clinton's visit to Bogota. For details contact International Action Center (212) 633-6646 or www.iacenter.org.

Every Tuesday

Weekly volunteer meetings. 6:30 p.m. At the International Action Center, 39 W. 14th St., Room 206. For info (212) 633-6646.

SAN FRANCISCO

Sun., Aug. 20

The protests at the Democratic National Convention in Los Angeles: report and political analysis. Workers World Forum. 5 p.m. At 2489 Mission St. For info (415) 826-4828.

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National Office

55 W. 17 St., New York, N.Y. 10011
(212) 627-2994; Fax (212) 675-7869
wwp@workers.org

Atlanta

P.O. Box 424, Atlanta, Ga. 30301
(770) 662-6417

Baltimore

426 E. 31 St., Baltimore, Md. 21218
(410) 235-7040

Boston

31 Germania St., Boston, Mass. 02130
(Enter at 284 Amory St.) (617) 983-3835;
Fax (617) 983-3836 boston@workers.org

Buffalo, N.Y.

349 Niagara St., Buffalo, N.Y. 14201
(716) 855-3055; Fax (716) 852-3402
buffalo@workers.org

Chicago

P.O. Box 6510, Chicago, Ill. 60680
(312) 329-6119; Fax (773) 761-9330
chicago@workers.org

Cleveland

3030 Euclid Ave., LL1, Cleveland, Ohio 44115 phone/fax (216) 426-0851
cleveland@workers.org

Detroit

5920 Second Ave., Detroit, Mich. 48202
(313) 831-0750; detroit@workers.org

Houston

P.O. Box 130322, Houston, Texas 77219 (713) 861-5965
houston@workers.org

Los Angeles

422 S. Western Ave., Room 114, Los Angeles, Calif. 90020 (213) 487-2368
fax (213) 387-9355 la@workers.org

Milwaukee

P.O. Box 16483, Milwaukee, Wis. 53216;
milw@workers.org

Philadelphia

P.O. Box 19267, Philadelphia, Pa. 19143
(610) 352-3625; phila@workers.org

Richmond, Va.

P.O. Box 14602, Richmond, Va. 23221
richmond@workers.org

Rochester, N.Y.

2117 Buffalo Rd., PMB. 303, Rochester, N.Y. 14624 (716) 436-6458;
roc@workers.org

San Francisco

3181 Mission, No. 29, San Francisco, Calif. 94110 (415) 826-4828; fax (415) 821-5782;
sf@workers.org

Seattle

1218 E. Cherry #201, Seattle, Wash. 98122
(206) 325-0085

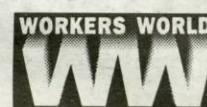
State College, Pa.

100 Grandview Rd., State College, Pa. 16801 (814) 237-8695;
jxb58@psu.edu

Washington, D.C.

P.O. Box 57300, Washington, DC 20037, (202) 588-1205
dc@workers.org

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Workers World

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New York, N.Y. 10011
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TRANSgender WARRIORS

MAKING HISTORY FROM JOAN OF ARC TO DENNIS RODMAN

By Leslie Feinberg

Leslie Feinberg has been a grassroots activist, journalist and lecturer on behalf of the lesbian/gay/bi and transgender movement. S/he is the author of the acclaimed novel *Stone Butch Blues*.

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Western wildfires

Blame the profit motive

By G. Dunkel

Since June, wildfires in the western United States have burned an area larger than the state of Connecticut—almost 4.4 million acres. Some won't be controlled until the snows come.

Hundreds of houses have been destroyed and thousands more damaged. An electric transmission line from Montana to the West Coast melted. Another was badly damaged and put out of commission.

This loss of power—topped by a heat wave—pushed California's power grid to the edge of a meltdown Aug. 1-2. (Los Angeles Times, Aug. 12)

Smoke, ash and flames have closed major highways and small roads. In some areas, the fires' heat sterilized the soil, which won't recover for decades. When the wet fall and winter weather comes, the burned-over areas will face rockslides, mudslides and flash floods because of the absence of ground cover.

Federal experts project the cost of controlling these fires to be \$1 billion. Estimates of the property damage done so far are not available. (Christian Science Monitor, Aug. 14)

The fire season will last at least six more weeks.

An election issue?

In this election year, the magnitude of the losses has given Republican politicians a chance to blast the Clinton administration.

"The Clinton administration didn't cause these fires, but their policies have left the Forest Service under-funded and under-prepared for this crisis," Gov. Marc Racicot of Montana charged. Racicot claimed Clinton has "a philosophy ... that leads to explosive fires that destroy everything." (New York Times, Aug. 12)

The American Forest and Paper Association, a group closely identified with the Republican Party, chimed in its support for Racicot's attack. The AFPA, a proponent of ecologically damaging logging practices, claimed the Clinton administration did not understand "that to save a forest you have

to cut a tree."

The White House dismissed Racicot's charges as "nonsense."

But the administration also had to answer more serious charges made in a memo leaked by a former U.S. Bureau of Land Management official. The memo charged that the department was underfunding the training of federal and local firefighters and the staffing of fire suppression efforts.

The Clinton administration admitted that funding had been cut. But it asserted the cuts were reasonable.

The BLM's preferred approach to controlling wildfires is called "prescribed" fires. These are fires that are intentionally set and controlled to remove the fuel that otherwise allows explosive fires to take off.

This approach has its limits. Earlier this year a BLM-set fire raged out of control in Los Alamos, N.M. It destroyed over 200 houses and threatened the government's premier nuclear research laboratory.

100 years of logging

Ecologists, firefighters and other experts say that before 1900 numerous small fires marked the Western areas of the United States and Canada every year. These natural fires—many of them started by lightning—cleared the forests of accumulated dead leaves, grass and other fire fuel. They promoted plant growth and left between 30 and 80 widely spaced large trees per acre—trees that could survive most fires.

The expansion of the logging industry in the late 19th and early 20th centuries left a lot of brush on the forest floor and promoted the growth of crowded stands of small trees. Fires grew bigger and more explosive, culminating in the Bitterroot Blaze of 1910, which produced hurricane force winds, killed 87 people, and burned up to 4 million acres of prime forest.

The government's response was the "10 a.m. policy." In 1910 the U.S. Forest Service, the predecessor of the BLM, mandated that every wildfire be put out by 10 a.m. the day after its detection.

The rigorous suppression of wildfires

protected the most profitable resource the forests contained—timber. At the same time, it allowed a hazardous buildup of brush, dead trees, grass and other fuels.

Today the situation is potentially even more deadly than it was 90 years ago, given the increasing number of "dream homes" built deep within Western forests.

Laird Robinson, a former Forest Service smoke jumper who collaborated with the late author Norman MacLean on the book "Young Men and Fire," has joined scientist Kevin Ryan of the Forest Service Fire Laboratory in Missoula, Mt., and others in calling for a multi-year, multi-billion-dollar effort to solve the problem.

According to the Aug. 11 Seattle Times, their plan calls for thousands of forest restoration workers to cut and burn through the dangerously choked timberland of the West.

But even its proponents know that such a plan, while it meets an obvious need and would supply employment to thousands of people for years, won't fly. It would have to be organized by the federal government,

which is in the process of shedding its responsibilities for welfare and health care and doesn't intend to take on any new ones, however necessary.

The BLM won't even completely fund the 1,300 full time firefighters it has, much less train thousands of new recruits in the rigorous and complicated techniques.

Those capitalist profiteers interested in cutting timber want it done in the cheapest, quickest way possible. They don't want to cut a few trees here and there over thousands of acres of forest.

Meanwhile, capitalists interested in selling "unspoiled vistas" to tourists or building "dream houses" oppose any mechanical removal of trees, which they see as an opening wedge for full-scale logging.

The government shows no sign of trying to resolve this conflict. From year to year the potential for a much greater catastrophe grows. Only a system that assesses the needs of society as a whole can carry out a careful plan to reduce the wildfire risks to a manageable level. Socialism is the name of that system.



Protest targets Haiti death-squad leader

By G. Dunkel
Queens, N.Y.

Just over the boundary from Nassau County, N.Y., in a quiet, tree-lined neighborhood in Laurelton, Queens, where all the houses have lawns, flower gardens and garages for their cars, Emanuel "Toto" Constant lives and works as a real-estate agent. The Haitian government wants him extradited for directing the mass murder of over 5,000 people during the coup against President Jean Bertrand Aristide in the early 1990s, and for complicity in the rape, torture and disfigurement of thousands more.

The U.S. government has granted him de-facto political asylum, a safe haven from the justice that awaits him in Haiti. Constant has admitted that he was a paid informant for the CIA during the coup, making \$700 a month.

As news spread through Laurelton's Haitian community that Constant was working for Rigaud Realty, anger and apprehension grew. On Aug. 12 a group of protesters got together, with help from the Center for Constitutional Rights, Fanmi Lavalas and State, County and Municipal Employees District Council 1707, and marched to his house.

The protesters held a short rally. They explained Constant's crimes, as well as the

U.S. State Department's role in granting him asylum, to his neighbors. One neighbor said: "I don't see him often. But it's not fair that they let him live here, while some kid who gets into trouble here is sent back to Haiti before he can turn around."

After stuffing leaflets into mailboxes and under car windshield wipers, the protesters marched back up 225th Street and headed for Rigaud Realty. The march took about an hour, but when the group arrived its chants were loud, militant and angry.

"Assassin, murderer, send Toto back to Haiti—right now," they chanted. "Shame, shame, shame on you, Rigaud."

A rally followed. Many speakers addressed conditions in Haiti and problems faced by Haitians living in the United States, as well as Constant's crimes.

A Haitian bystander who was listening across the street, told Workers World that many Haitians supported the protesters, even if they hadn't joined them that day.

An African American bystander said, "We should let bygones be bygones, but," and he pointed to a picture to one of Constant's victims, "this guy is so vicious he deserves justice."

"Mumia, what they're doing to the protesters in Philadelphia, this guy living in my neighborhood, all this stuff is just too much."

BALTIMORE

Community, families mark police killing anniversary

By Sharon Black-Ceci
Baltimore

On Aug. 9, over 100 people gathered at Baltimore's downtown Lexington Market to commemorate police shooting victims, including James Quarles. Each year the All-Peoples Congress, Unity for Action and the Quarles family protest at the site where the police shot him to death in 1997.

This year many other police brutality victims and family members joined the anti-racist groups. They were also protesting in solidarity with national actions demanding the release of hundreds of youths jailed during the Republican Convention in Philadelphia.

While Unity for Action Vice President Eric Easton introduced the families, the APC's Liz Lowengard made a large placard listing the victims who have been killed by police.

With tears in her eyes, Calvin Hazelton's sister came forward. "No one has ever remembered my brother. This killing has

continued to haunt me and my family. I have been fighting a drug addiction problem ever since and have had no peace," she said.

Hazelton's sister was passing by the protest when she saw her brother's name at the top of the list, which included over 20 names.

Andre Powell, spokesperson for the All-Peoples Congress, linked the case of Mumia Abu-Jamal, the movement against the death penalty and the recent demonstrations at the Republican Convention to the local work against police killings. He called for freedom for the youths jailed in Philadelphia.

Approximately 20 family members attended the protest.

The All-Peoples Congress is preparing a pamphlet telling the stories of those killed and abused by the Baltimore police. Families are asked to submit pictures and stories about their loved ones. For more information, call (410) 235-7040.

ON THE PICKET LINE

BY SHELLEY ETTINGER

United pilots ground flights

Fewer than half of all United Airlines flights have left on time—defined as within 14 minutes of the scheduled time—since Memorial Day. Things have been even worse in August. For the first 10 days of the month, on-time performance was down to 40 percent.

Why? Mostly because pilots are refusing to work overtime.

That simple job action is shining a bright light on a dirty secret that United shares with many companies: Instead of hiring enough people for good-paying jobs, they plan production or service based on speedup and overwork. Most employers would rather pay overtime than hire more workers with the complete wage-and-benefit package that entails.

That's been the tune at United. Now the airline is paying the piper. Ten thousand members of the Air Line Pilots union are exercising their right to work only their regular full-time schedules. As a result, United has had to cancel

hundreds of flights every day this summer.

One-quarter of United is supposedly "owned" by its employees. But the "employee stock ownership plan" provisions covering wages expired April 12. Pilots are demanding significant pay and benefit improvements to make up for the years of cuts they endured under the ESOP.

Wichita strikers defy court

It's the first strike by Machinists Lodge 70 at the York International plant in Wichita, Kan. The workers, who manufacture heating and cooling equipment, got the hang of it real fast. On July 31 they voted to reject the company's proposal; Lodge 70 President Richard Aldrich said the 3-percent wage increase offered was "simply not sufficient." The 700 workers walked out later that evening.

By the next morning, company lawyers were in court getting an injunction.

That didn't bother the strikers. They

kept blocking vehicles from entering the plant, causing traffic to back up on surrounding streets, according to the bosses who complained to the judge several days later. The bosses were also upset that strikers were using bad words, calling scabs ugly names.

Naturally, the workers say, they're mad. One of them commented that they make air conditioners but they don't even have air conditioning inside the plant. They say they'll stay out until their demands for decent pay and improvements in working conditions are met.

Wash. farm workers march

Over 4,000 farm workers and their supporters marched four-and-a-half miles—from Desert Aire to Mattawa, Wash.—on Aug. 7. United Farm Workers President Arturo Rodriguez led the march in 90-degree heat in the apple-growing region southeast of Seattle.

Workers, most of them immigrants and many undocumented, are paid \$9

or \$10 per bin of apples picked. They're demanding amnesty, decent wages, improved conditions and union recognition. They carried signs reading "Workers deserve a piece of the apple" and "No more racism." Members of other unions from the region swelled the march, along with community and religious activists drawn to the cause.

Rodriguez said, "We have literally millions of Latinos and people of other ethnicities performing the work that other people don't want to do, and they're treated like second-class citizens."

Despite all the threats against them, including the threat of deportation, the workers made some threats of their own. Strike talk was in the air. "We cannot feed our families with these low wages," said farm worker Arnulfo Ramirez. "And we will stop working if necessary to get a fair wage."

UFW Regional Director Lupe Gamboa commented on the mass turnout for what became the biggest march for immigrant workers' rights ever in Washington: "It shows how much worker discontent there is."

Georgia bricklayer solidarity

Members of the Bricklayers union demonstrated outside City Hall in suburban Smyrna, Ga., on Aug. 9. "Drop the charges," they chanted. The construction workers were protesting the racist arrests of six of their union brothers in July.

The workers' crime? Working—at 7 p.m., one hour past the 6 p.m. cut-off time stipulated in a city noise ordinance. Police charged six Mexican bricklayers with violating the law. They were arrested, handcuffed, taken to jail and forced to post \$175 bail each.

Outraged union members said they had never before heard of workers being arrested for working. Six organizers personally reimbursed the immigrant workers for the bail money. Bricklayers National Organizing Director Bob Yeggy said, "They were arrested and handcuffed because they are Hispanics in Smyrna."

Needless to say, police made no move against the construction company that employed the workers even though the bosses are clearly the ones responsible for violating the noise ordinance. Nor has there been an investigation of whether they were paying the workers overtime.

Behind 'economic prosperity' Mergers consolidate wealth, signal layoffs

By Gery Armsby

As politicians campaigned on the coat-tails of the so-called capitalist boom, Exxon Mobil, Qwest/U.S. West, First Union, Bank of America, First Data, and Conesco all announced major layoffs.

Bank of America leads the herd with a proposed 7 percent cut in its current work force—this after axing an initial 7 percent of the nearly 162,000 workers it employed one year ago. Its total layoffs will reach as high as 22,000 by next year.

Bank of America is the second biggest bank in the United States—a result of the 1998 East Coast/West Coast merger between San Francisco-headquartered BankAmerica Corporation and NationsBank, based in the Southeast.

Another banking giant, First Union Corp., will up its original layoff projections made in June from 3,500 to over 5,000 jobs cut. In order to slice away these workers, the bank plans to spend \$135 million on consultants and severance pay.

British-owned Standard Chartered PLC reported it plans 6,000 layoffs in its Asia-based banking operations as part of a restructuring drive that is likely to cost \$720 million.

Qwest, a telecom leader that recently merged with U.S. West communications, will cut between 2,000 and 4,000 jobs in the coming months.

Workforce cuts have sprung from various sectors and industries including energy, insurance and banking, technology and communications, and the dot-com enterprises. Many of the layoffs are directly tied to recent mergers.

All these companies' layoffs were announced to Wall Street brokers after second-quarter earnings reports. They were framed, for the most part, as restructuring or "rightsizing" initiatives.

Greedy top executives and investment bankers—nervous about flat earnings reports—generally welcomed the layoffs as a signal that costs are being diligently pared down to increase profits. Some investors were reportedly relieved by the layoffs, having previously feared many companies were hoarding employees.

Executives do not hide the fact that they want to squeeze as much profit as they can out of each worker. They court investors with their projections and boast about the "earnings potential" of the layoffs.

Qwest officials put this very clearly. They said that although each of their current employees brings in well over a quarter of a million dollars in revenues on average, they want to cut the work force and increase revenues at the same time.

The combined 72,000 Qwest/U.S. West employees generate over \$18 billion annually. Qwest wants to cut jobs and build revenues up to the \$24 billion mark.

Bank of America Chief Financial Officer James Hance told the same story in another way. He said he will slash jobs to improve the bank's "efficiency ratio" from 54 to 50.

This ratio reflects the cost of generating each dollar of income. In order to squeeze an extra eight cents out of every dollar spent, Hance will relentlessly hack away jobs.

Dot-com and wireless layoffs

According to "The Standard," a Web site featuring research on the Internet economy, over 9,000 layoffs have occurred in the dot-com and wireless sectors so far this year. One hundred seventeen very small to very large Internet-based companies reported between 10 and 1,500 layoffs.

NBC's Internet division bought out Xoom and Snap.com in 1999 to form NBCi. On Aug. 8, NBCi laid off 170 Inter-

net workers, a 20-percent cut.

Deutsche Telekom let 1,500 workers go after taking over VoiceStream wireless in July. Qualcomm, another wireless company, cut 200 jobs at the end of June.

Corel, maker of WordPerfect software, severed 320 employees in June to save \$40 million in costs annually.

Agilent, formerly a health-care technology subsidiary of Hewlett-Packard, announced Aug. 14 it intends to cut 450 jobs by November to "boost efficiency."

A common refrain among technology companies handing out layoff notices to their workers is "rightsizing"—a close relative of "downsizing."

Even in a period of capitalist boom, when outrageous fortunes are being accumulated through mega-mergers, those in traditionally more secure jobs, along with millions of workers around the world, are threatened by the slings and arrows of restructuring.

MARKET ELECTIONS

HOW DEMOCRACY SERVES THE RICH

By Vince Copeland

Every four years, big money chooses the presidential candidates. Their war chests filled to the brim, they are then packaged by the media as 'the people's choice.'

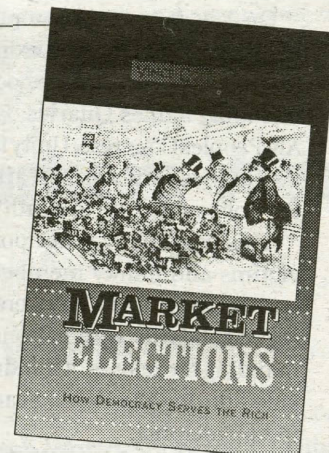
It's U.S.-style democracy—of the rich, by the rich, and for the rich.

But how do these chosen politicians win the votes of the millions as well as the millionaires?

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Verizon strikers vs. MERGER MANIA

By Milt Neidenberg

Fear now pervades management at Verizon, the giant telecommunications corporation formed by the merger of Bell Atlantic and GTE. Did the monopoly take the unions' pre-strike preparations too lightly in negotiating a contract?

It was clear that the Communications Workers and the Electrical Workers unions, who together represent more than 87,000 striking members in 13 states, were fired up over management's heavy-handed, oppressive tactics. But Verizon decided to ignore it.

That was a serious miscalculation.

The strike is one of the largest and most militant in years. Directory assistance has completely broken down. Requests for repairs and installations in 13 states have nearly tripled.

Customers are angry and frustrated. Threats to leave the company for other service providers are real in the cut-throat competitive telecommunications industry.

Verizon's strategy has backfired. They have relied completely on automated services and scab supervisors to do the job.

Thirty thousand managers, untrained and ill equipped to handle the technical aspects of the industry, are no substitute for an experienced, skilled, unionized workforce. Working them 12 hours a day, seven days a week can't overcome this fundamental weakness.

Herein lies the breakdown of operations that has left thousands across the region without phone service—not sabotage, as the company falsely charged.

This truth didn't stop the courts, always available when the bosses are in need, from issuing restraining orders against the unions in at least three states.

Verizon management compounded its miscalculations when it announced Aug. 8 that the company had purchased a 55 percent stake in NorthPoint Communications at a cost of \$800 million in cash.

That was a clear provocation. The unions charged that the money could have been made available to improve their contracts.

NorthPoint is a non-union, high-speed Internet digital subscribers line (DSL). The Electrical Workers have warned Verizon that they are going to organize NorthPoint's 1,500 non-union workers, a plan that would blunt Verizon's strategy to eliminate jobs and undermine union wages, benefits and working conditions. This issue has yet to be resolved.

Verizon was initially more concerned about its nationwide advertising campaign to make the merged corporations a household name rather than discussing the unions' demands.

On Aug. 8, the second day of the strike, Wall Street and the stock market confirmed the unsettling position Verizon had gotten itself into with 87,000 union workers. Verizon shares plunged more than 12 percent and an additional 3.7 percent the following day.

Bosses blink

As the strike gets stronger and the workers' anger grows, Verizon has begun to blink.

The company's first concession occurred less than a week into the strike when it reportedly agreed to the unions' demand for better access to represent the 32,000 non-union workers at Verizon Wireless. Fifty-five percent of Verizon Wireless is owned by Verizon and 45 percent by Britain's Vodafone AirTouch PLC.

This means that Verizon would be a

"neutral player" in a procedure called a card check. Under this agreement, Verizon bosses would recognize the union once a majority of the non-union workers signed authorization cards.

The unions would thus avoid costly and protracted legal entanglements with the National Labor Relations Board and the courts—a process that often takes years.

Verizon Wireless is the nation's largest phone company as well as the largest wireless owner. This significant concession on union representation will have far-reaching effects on an industry that is overwhelmingly non-union.

In addition to the card-check victory, the Communications Workers announced on Aug. 8 that GTE/Verizon signed a tentative agreement with its unionized work force in Kentucky moments before a walk-out. Progress is reported in western North Carolina and other areas.

Workers vs. mega-mergers

Verizon began as Bell Atlantic following the breakup of AT&T into 22 Bell Systems companies in 1982. It bought out Nynex, one of the Bells, in 1997, and recently merged with GTE to form Verizon.

Mega-mergers and spin-offs like this are intensifying mass layoffs, downsizing, increased productivity and obscene profits. In every industry in the last decades—telecommunications, banking, oil, auto, military-industrial and others—corporate mega-mergers have wrecked havoc.

These corporate mergers and acquisitions are usually carried out in secret to keep the workers in the dark. Meetings are held behind closed doors. Billions of dollars and overpriced stocks change hands in the boardrooms of high finance. Commercial bankers, investment bankers, high-priced lawyers and accounting firms, along with an army of "gimme" parasites, are paid hundreds of millions of dollars to pull off these mergers successfully.

Thanks in large part to these transactions, the value of U.S. stocks has risen by more than \$10 trillion since 1994—to \$16 trillion, or 16 millions of millions of dollars.

Workers in and out of unions are the main victims of the cover-ups of these wheeling and dealing operations. They are often caught by surprise when restructuring and the fallout of layoffs and downsizing begin.

Verizon workers are fighting to avoid this kind of catastrophe. The strike has exposed the corporate machinations and schemes that make the mega-mergers profitable.

The timing of the strike can upset Verizon's plans to intensify exploitation to suit the needs of the merger. With the strike as leverage, the rank and file can resist the layoffs that are inevitable in any merger. They can fight Verizon's plans to transfer unionized jobs to the non-union sector.

They can withstand the corporate decision to transfer them to areas where the merger needs experienced workers and eliminate many of the stress factors that permeate their jobs—especially forced overtime. They can force Verizon to subject speed-ups and restructuring plans to negotiations, instead of allowing bosses to reorganize at will.

Frenzied, merger-driven development has enabled Wall Street to be the dominant player in the world of international finance capital. Bankers use the wealth extracted from the labor power of the workers and the sacrifices forced upon them to impose their imperialist policies and further impoverish workers all over the world.



Thousands of striking Verizon workers and supporters rally in New York, Aug. 10.

WW PHOTO: G. DUNKEL

A broad and growing movement of progressive forces, including militant youths and people of color, are challenging this anti-worker corporate culture. These activists have challenged both the Democratic and Republican conventions, pointing to the lords of high finance and mega-merger architects that control both parties and their candidates.

Linking these struggles with the 87,000 striking Verizon workers who are fighting these powerful corporate forces could be a basis for unity against a common enemy.

Verizon workers show the way

Will the strike of 87,000 telecommunications union members be an influence on the million-fold work force of this highly competitive, overwhelmingly non-union industry? That is the greatest fear of the telecommunications bosses industry-wide.

And fearful they should be. These operations are ripe for union organizing.

In 1998, Worldcom merged with MCI to create a combined work force of 75,000 employees. Less than 500 are unionized. At Sprint only 10,500 of the company's 78,000 workers are unionized.

There are virtually no unionized workers in the long distance, wireless and Internet industries. VoiceStream Communications has agreed to be acquired by Deutsche Telekom, a German telecommunications corporation that has no union workers. BellSouth Corporation has 52,000 union employees of a total work force of 99,000.

Others like AT&T, Southwestern (owned by SBC), and other former Bell companies, which have a higher percentage of union workers, are in the process of building up non-union sectors in their wireless and Internet divisions.

With the Verizon strike now in its second week, the unions' tentative victory on the card check issue to reach the unorganized in Verizon Wireless will undoubtedly spread to other non-union workers in the telecommunications industry. The corporations will fight these efforts with a vengeance.

That will raise the need for creative forms of struggle on company property—like the sit-ins of the 1930s—and in the streets to overcome the bosses' challenges.

The 87,000 Communications Workers and Electrical Workers will need to be prepared for a continued, aggressive battle as Verizon digs in. While the outcome looks favorable to the unions, the final victory is yet to be decided.

Is Verizon James Earl Jones?

When people think of Verizon/Bell Atlantic, they think of actor James Earl Jones and his great voice. But this is just slick advertising. What is Verizon and who's really behind it?

Here are some of the facts:

Verizon is no mom and pop outfit. The company has 95 million telephone lines in the United States; 25 million wireless customers; and 4 million pager customers. It's the world's biggest provider of print and online directory information. Verizon operates in 96 of the top 100 markets in the country. The company reported \$60 billion in revenues for 1999.

Verizon is not just a monopoly here. It owns the main telephone companies in 21 countries and has a presence in another 19 countries. These include Canada, Venezuela, Dominican Republic, Britain, Italy, Greece, Micronesia, Indonesia, Thailand, Philippines, New Zealand, and the U.S. colony of Puerto Rico. Verizon has 6 million wireless customers overseas.

Who's on the board of directors? Not James Earl Jones.

The following Fortune 500 companies are represented on the board:

Banks: Chase, First Union, PNC

Pharmaceuticals: American Home Products

Oil: Shell

Military-Industrial Complex: United Technologies

Steel: USX

Transportation: CS Railroad

When you look at who owns the stock, you discover a Who's Who of big business and big banks: Barclay's, Fidelity Management, Bankers Trust, Mellon Bank, State Street Bank and others.

Your may not see these folks in the Verizon ads. You may not see their faces on your telephone bill. But these corporate interests are part of the system of exploitation that dominates our lives from telephones to political offices. They're part of the system we are fighting when we protest police brutality.

So when you pass the picket line, let the strikers know you support them. Not only because their battle is just—but because they are fighting for all of us!

Sources: Verizon Web site (www.verizon.com), Wall Street Journal (www.wsj.com), Yahoo Full Coverage (www.yahoo.com).

—Jeff Bigelow

LOS ANGELES

Mumia protest reaches millions

By Brenda Sandburg
and Bill Hackwell
Los Angeles

The eyes of the world were on the opening of the Democratic National Convention in Los Angeles as 5,000 people marched Aug. 13 to save the life of political prisoner Mumia Abu-Jamal and end the racist death penalty.

Over 200 media outlets from around the world reported on the protest, drawing unprecedented attention to Abu-Jamal's case. The former Black Panther is a prisoner on Pennsylvania's death row.

Chants of "Free Mumia!" echoed off the buildings in downtown Los Angeles as the march moved down Figueroa Street from Pershing Square to the Staples Center, where Democratic Party delegates were beginning to arrive.

People came from all over the country to send a clear message to the Democratic Party wing of the ruling class.

Buses came from San Francisco, Seattle, San Diego and Mendocino County, Calif. People organized vans and car pools from all over the West Coast. Others came from as far away as New York and Washington.

The event was youthful and multinational. A wide range of ages and struggles was represented.

The spirited daylong event set the tone for a week packed with protests against corporate plunder, police brutality, racism, the U.S. war against Iraq and the Navy occupation of Vieques.

Protesters defy police, gov't threats

"If the Democrats and Republicans really cared about working people, they'd be out here on the streets with us protesting against police brutality," said rally Co-chair John Parker, a leading organizer of the Los Angeles Coalition to Stop the Execution of Mumia Abu-Jamal and co-coordinator of the Los Angeles chapter of the International Action Center, which initiated the demonstration.

"Instead, they're more concerned about not offending their corporate sponsors

who hire these thugs [the cops], the same people who are trying to kill Mumia."

Organizers said the demonstration would have been even bigger if not for the blatant threats made by the Los Angeles Police Department and federal officials.

"Despite every effort by the mayor and the LAPD to marginalize the struggle to save Mumia and to intimidate and frighten people from coming out to the demonstration, a massive grassroots mobilizing effort has succeeded in reaching millions of people around the world with the truth about Mumia's case," said Preston Wood, co-coordinator of the Los Angeles IAC.

Originally, police tried to isolate protesters in a fenced-in area far from the convention site. The American Civil Liberties Union and National Lawyers Guild filed a lawsuit on behalf of protest organizers.

A court ruled that the city's planned restrictions violated the First Amendment and that people had the right to demonstrate in the vicinity of the convention center.

The fact that the demonstration was linked to the Democratic Convention was vital in boosting media attention to Abu-Jamal's case. "This is the first demonstration for Mumia to get widespread national coverage," said James Lafferty, a co-chair of the rally and member of the National Lawyers Guild. "The amazing coverage is a major breakthrough in putting the issue on the map."

In addition to demanding a new trial for Abu-Jamal, protesters called for an end to the racist death penalty, police brutality and the prison-industrial complex.

Dorsey Nunn of Legal Services for Prisoners with Children noted that 6 million people are currently on parole or probation. "Mumia's case is a continuation of an all-out attack of racism," Nunn said.

Speakers said there is no fundamental difference between the leadership of the Democratic and Republican parties.

Abu-Jamal's son, Mazi Jamal, declared: "The Los Angeles convention is an echo of the Philadelphia convention, bought and paid for by corporate people who are nothing but public-relations spokespeople for



WW PHOTO: BILL HACKWELL

Leonard Weinglass, center, with WWP candidates Gloria La Riva and Monica Moorehead at Aug. 13 march for Mumia in Los Angeles.

the bosses. Whether you vote Republican or Democrat, you vote for your own oppression."

Gloria La Riva of the International Action Center noted that Texas Gov. George W. Bush is set to execute 10 more people before December.

"Gore and the Democrats are just as responsible for every execution in Texas," La Riva said. "President Clinton signed the Anti-Terrorism and Effective Death Penalty Act, which is what has prevented Mumia and others on death row from gaining a new trial."

Pam Africa of International Concerned Family & Friends of Mumia Abu-Jamal urged people to sign an appeal to U.S. District Court Judge William H. Yohn. Yohn will decide later this year whether to allow new evidence to be presented in court on Abu-Jamal's behalf.

Africa said the evidence "shows there was a conspiracy between Judge Sabo, the district attorney and Mumia's public defender" at the time of his conviction.

War at home and abroad

Other speakers linked the prison system's brutality and injustice to U.S. policy abroad.

The U.S. government "kills women and children in Iraq and kills people in the United States, even if they are mentally disabled or under 18, even if malfeasance and mistrials are horrendous," actor Edward Asner said.

"Until Mumia is granted a new trial, we will continue to watch the Al Gores laugh up their sleeves while the George W. Bushes inexorably march the young, the disabled and quite possibly the innocent to their deaths."

Abu-Jamal's lead attorney, Leonard Weinglass, said the U.S. government is killing its young people just as it kills op-

pressed people in Iraq, Colombia and other parts of the world.

"Of 3,600 people on death row, 70 are juveniles," Weinglass said. "The U.S. is the only country of the world to execute its youth."

It is only poor people who end up on death row, added Steve Rohde, president of the Southern California chapter of the American Civil Liberties Union.

"They call it capital punishment, because if you don't have the capital, you get the punishment," Rohde said. "Over one-third of those on death row never had a lawyer."

Many speakers paid tribute to Shaka Sankofa, also known as Gary Graham, who was murdered by the state of Texas June 22.

Gloria Verdieu of the San Diego Coalition to Stop the Execution of Mumia Abu-Jamal said the intense media coverage about Sankofa's unjust conviction did not halt "the biggest legal lynching in the history of the United States."

Only a mass movement of the people will free Abu-Jamal, she added.

Jackson: 'We must not lose Mumia'

The Rev. Jesse Jackson came to lend his support to the protest. He declared, "We lost Sankofa, we must not lose Mumia."

Jackson said the laws must be changed to make state executions illegal, adding, "We cannot rest until all political prisoners are free."

Larry Holmes, a national leader of Millions for Mumia/IAC, echoed Sankofa's last words. "He said you can kill a revolutionary, but you can't kill a revolution," Holmes declared. "We will stand between the execution chamber and Mumia."

Imani Henry, a coordinator of the lesbian/gay/bi/trans group Rainbow Flags for Mumia, told the crowd, "I was arrested in Philly at the Republican National Convention protest and rushed here to tell the Democrats, like we told the Republicans, that they have the blood of Shaka Sankofa on their hands."

Henry urged people to protest at the first national debate between Bush and Gore in Boston Oct. 3.

Workers World Party presidential candidate Monica Moorehead denounced the forces lined up against the demonstrators.

"The cops can detain and torture activists as they did in Philadelphia and the media can label us as criminals. But you know what? It doesn't matter. Repression breeds resistance."

Moorehead said the government hopes to silence the dynamic youth and student movement. But, she added, "Shaka Sankofa gave us our marching orders with his dying words to fight on."

"We will fight on until Mumia is free and struggling with us."

Other speakers included Farm Workers union leader Dolores Huerta, Eric Mann of the Bus Riders Union, Bob McClosky of Service Employees Local 535, Bob Mandel of the Oakland Education Association, AF-SCME representative Roy Stone, spoken-word artist Jime Salcedo, and several bands including East LA Sabor Factory and Atzlan Underground.

'Free the Philly protesters'

By Greg Butterfield
New York

"Free the Philly protesters!" was the cry at two New York protests in mid-August demanding the immediate release and amnesty for all 456 activists arrested in Philadelphia during the Republican National Convention.

On Aug. 9 demonstrators filled the sidewalk on 42nd Street near Times Square at a picket line organized by the International Action Center. Speakers included Larry Holmes of Millions for Mumia and Imani Henry of Rainbow Flags for Mumia, two leading Black activists arrested during the Aug. 1 Day of Resistance to the Criminal IN-Justice System.

On Aug. 12, people came to the same location for a protest called by Hunter College Student Liberation Action Movement and the New York Direct Action Network. ACT UP-New York, the IAC and other groups joined the demonstration.

"No justice, no peace, until they're all

released!" was a popular chant. Another was, "Brick by brick, wall by wall, we're gonna free Mumia and free them all!"

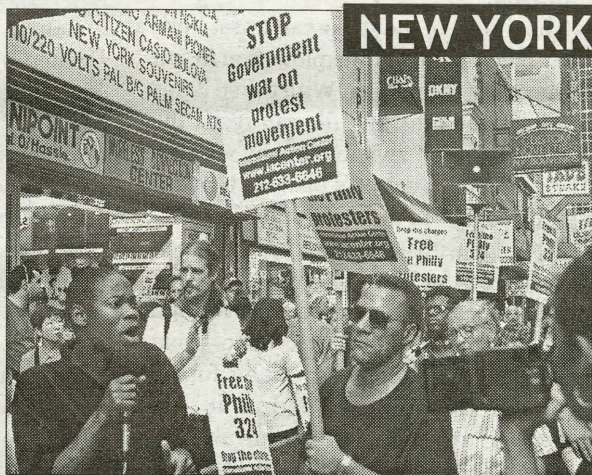
Many activists who had been released described the struggles and solidarity of those swept up in the mass arrests.

Sharon Eolis, a health care worker and IAC member, was among those arrested in Philadelphia. As she walked the picket line at the Aug. 12 demonstration, Eolis described the conditions at the Roundhouse police station to Workers World:

"A few people were handcuffed so tight that they had numbness and tingling in their arms," she explained.

"I was put in a holding cell with about 40 other women for 36 hours. There was no bathroom facility."

"I was able to see a lot of the torture and abuse that was going on," Eolis reported. "People were forced to be fingerprinted and



WW PHOTO: JOHN CATALINOTTO

Aug. 9 protest in Times Square.

there was brutality.

"Some people were handcuffed hand to foot, dragged out and dropped down or thrown into a wall. We witnessed this several times."

The protesters vowed to keep fighting until all their comrades were released and all charges were dropped.

Brutality by design

Clinton's real legacy on display

By Fred Goldstein

At the same moment President Bill Clinton delivered his speech to the Democratic National Convention extolling the so-called accomplishments of his administration, the Los Angeles Police Department opened fire with rubber bullets, pepper spray and bean bags on a crowd of 10,000 concert-goers 200 yards from the convention center.

The cops were testing their new crowd-control assault tactics on an unarmed crowd milling about after the police shut down a protest concert featuring Rage Against the Machine. The band had finished its set and the cops pulled the plug on the Latino group Ozomatli.

Their goal was to clear the streets before the delegates emerged from the hall after Clinton's speech. So the LAPD used the excuse of a few bottles and rocks being thrown over a fence as the pretext for a full-scale military attack, complete with cops on horses, motorcycles, bicycles and foot, all dressed in riot gear.

To underscore the satisfaction of Democratic Party officials with the police action, a Los Angeles Independent Media Center dispatch of Aug. 15 quoted Julie Green, a convention spokesperson, complimenting the police on a "smooth operation."

The simultaneous events summarize the entire Clinton administration. Clinton is at the podium posing as a friend of the people while his henchmen send the police to attack the people with full force.

It is this type of maneuver that has earned him the accolades of the bourgeoisie—despite their distaste for him.

A monumental renegade

After his speech all the commentators praised Clinton as the greatest politician of his generation, if not of the past century.

What was his greatness? He got the Democrats back into the White House after a long period of Republican rule.

Wherein lies his political brilliance? He stole the Republicans' thunder by moving the Democratic Party all the way to the right, adopting most of the Republican program while still holding onto the party's base.

To be sure, it does take a certain amount of political initiative and skill to be a renegade on such a monumental scale.

Clinton took over the leadership of a party that has the backing of the unions, the Black bourgeois leaders, the women's movement and the gay movement.

He then proceeded to destroy the welfare system, strengthen capital punishment, pass NAFTA, refuse to fight for anti-scam legislation, put forward the "don't ask, don't tell" anti-gay military policy, hand over the country's medical care to the insurance companies, make balancing the budget the be-all and end-all of economic policy, and commit blatant military aggression against Yugoslavia and Iraq.

Of course it is not hard to chart a reactionary course when all of Wall Street is demanding it. It is easier than it appears to carry out that program when you know you can count on the continued support of the party base's leadership, which hopelessly follows the time-worn and ultimately bankrupt "lesser evil" theory and will not break with the pro-imperialist Democratic Party leaders.

But when history is written, Clinton and his Democratic Leadership Council, the architects of this turn to the right—of which both Al Gore and Joseph Lieberman are leading members—may get mixed reviews from the bourgeoisie. The reason for this is precisely what is happening on the streets of Los Angeles as well as what happened in

Philadelphia, Washington and Seattle.

Clinton-Gore exposed big business control

The Clinton-Gore leadership became so brazen that they exposed big business's control over the Democratic Party—a control that was supposed to remain behind the scenes.

They made an enormous effort at forcing imperialist neoliberalism down the throats of the oppressed countries on behalf of the multinational corporations. They openly carried on fund-raising from big business in shameless Republican style. Their repressive legislation was brutally racist, anti-poor and anti-working class, as they implemented the budget demands of the bondholders.

In the scheme of U.S. politics, the Republicans were supposed to be the party of big business and the Democrats the party of the common people. Of course, this was never true. But Clinton and Gore have accomplished what volumes of political argument could not accomplish—they discredited the two-party capitalist political system before a new generation.

To be sure, breaking with the two-party system of corporate rule is not an end in itself. The question of how to take the struggle forward must still be answered. But it is nevertheless a vital and indispensable beginning on the road to building an independent revolutionary struggle against the capitalist system.

Should this struggle widen and spread to the masses, the ruling class and the Democratic Party leadership is fully capable of reviving its demagogic liberalism.

But for now, since the protests in Seattle and Washington, the bourgeoisie has realized that the youths who are carrying out resistance to corporate domination, racism and repression, whatever their ideology, are irreconcilably opposed to the manifestations of capitalism and the two bourgeois parties.

Beginning in Philadelphia and now in Los Angeles, the bourgeois establishment is officially treating them as enemies to be intimidated and crushed. The illegal jailings and beatings in Philadelphia and the heavy use of military-style police force in Los Angeles can only be understood in that light.

The government's nervousness was evident when the LAPD raided Patriotic Hall, where the Shadow Convention and the Independent Media Center were housed, on Aug. 14. On a trumped-up claim that a van was filled with explosives, the police shut down the hall while the IMC was preparing to upload a broadcast about the demonstrations to 150 stations through a satellite connection.

In place of the IMC broadcast the police sent a message saying the program had been closed down by the LAPD. Activists were forced to stand outside for six hours.

Repression breeds resistance

Among the many accounts of the attack on the Rage concert, one by Los Angeles Times staff reporter Joe Mozingo shows that the government has much to fear.

Mozingo was covering the demonstrations and rushed to the site of the attack to join the crowd. A phalanx of 20 mounted police and a line of foot cops encircled the crowd and drove it towards a corner into another phalanx of police with shotguns armed with beanbags and rubber bullets.



WW PHOTO: BILL HACKWELL

Los Angeles police line streets during Aug. 14 march against corporate greed.

"They began to shout 'Don't shoot,'" wrote Mozingo, and then, "they were pushed onto Olympic Boulevard. The group stopped just past Francisco Street. The police ordered them to move. They didn't."

"The horses were lined up—23, side-by-side. Hundreds of other officers were in tight formations. ... Then boom!"

Rubber bullets were flying. Mozingo himself was shot several times.

The crowd retreated and then "stopped under the overpass of Harbor Freeway. The police lined up 50 yards away behind spires of smoke. ... Again, after repeated orders to move on, shooting erupted in trails of sparks. ... We ran away again and had several other stand-offs on Olympic."

Protesters were picking up rubber bullets as souvenirs. Finally the crowd was pushed out of the area.

But it is clear from this report that the concert-goers, almost all youths, did not flee in panic or fear. They were angered into resistance and held their ground in the face of overwhelming force. They only dispersed when they had no means to overcome police firepower. The crowds in Seattle had similar fight-back reactions against police attacks with rubber bullets and tear gas.

This is the first development of a sus-

tained resistance movement in a generation.

It comes after the defeat of the USSR and the great setback for the socialist camp. This defeat paved the way for the triumphal march of U.S. corporations all over the Third World and for the arrogance of the Clinton administration and its repressive policies at home. It arises in a much more reactionary political atmosphere, both nationally and internationally, than existed during the 1960s and early 1970s. It has tested the ruling class and drawn a vicious reaction.

The ruling class feels free to dispense with all elementary norms of capitalist democracy. It is setting the police free to do virtually anything they want to suppress any manifestation of militant resistance.

But in the long run this strategy is bound to fail. In fact, the struggle can become an invaluable education that will ultimately make the movement stronger.

All organizations that consider themselves Marxist or socialist, despite ideological and tactical differences, are duty bound to give support to this movement and to help turn the capitalist strategy of destruction into a means to fan the flames of resistance.

PHILADELPHIA

Women prisoners speak

By Berta Joubert-Ceci
Philadelphia

Over 450 people were arrested during the Aug. 1 protests against the "criminal injustice system" at the Republican Convention. The 20 protesters who remain in Philadelphia jails will be released Aug. 15, supporters said.

After deliberating among themselves and consulting with lawyers, the activists have decided to switch their tactics from "jail solidarity" to "court solidarity."

Judges reduced the bail for many protesters during their second week in jail. Bail was originally as high as \$10,000 to \$1 million.

Kris Hermes from the R2K Network legal defense team told Workers World that the newly released activists plan to hold a press conference on the evening of Aug. 15.

There the ex-prisoners—most of them women—will announce their new strategy.

The women will also speak out about the conditions they were subjected to while in jail, including physical and psychological torture, isolation and sexual abuse.

Hermes said the activists want to keep the focus on the struggle to abolish the prison-industrial complex and the current situation of the 2 million people behind bars in this country.

They will give voice to the general prison population by reading a list of demands drafted by non-protesters in the jails. These prisoners' 16 demands include the right to a speedy trial, prompt medical and dental attention, decent food, an end to overcrowding, an end to abuse by guards and reliable phone service.

In a statement, the protesters said, "These demands reflect the long-term day-to-day problems inside the Philadelphia prison system that are not unique to us and will remain long after we are gone."

"These are the problems that we were trying to draw attention to when we were arrested."

NATO troops seize mining complex

By Sara Flounders

Claiming they were concerned about controlling air pollution, some 3,000 NATO soldiers stormed a lead smelting plant in Zvecan at 4:30 in the morning of Aug. 14. The plant was the only functioning industry in the vast Trepca mining complex in northern Kosovo, a few miles from the city of Mitrovica.

At 6:30 a.m., in a further attack that had nothing to do with air pollution, NATO soldiers closed down and confiscated the equipment of Zvecan's Radio S—the only station that dared to report information critical of NATO.

The northern part of Mitrovica is the only remaining multi-ethnic part of Kosovo. Thousands of Serbs, Romani people, Slavic Muslims, other nationalities and peoples of mixed backgrounds have been driven out of other areas by Kosovo Liberation Army thugs and vigilante groups. Many have fled to the north side of the Ibar river.

There, with the local Serbian population, they have resisted more than a year of KLA attacks in an economically devastated region.

The surprise attack by NATO shut down the only radio station and the main source of employment for the local population.

The mines, with their smelting, refining and power centers, once constituted one of Yugoslavia's leading export industries and a main source of hard currency. It was

the major source of jobs in the region.

Defending the pre-dawn attack, Bernard Kouchner, the head of the United Nations Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK), said, "As a doctor and chief administrator of Kosovo I would be derelict if I allowed a threat to the health of children and pregnant women to continue for one more day." UNMIK is the police force set up by NATO to administer Kosovo.

Kouchner has never had a word of criticism for the environmental havoc NATO created throughout the entire region with the use of depleted uranium weapons, the bombing of chemical plants and the use of cluster bombs.

If you find it hard to accept that NATO is suddenly concerned with pollution, it's worth looking for what is really at stake.

'Most valuable piece of real estate'

On July 8, 1998, New York Times reporter Christopher Hedges wrote, "The sprawling state-owned Trepca

mining complex is the most valuable piece of real estate in the Balkans." Hedges described glittering veins of lead, cadmium, zinc, gold and silver.

The Stari Trg mine is ringed with smelting plants, 17 metal treatment sites, warehouses, freight yards, railroad lines, a power plant and the country's largest battery plant. It is the richest lead and zinc

mine in Europe. There are also 17 billion tons of coal.

It was George Soros, the multi-billionaire financier, who wrote Kouchner's script.

Paris-based journalist Diana Johnstone, in a Feb. 28 report, described a policy paper by the International Crisis Group. This is a think tank set up by Soros to provide guidance in the NATO-led reshaping of the Balkans.

The think tank publicly called on Kouchner to take over the management of Trepca and to use the pretext of environmental hazards to shut the Zvecan smelter down.

The Soros group stressed that the takeover should happen before new elections in Yugoslavia so that the opposition could blame Yugoslav President Slobodan Milosevic for the loss of Trepca. The elections are now six weeks away.

At the time this proposal was made there was no pollution—the lead smelter was not even in operation. It was closed for several months after the NATO bombing.

Production in this state-owned industry started again only two months ago, at great sacrifice and expense. The hard currency it could have earned was desperately needed to rebuild Yugoslavia's ravaged economy.

Skimming the profits

With the seizure of the smelting plant in Zveca, NATO will control the entire Trepca complex.

Proving once again that NATO is the military arm to insure primarily U.S. corporate control, the first move after seizing

the complex was to turn it over to a consortium of private mining companies. This consortium—ITT Kosovo Ltd.—is a joint venture of U.S., French and Swedish companies.

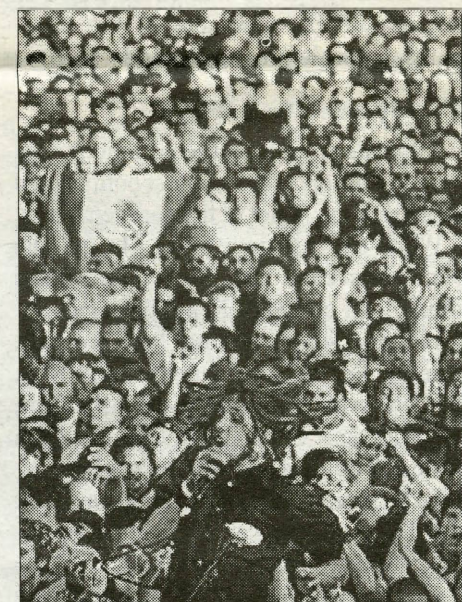
The most interesting partner in this deal to control Trepca is the U.S. company Morrison Knudsen International. On July 7 Morrison Knudsen merged with Raytheon Engineers and Constructors, a major military contractor that makes Patriot missiles and radar equipment for the Pentagon.

This is an enormously lucrative deal. ITT Kosovo Ltd. will administer Trepca, appoint executives and a board of directors, develop the investment strategy and skim the greatest profits from every possible deal.

Those in the Albanian population who hold illusions that control by these corporations will mean the return of the thousands of well-paid, secure jobs with benefits that existed before the war should read the plans multi-billionaire Soros has in store.

Once NATO has control of the whole industrial complex, according to the International Crisis Group, foreign investors will develop a very modern, highly profitable facility with a small workforce.

In this outright theft of an industry that was built by the efforts of all the peoples of Yugoslavia, Soros's think tank recommends that the management and administration be made up of foreign executives "in order to prevent corruption!"



PHOTOS: L.A. INDEPENDENT MEDIA CENTER

Rage Against the Machine concert, Los Angeles, Aug. 14.

and rubber bullets, people were organizing to try and get everyone to safety," reported Forrest Schmidt, a Workers World Party activist who was caught in the police riot.

"I saw many people who had been hit in the back of the head by rubber pellets," Schmidt said. "The police were firing high as the crowd was running away. They were aiming at people's heads, not their legs."

"One woman I saw was hit directly in the eye," he said. "The entire side of her face was swollen and she couldn't see out of that eye. I saw another person severely trampled by a horse."

Besides rubber bullets and pepper spray, Young said, the cops fired "big cork bullets, half-dollar-size and very thick."

"Some guy had the back of his head split open by one," she said.

The Los Angeles Times reported that homeless-rights activist Ted Hayes was struck in the chest with a "beanbag" projectile. Hayes was knocked to the ground gasping for breath. He had to be taken to the hospital.

Schmidt said the cops seemed to target legal observers from the National Lawyers

As Clinton/Gore speak of democracy

Los Angeles police riot

Continued from page 1
more determined and militant."

Legal assembly

The Aug. 14 concert was the culmination of a day of protests against capitalist globalization, the National Missile Defense program and economic injustice. The actions converged for the concert, a legal assembly, in the fenced-off "protest pit" outside the convention center.

Earlier, police attacked a 2,000-strong street protest targeting Gore's ties to Occidental Petroleum. That Big Oil monopoly threatens the sovereignty and environmental safety of the Indigenous U'wa people in Colombia. Ten people were arrested.

The crowd at the concert was multinational, including many Latino youths. There were young Nigerians working with the Service Employees union and a Korean drum corps. The Chicano students' group MEChA, the Filipino group Bayan and the U.S. Out of Colombia Committee hoisted banners.

There were also hundreds of youths and community people who came just to hear the music, not expecting a confrontation with police.

Rage Against the Machine performed songs of protest and solidarity with political prisoners and international people's struggles. The band led the audience in chants of "Free Mumia!"

Then the East LA band Ozomatli took the stage.

Imani Henry, a national coordinator of Rainbow Flags for Mumia, described what

happened next.

"The police got on the loudspeaker and said, 'This is now an illegal demonstration. You have 15 minutes to disperse.' But they didn't let people disperse."

"The band was defiant. People in the crowd started putting up banners. Many people left marching and chanting," Henry said.

'Overwhelming force'

Richard Becker, West Coast co-director of the International Action Center, described what followed as "overwhelming force" by "teams of 120-150 cops in military formation."

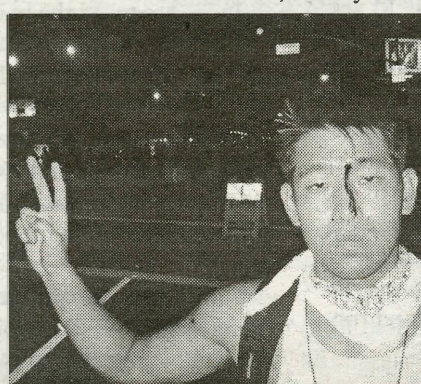
The cops appeared to have timed their riot to coincide with Clinton's speech, when the fewest TV cameras would be trained on the protesters outside, he said.

"The main orientation of the police was not arrests, but punishment," Becker told WW. "This attack was intended to create the idea that if you go anywhere near the Staples Center, punishment will be inflicted on you."

As people tried to leave the concert site, riot police on horseback charged the crowd, splitting it in two.

The largest group marched up

Hit by a rubber bullet.



U.S. court rules against Serb leader

The rape charge & Washington's war propaganda

By Sara Flounders

On Aug. 10, a federal court in New York ruled that Radovan Karadzic, the Bosnian Serb leader during the civil war in Bosnia seven years ago, must pay \$745 million in damages for the crimes of rape, torture and genocide committed during the civil war.

Of course, no money is expected to be recovered. The charge was originally filed in 1993 for propaganda purposes at the height of the Bosnian civil war. The decision seven years later received the full front page and three inside pages of coverage in the Aug. 11 edition of *Newsday*, and wide attention in other media.

How could a U.S. federal court in New York even have jurisdiction over what happened in another country to people who had no connection to the United States?

This "trial" is part of a continuing effort to give the U.S. government the basis to charge and convict leaders of any country that is the target of CIA destabilization. It revived all the charges that were used to justify U.S. military intervention and occupation in the Balkans.

Karadzic is not charged with committing any of the crimes directly. He is charged as the leader of a government that has been a target of continuing demonization.

Karadzic could not travel to New York or present any defense in this one-sided trial. He is in hiding in Bosnia after being indicted on similar charges at the court established at The Hague by U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright—the so-called International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia.

Of course, no testimony presented in the

U.S. federal court in New York or the Tribunal based at The Hague even mentioned Washington's role in manufacturing the break-up of the Yugoslav Federation, fomenting the civil war and bombing civilians in Bosnia and Yugoslavia.

But the criminal role of the United States, Germany and other Western governments has been well documented by people's tribunals in New York, Berlin, Rome, Athens, Moscow and Kiev, Ukraine, over the past year.

NATO bases the real goal

The charges of genocide and mass rapes in Bosnia were the beginning of a massive, well-orchestrated public relations campaign to demand U.S./NATO intervention in the Balkans.

Claiming to be a force for peace and stability in a bloody civil war, the Pentagon has now established a whole network of military bases in Bosnia, Croatia, Macedonia, Kosovo, Hungary and the Czech Republic.

Serb towns in Bosnia were the targets of more than 4,000 U.S. bombings in 1994 and 1995. In 1999 the Pentagon and NATO bombed Yugoslavia for 78 days.

The charge of rape made against the Serbs shaped the views of millions of people who previously had little interest in the Balkans.

In late 1992 and early 1993, sensational news reports charged that mass rapes were a planned, deliberate strategy of the Bosnian Serb leadership.

Women are the first victims in every war. Rape and the degrading abuse of women are all too often carried out as a stamp of conquest by invading armies imbued with patriarchal attitudes.

But the charge of rape has also often been consciously used as an essential prop of war propaganda. The supposed defense of women is used to mobilize armies and to galvanize blind hatred.

A lie repeated becomes fact

Without any examination of the highly biased sources, the major Western media gave lurid descriptions of rape camps where it was claimed that between 20,000 and 100,000 Muslim and Croatian women were raped. This crystallized the public view that Serbs were the evil aggressors and Muslims and Croats the helpless victims.

The charge that 30,000 women and girls had been raped originated with the foreign minister of Bosnia, Haris Silajdzic, in order to stall peace talks in Geneva in late 1992.

In January 1993 the Warburton Report authorized by the European Community estimated that 20,000 Muslim women had been raped as part of a Serb strategy of conquest. This report was widely cited as an authoritative, independent source.

No coverage was given to a dissenting member of the investigative team—European Parliament President Simone Veil—who revealed that the estimate of 20,000 rapes was based on interviews with only four victims, two women and two men.

The Croatian Ministry of Health in Zagreb was the main source on which the Warburton Report based its estimate of 20,000 rapes.

Because the charge of systematic Serbian rapes of Muslim and Croatian women has been repeated so often, it is now accepted as an undisputed fact.

Publications vied with each other for sensationalized accounts. *USA Today* told the story of a 5-month-old baby who was supposedly the result of Serbian rape. The *New York Times* carried a photo story with the caption, "Two-month-old baby girl born to a teen-age Muslim woman after she was raped in a Serbian detention camp." The war was not yet nine months old.

Ms. Magazine ran a cover story that accused Bosnian Serb forces of raping for the purpose of producing pornographic films. No such films were ever found and the charges were not supported by the findings of Helsinki Watch or Human Rights Watch.

Croatian (Dis)Information Center

The woman who was the star witness and main media spokesperson in the New York trial and judgment, Jadranka Cigelj, is a paid propagandist who worked for the Croatian Information Center.

She was well known in radical Croatian nationalist circles. She was also the vice-chair of Croatian President Franjo Tudjman's fascist HDZ Party.

The HDZ is closely linked to the Ustashe Party that led Croatia during the Nazi occupation in World War II.

Perhaps because of her fascist political background, in interviews Cigelj always brands the Serbs as "far worse than the Nazis."

Cigelj's rape charges are extensively quoted in almost all articles and testimony on rapes in Bosnia. However, her accounts have changed several times.

Thomas Deichmann, a German re-

searcher and journalist, has documented Cigelj's varied testimony and her political background in a chapter of the book, "War, Lies and Videotape," published by the International Action Center.

In one publication produced by the Croatian Information Center, Cigelj charged that a Serbian reserve officer raped her. In a later article with Roy Gutman of *Newsday*, she charged that Zeljko Mejakic, the Serbian commander of a refugee camp, and two camp guards raped her.

Later, in a German publication, her story changed again. She testified in the highly publicized case of another man, former Serbian soldier Jezdimir Topic, who faced deportation from the United States in 1999.

Cigelj offered to become a key prosecution witness against another Serb, Dusan Tadic, at the Hague Tribunal. She was rejected because she was seen as an unreliable source.

However, Cigelj has been featured in documentaries, received financial awards, and was the main spokesperson of a 25-city U.S. tour organized by Amnesty International.

None of the discrepancies in her story or her right-wing political activities was reported in the coverage of her testimony against Radovan Karadzic.

Capitalism promotes sexual slavery

Nowhere in *Newsday's* three pages of coverage recounting charges of Serbian rapes in Bosnia were the conditions women face today under NATO occupation even mentioned.

Throughout Eastern and Central Europe, in Russia and the former Soviet republics, the chaos and dislocation of the capitalist market have eroded the enormous gains women made under socialism.

A decade ago these countries guaranteed full employment and two years paid maternity leave. Now unemployment of 30-40 percent is the norm. Health care and child-care services have collapsed.

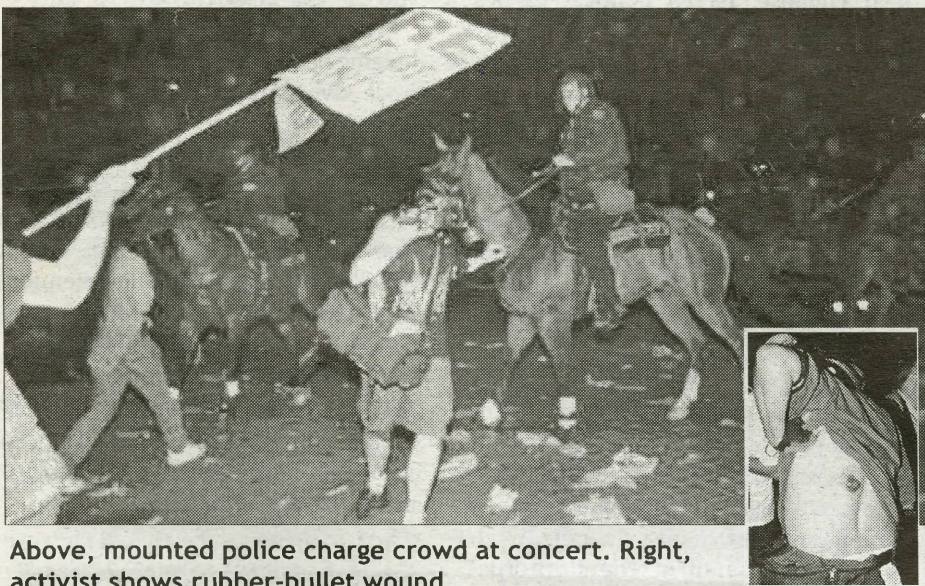
Women's organizations were understandably outraged by the lurid reports concerning mass rapes in Bosnia seven years ago. They would make a contribution if they focused their resources on exposing the conditions for women living under U.S. domination today.

U.S. troops and bases do not protect women. They exist to protect the extraction of profits for giant capitalist institutions. In every U.S. military operation an entire sex industry of bars, strip joints and brothels is created around the bases.

This experience of Vietnam, Thailand, Korea and the Philippines is now the reality around U.S. bases in Tuzla, Bosnia, and at Camp Bondsteel in Kosovo.

At the United Nations Beijing Plus Five Conference of 10,000 women in June, the worldwide status of women was examined. It was estimated that more than half-a-million women from Central and Eastern Europe are shipped abroad each year as part of the worldwide trafficking in prostitutes. Bosnia was cited as one of the worst examples. (*New York Times*, June 11)

Flounders is co-director of the International Action Center in New York. Background materials for this article appeared in two IAC books, "NATO in the Balkans" and "War, Lies and Videotape," both available at leftbooks.com.



Above, mounted police charge crowd at concert. Right, activist shows rubber-bullet wound.

Guild and the American Civil Liberties Union. The progressive lawyers had helped protest organizers hand the LAPD a defeat by winning a court injunction permitting marches to the convention site.

Not even Democratic Party delegates were safe. Police outside the convention center reportedly manhandled Los Angeles County AFL-CIO Secretary-Treasurer Miguel Contreras. New York Public Advocate Mark Green and some other New York delegates were also treated roughly.

Throughout the night LAPD spokespeople offered several excuses for their riot.

First local television stations reported that police had been angered by "one or two bonfires" lit inside the concert area.

Then the cops claimed that 10 to 20 people at the edge of the concert were throwing chunks of dirt, rocks and bottles at them—over a 13-foot-high chain link fence.

Another story had it that two youths who scaled the fence holding a black flag were "endangering" the riot-gear-clad LAPD.

The Southern California ACLU quickly condemned the LAPD. Spokesperson Dan Tokaji said, "Had the police cooperated with rally organizers, the night could have ended calmly and smoothly."

"Instead, the police response tonight created huge risks. When people see batons raised, riot gear and mounted police clearing the area, a tense situation becomes a volatile one."

"I was there in the middle of all this, enjoying the sound of Ozomatli, when all of a sudden the plug was pulled with the excuse that people would not get off the 'security' fence," wrote Cisco, a concert-goer who posted a personal account on the Los Angeles Independent Media Center Web site. "People got angry, and rightly so."

editorial

Target: Lumumba

The year was 1960. The people of the Congo had just wrested independence from Belgian imperialism. Their leader was 35-year-old Patrice Lumumba, who declared he was ready to seek Soviet assistance to drive out the remaining Belgian troops. To the people of Congo, he was a hero.

To the Cold Warriors in the Eisenhower White House, Lumumba was a "communist agent." To Belgian ruling circles, he was an upstart African who dared to challenge their murderous rule as anything but benign.

To both sets of imperialist rulers, Lumumba was a target. He was someone to be pushed out, gotten rid of, eliminated. Assassinated.

U.S. and Belgian imperialist interests competed then—and still compete—in the Congo. And they both compete with French and British corporations. But they all agreed in the summer of 1960 that Lumumba must be destroyed.

This year new official material has come out that backs up the rumors, leaks and rational analysis that the CIA and/or Belgian secret services and military conspired with corrupt Congolese officials—namely Joseph Mobutu and Moise Tshombe—to get rid of Lumumba.

Orders for the U.S. hit came directly from the top. As the British Guardian publicized this Aug. 10, U.S. President Dwight Eisenhower told a meeting of the National Security Council that he thought Lumumba should be erased.

According to Robert Johnson, the minute-taker at that Aug. 18, 1960, meeting, who spoke to a Congressional committee in 1975, Eisenhower turned to Allen Dulles, director of the CIA, "in the full hearing of all those in attendance, and saying something to the effect that Lumumba should be eliminated."

Johnson recalled: "There was stunned silence for about 15 seconds and the meeting continued."

According to many reports, Dulles and the CIA put a plan in motion to poison Lumumba with biological

agents so he would fall ill and die, and the United States would escape blame. This elaborate plot failed, for while U.S. imperialism is capable of attempting the greatest crimes, it does not always succeed.

The CIA made dozens of similar elaborate attempts on Cuban President Fidel Castro's life, and the Pentagon carried out simpler direct bombing strikes aimed at Libya's leader Muammar Qaddafi and Yugoslavia's elected President Slobodan Milosevic.

But sometimes the murderers succeed. In September 1960, following a coup led by Mobutu, Lumumba wound up under house arrest. When he attempted to escape, U.S. and Belgian agents helped his enemies capture him. He was turned over to Tshombe's forces and murdered on Jan. 17, 1961.

A book written last year by Ludo de Witt, based on Belgian government documents, shows how officials and officers from that country were actively working to get rid of Lumumba just as the CIA was. Whoever struck the final blow, both imperialist powers were acting like what they are: organized criminals. Highly organized. But still criminals.

Lumumba, on the other hand, was a national hero. And a revolutionary liberation hero for the world who is still inspiring the people of the Congo to fight for their independence. The last words he wrote while awaiting his death that January show why:

"History will one day have its say, but it will not be the history that is taught in Brussels, Paris, Washington or in the United Nations, but the history which will be taught in the countries freed from imperialism and its puppets. Africa will write its own history, and to the north and south of the Sahara, it will be a glorious and dignified history.

"Do not weep for me, my dear wife. I know that my country, which is suffering so much, will know how to defend its independence and its liberty. Long live the Congo. Long live Africa!"

ISRAEL

Settler state in crisis as deadline looms

By Michael Bar-Am

The Israeli settler state is in the midst of a deep political and ideological crisis. A military crisis also looms as Sept. 13 approaches.

That is the date when the Palestinian Authority has said it will declare an independent state of Palestine. The PA now administers a small percentage of Palestinian land from which Israeli ground forces have withdrawn.

In May Israeli troops were forced to make a humiliating retreat from southern Lebanon, which they had occupied since June 1978. The retreat was brought on by a heroic armed struggle and people's war conducted by the Lebanese people.

Lebanese youths played a leading role in attacks on Israeli military bases and in the daily ambushes of Israeli infantry and armored vehicle patrols.

Less than two months later, the Clinton administration tried to broker an agreement between Israel and the Palestinian Authority at the Camp David compound outside Washington.

President Bill Clinton chaired the talks. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright was close at hand.

Prime Minister Ehud Barak led the Israeli delegation. Yassir Arafat, the leader of Fatah, the largest Palestinian political movement, and head of the PA, lead the Palestinian delegation.

The talks collapsed over control of Jerusalem, Palestinian sovereignty and the right of Palestinian refugees to return to their homes in Palestine, including Ashkelon, Haifa, the Galilee and the West Bank.

When Barak returned to Israel, he found his shaky parliamentary coalition near collapse. Israeli political parties and establishment media are deeply divided over how to try to deal the Palestinians a historic defeat that would once and for all legitimize the Israeli settler-state worldwide.

Liberals, centrists and moderates are for using the carrot, that is, offering concessions to Palestinian statehood. Right-wingers, racists and religious fundamentalists are for using the stick and repressing the Palestinians militarily. But all support the existence of an apartheid-like state with a virtually all-Jewish population.

With armed struggle throughout Palestine a real possibility in September, the Israeli daily newspaper Ha'aretz, in an Aug. 11 editorial entitled "The return of despair," observed: "It has been a long time since we heard so many saying there is nothing to keep them here. All those who

have not heard anyone make such a statement recently—all dozen of you—please stand up."

In his desperate bid for the Clinton administration's support—and more importantly, to bolster sinking Israeli morale—Barak exposed the real role of Washington in keeping Israel afloat. The United States gives Israel billions of dollars in military and economic aid annually, as well as political backing in all domestic and world forums.

Barak got Clinton to give a 30-minute "feel good" interview on prime time Israeli television. Clinton praised Barak and attacked the Palestinians for not giving in at Camp David.

Palestinian youths train for struggle

At this time it is impossible to tell what will happen on Sept. 13.

The clock is ticking. The United States is putting tremendous pressure on the PA not to declare an independent state. The Israelis are threatening a land, sea and air blockade if independence is declared.

The Palestinians have studied the successful military campaign in southern Lebanon and thousands of Palestinian teenagers are spending their summer vacation in military training learning to use live ammunition.

Palestinian legislator Ziad Abu Zayyad told the Associated Press Aug. 13 that a final decision would not be made until a PLO leadership meeting in late August-early September.

Meanwhile, Ha'aretz reported May 26, the "crisis of motivation among Israel's youth has been an officially recognized phenomenon since 1996" by the Ministry of Defense. Compulsory military service for all 18-year-olds is a thing of the past. Now there is "selective conscription."

"The four years of the great war on draft dodging have not reduced the number of those avoiding the draft," Ha'aretz warned.

Roni Barkan, from the town of Ra'anana, entered the Israeli Defense Forces after college. He left the army after two months. "For me, the so-called enemy nations are not enemies at all. I have no personal interest in waking up in the morning to find there's a State of Israel," Barkan explained.

This growing disaffection of Israeli youths offers perhaps the best opportunity to de-fang the Pentagon's aggressive ally in the Middle East.

Bar-Am served in the Israeli Defense Forces during the 1973 Arab-Israeli War and since that experience has been active for decades as a supporter of the Palestinian liberation struggle.

'Oxy out of U'wa land!'



An Aug. 14 demonstration in Los Angeles exposed Vice President Al Gore's connection to Big Oil. Gore's father was on the board of directors of Occidental Petroleum. He left the vice president \$500,000 in Oxy stock. The early-morning protest by over 2,000 militantly denounced Occidental's plans to drill on the lands of the Indigenous U'wa people in northwest Colombia. Protesters exposed both the environmental hazards and genocidal practices that Gore is partner to.

— Story and photo by Bill Hackwell

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Venezuelan prez resists U.S. pressure

Chavez defies sanctions on Iraq

By Andy McInerney

Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez delivered a diplomatic body blow to U.S. efforts to isolate and economically strangle Iraq on Aug. 10. Chavez crossed the Iran-Iraq border to meet with Iraqi President Saddam Hussein—the first meeting between Hussein and a foreign head of state since the 1991 U.S.-led war against Iraq.

The meeting was held as part of Chavez' 10-nation tour to meet with members of the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries. But it had special importance because of Washington's efforts to isolate Iraq, including the 10-year policy of economic sanctions that has caused over 1.5 million deaths.

U.S. officials fumed about the visit. State Department spokesperson Richard Boucher called it "particularly galling." The trip "bestows an aura of respectability on Saddam Hussein," he whined.

Britain, an imperialist junior partner in the U.S.-led campaign against Iraq, lodged a diplomatic protest with the Venezuelan government in Caracas. The British Foreign Office called the visit "inappropriate."

But unlike the leaders of most other countries in the capitalist world, Chavez refused to back down.

"We regret and denounce the interference in our internal affairs," Chavez said. "We do not and will not accept it."

"What can I do if they get upset?" he continued. "We have dignity and Venezuela is a sovereign country."

In addition to discussions on maintaining oil price levels to near \$25 per barrel, the Venezuelan delegation made a special point of criticizing the U.S. sanctions against Iraq.

"President Chavez affirmed the Venezuelan position supporting an accord against any kind of boycott or sanctions that are applied against Iraq or any other country in the world," said Deputy Foreign Minister Jorge Valero.

After leaving Iraq, Chavez took the case of Iraq to Indonesia, another OPEC member. Chavez and Indonesian President Abdurrahman Wahid issued a joint statement opposing U.S. sanctions in Iraq.

"We share the sentiments of President Chavez with regard to the Iraqi people," Wahid said on Aug. 12. "For that reason Indonesia hopes for lifting the blockade of Iraq soon."

Defiance reflects mass support

Venezuela is currently the leading oil exporter to the United States. Normally a country of such importance would be held under the thumb of U.S. imperial-



Iraqi President Saddam Hussein greets Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez in Baghdad Aug. 10.

ism through client regimes and economic pressure.

But in 1998, seething discontent from Venezuela's 23 million people rocketed Chavez to the presidency, breaking the grip of Venezuela's notoriously corrupt traditional political parties. Chavez had led a 1992 military rebellion against the government in support of popular demonstrations against poverty and austerity.

On July 30, Chavez was enthusiastically re-elected in a special election called to "re-legitimize" his government. His Fifth

Republic Movement and allies in the Patriotic Pole won 60 percent of the seats in the new legislative body.

Expectations are high that Chavez will confront the country's mass poverty—afflicting nearly 80 percent of the population—and unemployment. Chavez is promising a "revolution" to shake up the traditional ruling elite.

In the international arena, Chavez has already defied the United States by refusing to allow U.S. military planes to fly over Venezuela in operations directed at neighboring Colombia. He has embraced Cuban President Fidel Castro as a "brother." Visiting Beijing in 1999, he encouraged the Chinese government to "continue to fly its standard so that the world would not be run by a universal police that imposes everything."

He has advocated cooperation of exploited nations against U.S. hegemony. "We, the small, poor nations, underdeveloped, of the Third World ... we have no alternative but to unite, whatever our geographic location," Chavez said on Aug. 6, before leaving on his tour of OPEC nations.

The social ferment throughout Latin America—from the Chavez government to the revolutionary movement in Colombia—is beginning to be felt on the international arena.

IRAQ

U.S./Britain bomb civilian targets

By Gery Armsby

U.S. and British warplanes attacked sites in northern Iraq Aug. 15. This followed heavy bombardment in southern Iraq Aug. 10-12.

The airstrikes killed two civilians and injured more than 20 others. They also destroyed a train station, several homes and a food rations storage and distribution facility that warehoused food allowed into Iraq under the United Nations oil-for-food program.

The Pentagon claimed the jets were targeting anti-aircraft artillery sites.

In almost daily bombing raids, U.S./British maneuvers have killed over 200 Iraqi civilians and wounded more than 800 since December 1998. At that time, a torrent of Pentagon bombs rained on Iraq for four straight days.

The two imperialist powers claim to be enforcing so-called "no-flight zones," which they imposed on Iraq after the 1991 Gulf War. Baghdad has protested the no-flight zones, pointing out that the unilateral constraints violate Iraqi sovereignty.

The zones cover most of the northern and southern portions of the country, restricting Iraqis from flying over two-thirds of their own air space.

The latest bombings by the United States and Britain occurred in these zones: in the city of Samawa, 175 miles south of Baghdad; and near Mosul, 250 miles to the northeast of the Iraqi capital.

At an Aug. 13 Baghdad news conference, Iraqi Air Defense Commander Lt. Gen. Shaheen Yassin Ahmad said, "I expect them to intensify their activities and



Residents of Samawa, Iraq, clear debris after an Aug. 12 U.S. airstrike.

aggression."

He also suggested as a pretext for the increased U.S. and British hostilities "their international political failure, the challenge of the Venezuelan president [Hugo Chavez] to their policies and the calls of the world community to stop aggression."

The Iraqi Air Defense Command reported in July that more than 21,600 U.S. and British warplanes have flown into Iraq's air space since December 1998. An average of one bombing or missile attack occurs every three days; Pentagon bombs kill an average of one civilian every other day.

The Pentagon admits to flying over 280,000 sorties since imposing the "no-flight zones."



WORKERS AROUND THE WORLD

By Andy McInerney

CZECH REPUBLIC

Anti-IMF protests set

Thousands of activists are preparing to face off against the Sept. 21-29 meeting of the International Monetary Fund and World Bank in Prague, Czech Republic.

"This summit is a challenge to those who are concerned about the destiny of today's world," charged the Initiative Against Economic Globalization (INPEG), one of the coalitions organizing the protests. "Let us face the globalization of capital with the globalization of solidarity."

Demonstrations by Czech unionists and leftists will take place on Sept. 23. INPEG's Global Day of Action is scheduled for Sept. 26. Solidarity actions are also being organized around the world.

The Czech government is mobilizing at least 11,000 riot police for the demonstrations.

ECUADOR

Protests demand referendum against privatization

On Aug. 2, representatives of the Confederation of Indigenous Nationalities of Ecuador (CONAIE) and the Coordinating Committee of Social Movements (CMS) delivered over 1.5 million signatures to the Supreme Electoral Court demanding a people's referendum. The six items proposed for the referendum are the main demands of the movement that overthrew former President Jamil Mahuad on Jan. 21.

The first question asks for a ban on foreign military bases on Ecuador's territory. U.S. troops are using the Manta base in eastern Ecuador as part of their war maneuvers against Colombia's revolutionary movement.

Economic matters include reversing the "dollarization" of the economy, where the U.S. dollar has become the national currency; immediately returning frozen bank funds, canceling the foreign debt, and ending privatizations.

The final point on the proposed referendum is a general amnesty for the participants in the Jan. 21 uprising.

CONAIE President Antonio Vargas told the Quito-based Pulsar news agency that the "cease-fire" with the current government of Gustavo Noboa is over.

Mobilizations to support the demands and against the government's privatization attempts are planned for Aug. 15.

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VOCES DE RESISTENCIA:

Carta de 24 presos con llamados 'Fulano'

Somos 24 presos masculinos detenidos actualmente en la cárcel Curran-Fromhold Correctional Facility por nuestra participación o nuestro intento de participar en las acciones directas no violentas del 1º de agosto contra la Convención Republicana en Filadelfia. Las convenciones cuidadosamente coreografiadas por los dos partidos políticos mayores no tienen nada que ver con la democracia. Son espectáculos grandiosos auspiciados por las grandes corporaciones diseñadas a legitimar un sistema de dominación por la clase social corporativa que aplasta el espíritu humano y que está destruyendo al planeta. El sistema judicial de policías, cortes y prisiones que se enfoca desigualmente en la gente pobre y de la clase trabajadora en general y gente de color particularmente es la piedra clave de un sistema que funciona de parte de los ricos y sostiene su dominación.

Nuestras acciones en las calles de Filadelfia tuvieron la intención de llamar atención al hecho de que hay 2 millones personas encarceladas en los Estados Unidos; al uso sistemático de brutalidad policial para aterrorizar a comunidades enteras; sobre el racismo y crueldad de la pena de muerte; sobre los muchos presos políticos, incluso a Mumia Abu-Jamal, quienes están enjaulados por su compromiso de luchar por la justicia social. Nuestras acciones tuvieron la meta de disturbar a la Convención Republicana lo más que nos fuera posible. A la vez que lamentamos cualquier inconveniencia que hayamos causado a la gente de Filadelfia, nos sentimos orgullosos de lo que hemos hecho para exponer a este sistema podrido.

Desde el momento de nuestra detención hemos experimentado y observado el mecanismo del sistema diseñado para deshumanizar a seres humanos. Muchos de nosotros fuimos brutalizados durante el proceso de detención. Algunos fuimos golpeados o expuestos a gases lacrimógenos después de ser esposados. En la cárcel, hasta nueve personas fueron apiñadas en celdas diseñadas para dos personas. Personas con restricciones dietéticas pasaron hasta 48 horas sin comer. En algunos casos tuvimos las manos y los pies esposados juntos y algunos tuvimos las esposas tan apretadas que perdimos la sensación en las manos o sangramos como resultado.

Nos negaron la oportunidad de reunirnos con nuestros abogados defensores antes de la acusación formal, o fuimos acusados en una corte cerrada al público con la excepción de miembros selectos de los medios noticieros. Nos obligaron a usar un abogado defensor del estado nombrado por la corte a pesar de nuestros llamados explícitos y repetidos de ser representado por nuestros abogados propios, quienes fueron negados acceso a los procedimientos. Nos acusaron con una variedad de delitos y en algunos casos, con felonías. Se han fijados nuestras fianzas a entre \$10 mil y \$1 millón. Muchos, si no todas las acusaciones en nuestra contra son o muy exageradas o

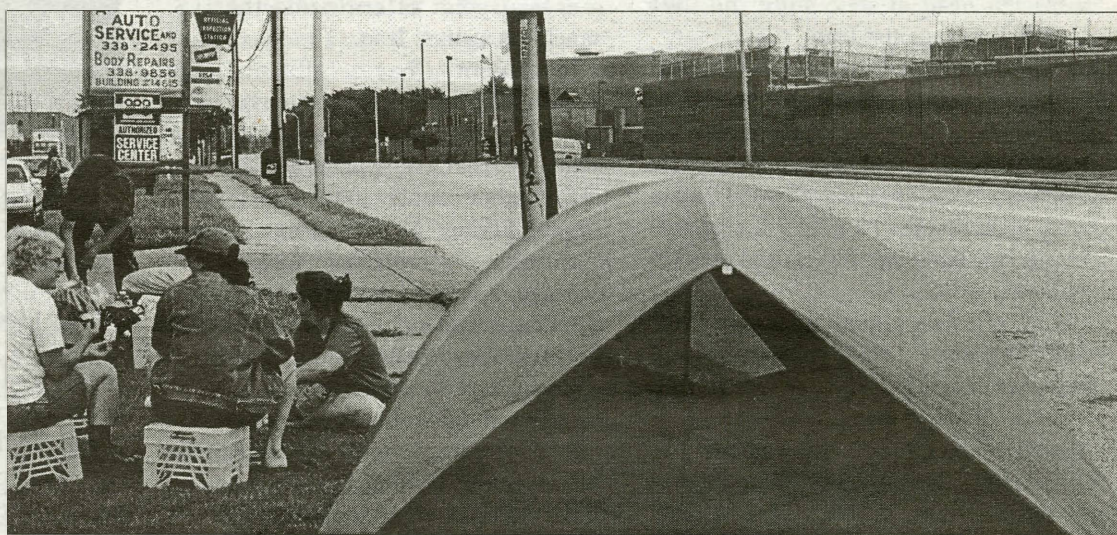
completamente inventadas.

En la cárcel Curran-Fromhold Correctional Facility se nos han colocado en un área especial donde tenemos poco contacto con los demás prisioneros. Mientras que consideramos que nuestras condiciones acá son deshumanizantes, reconocemos que estamos recibiendo tratamiento especial, como comida extra. Hasta ahora no nos han maltratado físicamente el personal.

Durante todo este proceso hemos intentado resistir y apoyarnos con solidaridad entre nosotros lo más posible. Casi todos nosotros hemos rehusado identificarnos. Muchos de nosotros tuvimos que ser arrastrados físicamente por las varias etapas de este proceso. Hemos mantenido en alto nuestros espíritus cantando y coreando y golpeando contra las paredes. Desarrollamos métodos para comunicarnos entre nosotros y para tomar decisiones por acuerdo general. Muchos de nosotros arrancamos las pulseras de identificación de las muñecas. Resistimos la colección de nuestras huellas digitales igual que el intento de fotografiarnos. Algunos de nosotros rehusamos comida. En la primera etapa de la detención algunos nos quitamos toda la ropa para hacer el procedimiento más difícil. Durante todo esto hemos descubierto una fuerza interna que anteriormente desconocimos y hemos forjado una muralla de solidaridad basado en una solidaridad y amor profundo entre nosotros. Hemos derivado fuerza especial del desafío orgulloso de las compañeras, las voces altas de las cuales hemos podido oír, y cuyos actos de resistencia hemos podido presenciar de vez en cuando. Aunque no tenemos mucho acceso a noticias desde afuera estamos conscientes de los esfuerzos de los de afuera de ayudarnos. Los queremos a todos Uds. Sabemos que estamos aquí adentro para Uds. y sabemos que Uds. están haciendo lo posible a favor de nosotros.

Creemos que nuestras experiencias hasta ahora nos vindican en nuestra decisión de tomar acciones fuertes para exponer la brutalidad e injusticia de este supuesto sistema de justicia. Mientras que pasamos por esta experiencia estamos aprendiendo en carne propia del maltratamiento que experimenta todos los días la gente en este país. Como un grupo mayormente de hombres blancos de la clase media, sabemos bien que el tratamiento que recibe rutinariamente la gente pobre, gente de color, y otras personas marginadas es mucho peor de lo que hemos experimentado nosotros.

Mientras que no tenemos mucho contacto con los demás prisioneros, ese contacto ha sido sumamente positivo, ellos saben porqué estamos aquí y nos dejan saber en muchas maneras que apoyan nuestras acciones y respetan nuestro compromiso y solidaridad. Estamos aprendi-



Encampamiento de apoyantes de los prisioneros en Filadelfia

MO FOTO: JOE PIETTE

endo de ellos cómo funciona la prisión y sus propias tradiciones de resistencia. Ellos tienen nuestro respeto, admiración y solidaridad. Hasta ahora los intentos de algunos entre la personal de cultivar desconfianza y antagonismos entre nosotros y los demás prisioneros han sido inútiles.

Somos presos políticos; nos están deteniendo bajo acusaciones ridículas, en algunas casos sin conexión alguna con nuestras acciones reales; las fianzas son fuera de proporción hasta con las acciones que ellos falsamente nos acusan. Estamos aquí por nuestro compromiso político y porque nos atrevimos a desafiar a los poderes corporativos mientras estaban haciendo el intento de fabricar la ilusión de apoyo popular por la dominación de algunos pocos.

Llamamos a todo el mundo que nos apoya seguir presionando a las autoridades de Filadelfia para ganar nuestra liberación pronto. Urgimos a todos Uds. seguir organizando protestas de nuestra parte y escribir al alcalde y llamar a los fiscales y autoridades de la prisión para demandar: 1. Que nos sueltan inmediata e incondicionalmente sin fianza; 2. Que se abandonen todas las acusaciones, y que 3. los prisioneros con restricciones dietéticas (vegetarianos) sean proporcionado con comida adecuada que pueden comer.

Llame a estos oficiales y díles que apoyan nuestras demandas: la Fiscal Lynne Abraham, (215) 686-8701; el Alcalde John Street, (215) 686-2181; y 'City Solicitor' Ken Trujillo, (215) 683-5003.

Treinta de nosotros hemos iniciado una huelga de hambre para ganar estas demandas. Queremos que todos sepan que tenemos la moral alta y nos quedamos

fuertes en nuestra solidaridad. Tenemos una variedad de experiencias distintas en la vida y perspectivas diferentes, pero estamos unidos en nuestro compromiso para obtener una democracia verdadera y un fin al gobierno corporativo en general y al sistema de injusticia criminal en particular.

¡Libertad para Mumia Abu-Jamal y todos los presos políticos!

¡Alto al terror policial!

¡Qué arrasen al complejo carcelario industrial!

¡Alto a la pena de muerte!

Escribenos:

John Doe "JD" Professor

John Doe ODB

John Doe Wolfman

John Doe 6010 "Dinger"

John Doe

"No es bueno para los negocios"

John Doe Slick

Camilo Viveiros Jr.

John Doe 6013

Christopher Hartley

John Doe Mac

John Doe Mango

John Doe "B.A."

John Doe Sparky

John Doe Flea

John Doe "Hank H. Parts"

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