



FREE AT LAST! ELIÁN & HIS FAMILY ARE HOME IN
EDITORIAL PAGE 10

**WORKERS AND OPPRESSED
PEOPLES OF THE WORLD UNITE!**

July 6, 2000 Vol. 42, No. 27

Web edition <http://www.workers.org>



WW PHOTO: GERY ARMSBY

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WORKERS WORLD



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BATTLE OF VIEQUES

New bombing sparks resistance

By Berta Joubert-Ceci

Late in the afternoon of June 25, the U.S. Navy began dropping bombs again on Vieques, Puerto Rico. Despite wide opposition from all sectors of Puerto Rican society, the Pentagon initiated its plan to drop 130,000 pounds of bombs during five days of military practice at the eastern tip of the island, home of the Atlantic Fleet Weapons Training Facility.

This is the largest military exercise in Vieques since April 19, 1999, when two 500-pound bombs fell on an observation post in the shooting range and killed a civilian guard, David Sanes.

After Sanes's death the people of Vieques and mainland Puerto Rico penetrated the restricted military zone, establishing encampments and effectively stopping the Pentagon's exercises for over a year.

Then on May 4, hundreds of FBI agents, federal marshals and marines evicted the more than 200 protesters. They sealed the base in an attempt to prevent activists from re-entering.

But demonstrators have managed to return to the area, even though most have been detained. Some remain hidden in

secluded areas in an effort to stop the bombing.

The people responded immediately to the latest threat.

Once activists spotted three Navy ships on the horizon June 24, they started penetrating the restricted area. Despite heavy security, over 200 protesters have succeeded thus far, by land and by sea.

One activist managed to jump over the cyclone fence that divides the military from the civilian area. He planted a Vieques flag on the base before marines could catch him.

In a dramatic scene, fishers in five boats, under the leadership of Carlos Zenón, took a few demonstrators by sea to the restricted shooting area June 26. Two Harbor Patrol boats with military personnel and one helicopter tried to catch the boats. But the protesters threw steel rods at the military vessels and were able to escape to safety.

The Navy later claimed two sailors were injured by the rods.

According to the Associated Press, by June 28 at least 135 demonstrators were arrested. The federal court that oversees these cases has taken a tough stand. The court is imposing \$500 cash bail for those who refuse to identify themselves.

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STOP LEGAL LYNCHINGS!



'Avenge Shaka, Free Mumia!'

Sankofa's last words

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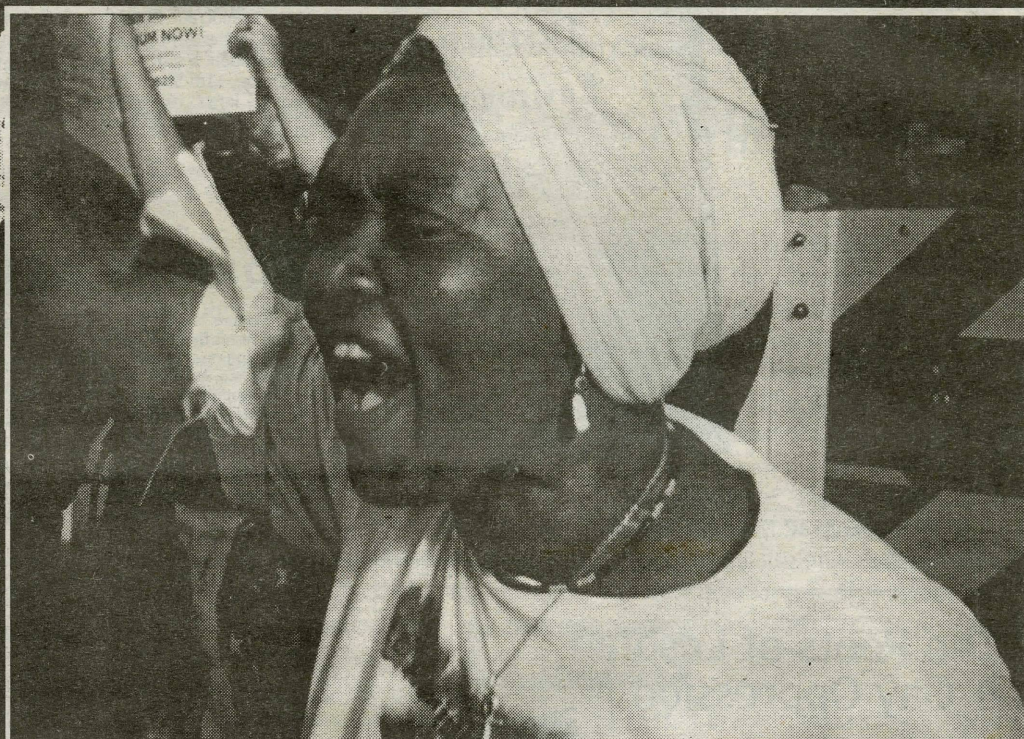
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Fidel on Shaka

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The battle to save Gary Graham/
Shaka Sankofa. Huntsville, Texas.
June 22



WW PHOTOS: RICHARD BECKER



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CANADA

Cutbacks leave 2,000 sick, 11 dead

By G. Dunkel

At the end of May in the Canadian city of Walkerton, Ontario, some 2,000 of the 5,000 residents became sick. The water they drank was contaminated by E coli.

Eleven people died. The medical examiner is looking into seven more deaths to see if they were caused by E coli.

Canada is a rich country with the largest supply of fresh water in the world. But privatization, government cutbacks and unrestricted use of the environment by big business have created a public-health crisis.

The province of Ontario has forced all its municipalities to take responsibility for monitoring the safety of their water supply—including the costs, which are high. Ontario Premier Mike Harris said Walkerton officials should have applied for a provincial grant to help pay these expenses.

When the press pointed out that they had and were turned down, Harris blamed his staff.

One of the most poignant stories was that of Brody Rapp. He's a young child who came down with the flu just before the E coli outbreak became known. His parents gave him extra water to overcome the flu, which made him so sick from E coli that he spent weeks in the hospital. Brody will probably recover.

Even though everyone in the town has been drinking bottled water and washing their hands in bleach for a month, another wave of E coli-related illness broke out in the middle of June. Government experts are trying to figure out why and how the second wave occurred.

Harris went to Walkerton the day the town began to bury its dead and denied that anything was his fault.

A letter from David Wood of Mildmay to the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation charged: "This is a government that has gutted the budgets and personnel of all the vital monitors of our environment. The ministry of the environment, ministry of natural resources and the local conservation authorities have all been decimated by budget cuts."

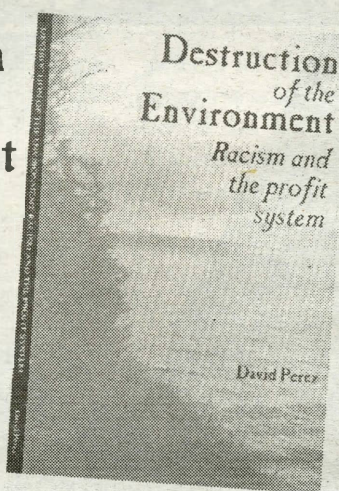
Cuts have gone so deep that people asking the government to check their water have to supply the stamp used to return the results.

Destruction of the Environment Racism and the profit system

by David Perez

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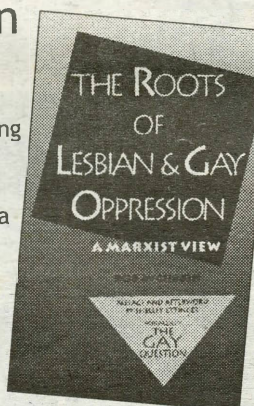


The Roots of Lesbian & Gay Oppression

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By Bob McCubbin

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WW PHOTO: BILL HACKWELL

Rainbow Flags for Mumia contingent at San Francisco Lesbian, Gay, Bi and Trans Pride March, June 25.

WW CALENDAR

LOS ANGELES

Sun., July 9

"Cuba and the U.S. Death Penalty." Hear Gloria La Riva, a participant in a roundtable discussion on Cuban television on racism and injustice in the U.S. judicial system, particularly in the application of the death penalty. Sponsored by the International Peace for Cuba Appeal and the International Action Center. 3 p.m. At the IAC office, 422 S. Western Ave. For info (213) 487-2368.

Sun., Aug. 13

West Coast demonstrations for Mumia Abu-Jamal and against police brutality are scheduled to begin Aug. 13 in Los Angeles at the Democratic Convention. 1 p.m. Gather at Pershing Square, 5th & Olive. For info contact Millions for Mumia/International Action Center in Los Angeles (213) 487-2368 or npcla@earthlink.net; in San Francisco (415) 821-6545 or www.actionsf.org.

Tue., Aug. 15

Protest against U.S. sanctions on Iraq at the Democratic Convention. Called by the Save the Iraqi Children Coalition. 5 p.m. At the Staples Center, 11th Street and Figueroa. For info (213) 487-2368.

PHILADELPHIA

July 30 to Aug. 1

Join the 'Free Mumia--shut down the prison-industrial complex' contingent in the big demonstration outside the Republican Convention on Sun., July 30. Then stay in Philadelphia July 31, Aug. 1 and beyond. For info (212) 633-6646 or iacenter@iacenter.org.

SAN DIEGO

Sat., July 1

Mumia video showing. Come see video footage of the Madison Square Garden rally May 7. Sponsored by the San Diego Coalition to Stop the Execution of Mumia Abu-Jamal. 6 p.m. At the Downtown Public Library, 820 E Street (3rd floor auditorium). For info (619) 692-4422.

SAN FRANCISCO

Sat., July 1

Long live Shaka Sankofa. Commemoration of Shaka Sankofa's life and political analysis of the growing movement to stop the racist death penalty. With Henry Clark, Kiliyu Nyasha, Bato Talamantez, Gloria La Riva, Larry Holmes and Richard Becker. 7 p.m. At 362 Capp St. For info (415) 821-6545.

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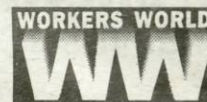
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LESBIAN / GAY / BI / TRANS PRIDE

Throngs cheer diverse Pride marchers

By Gery Armsby
New York

On June 25, New York's 31st annual Heritage of Pride march flowed down Fifth Avenue from Central Park to Greenwich Village. Wave after wave of the nearly 300 groups that composed this year's parade brought their lesbian, gay, bi and trans pride out into the streets of Manhattan. Huge crowds warmly cheered them.

Pride marches held each June here and around the world commemorate the June 1969 Stonewall rebellion in which trans youths and other lesbian, bisexual and gay people—Black, Latino and white—united in a momentous fight against police repression in Greenwich Village.

Out of that four-night-long street battle against the cops a movement that set its sights on lesbian and gay liberation emerged.

Out and against the death penalty

By Brenda Sandburg
San Francisco

Thousands of people cheered in support as the Rainbow Flags for Mumia contingent marched in San Francisco's Lesbian/Gay/Bi/Trans Pride Parade on June 25.

Chanting, "We're here, we're queer, we're fighting for Mumia," and, "Hey hey, ho ho, the death penalty has got to go," the contingent reached the estimated 750,000 people lining the parade route. Workers World Party, Lesbians and Gays Against Intervention, and the Zapatista Support Committee marched together in the contingent.

San Francisco's 30th annual Pride Parade also had a strong youth presence. The Lavender Youth Recreation and Information Center and the Bay Area Gay-Straight Alliance Network were among the 211 contingents. Other groups included Pride at Work, Bay Area American Indian Two Spirits, Malaysian Gay and Lesbian Club and the National Gay Pilots Association.

Comedian Margaret Cho was the celebrity grand marshal. She was joined by Grand Marshals Del Martin and Phyllis Lyon, who helped found the Daughters of Bilitis, the first lesbian organization in the country, and San Francisco Board of Supervisors President Tom Ammiano.

Lesbians march

One of the most powerful and exuber-

ant activities of lesbian/gay/bi/trans pride week was the Dyke March on June 24. Some 50,000 women marched from Dolores Park to the Castro district, cheering, drumming, and whistling. Dozens of women on motorcycles from the group "Dykes on Bikes" led the march, greeted with wild applause of appreciation.

The expansion and growth of the lesbian, gay, bi and trans movement and its active participation in the struggle against racism and national oppression were apparent to the hundreds of thousands who cheered and watched along the parade route.

A big contingent of Puerto Rican women marched near the front of the parade. With banners and shouts they demanded, "U.S. Navy out of Vieques!"

The Caribbean Pride float and contingent—emblazoned with flags from Jamaica, Grenada, Martinique, Trinidad and Tobago, Bahamas, Saint Lucia, Sint Maar-

ten, Antigua, Barbados, Montserrat, Cuba, Haiti and the Dominican Republic among others—spanned almost two city blocks.

Also near the front of the march were delegations from local and national lesbian, gay, bi, trans and two-spirit people of color organizations. These included African Ancestral Lesbians United for Social Change, Audre Lorde Project, Kilawin Kolektibo: Filipina Lesbian Collective, South Asian Lesbian and Gay Association, Brazilian Rainbow Group, LLEGO—the National Latina/o Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Organization, Colectivo Mexicano LGBT, Project Reach, Gay Men of African Descent, and many others.

Nine student groups from local colleges and universities marched. They included gay-straight alliances from New York University and Pace University. HIV/AIDS activists carried signs slamming the U.S. government and drug corporations for their profit lust. They blamed millions of AIDS-related deaths around the world on exorbitantly priced treatments designed more to line the pockets of the pharmaceutical barons than to save lives.

Activists from Rainbow Flags for Mumia had a militant contingent in the parade, joined by Workers World Party, which has marched every year since 1971. The group chanted: "They're killing our people by the

hour—what do we do? Fight the power." Members of the contingent also carried banners honoring Shaka Sankofa (Gary Graham) who was murdered by the state of Texas just days before. Nine of the marchers in the Rainbow Flags for Mumia contingent had been arrested earlier in the week during actions to prevent Gov. George Bush from executing Sankofa.

Labor groups representing lesbian, gay, bi and trans workers turned out in force. There were contingents from the Lesbian and Gay Teachers' Association, AFSCME District Council 37's Lesbian and Gay Issues Committee, the National Lesbian and Gay Nurses Association, and Pride At Work,

the official AFL-CIO lesbian/gay/bi/trans constituency group, among others.

The parade, which started at noon, lasted until well after 6 p.m. It culminated at Sheridan Square, site of the Stonewall bar where the gay and trans rebellion erupted over 30 years ago.

Among other contingents that marched were a group of veterans of the Stonewall rebellion, a delegation from the Lesbian Herstory Archives, the National Organization for Women, ACT UP, National Gay and Lesbian Task Force, Metropolitan Gender Network, Lesbian and Gay Immigration Rights Task Force, www.stopdrlaura.com, and many, many others.

NEW YORK

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WW PHOTO: G. DUNKEL

Rainbow Flags for Mumia contingent marches in NY Pride, June 25.

'Not one more execution' heard at rainbow march

Special to Workers World

Pride poured into the streets of Denver on June 25 as 100,000 gay, lesbian, bisexual and trans people from Colorado and neighboring Wyoming marched in the biggest Pride event there to date. One hundred ten contingents took part in the multinational march.

Grand marshals included Karen Williams and Dana Austin, both African American lesbian comedians, and Leslie Feinberg, lesbian transgender activist and a managing editor of Workers World newspaper.

Feinberg delivered the Pride rally keynote. She pointed to the right-wing murders of Matthew Shepard in nearby Laramie, Wyo., and James Byrd Jr. in Jasper, Texas:

"Politicians and the media tell us that giving the courts the power to mete out stiffer sentences through passage of hate-crimes legislation will put a halt to these lynchings. But the killers of Shepard and Byrd knew that they faced the death penalty in those states. There is no harsher sentence. And virtually all the major lesbian, gay, bi and trans organizations—and the Byrd and Shepard families—are op-

posed to the death penalty."

Feinberg said she, along with many others across the United States, had been working feverishly to stop the execution of Gary Graham/Shaka Sankofa in Texas just days before. "The death penalty is being used as a racist weapon, an anti-youth, anti-poor weapon. Let us vow: Not one more execution!" The crowd cheered in response.

"And let us also vow that we will not let the state take Mumia Abu-Jamal from us," she continued. Feinberg is a co-founder of Rainbow Flags for Mumia.

"What is the rainbow connection with Mumia's struggle?" she asked the crowd. "The state has him on a fast-track for execution because he is a Black revolutionary."

"If they were able to execute a man who millions around the world believe was framed for political reasons, it is meant to send a chilling message to all who fight for change. And it would give the green light to the bashers and lynchers."

The crowd roared its agreement when Feinberg concluded, "What is needed to protect all of our lives is a mass movement that unites all who are fighting against oppression."

Lesbians march in New York

On June 24, more than 2,500 lesbians and their supporters took to the streets of New York for the annual Dyke March.

These marches take place the night before Lesbian/Gay/Bi/Trans Pride marches in cities including San Francisco, Chicago, Denver, Tokyo and Toronto.

The first recorded Dyke March was in 1993 when 20,000 people joined together the night before a national march on Washington. This tradition continues as a symbol of women's contribution to the struggle for lesbian, gay, bi and transgender liberation.

—Story & photo Elijah Crane



ON THE PICKET LINE

Minnesota hotel strike

Hotel workers in Minneapolis and Bloomington, Minn., have been on the picket lines since June 16. They walked out when the bosses refused their demands for 22-to-50-percent pay raises and health benefits.

Community support for the strikers is strong, despite the hotel bosses' efforts to portray them as unreasonable and greedy. In fact, most of the strikers are immigrant workers trying to support themselves and their families on dismally low wages and no benefits. They are represented by Hotel and Restaurant Local 17, a fighting union that emphasizes unity among workers of all nationalities. The local's strike bulletin is printed in English and Spanish. Local 17 is known nationally for having defended the housekeepers at the Holiday Inn Express who were fired and faced deportation for bringing in the union.

As of June 26, there are 1,160 strikers at five hotels. The strike could spread to include another 500 workers. —Shelley Ettinger

D.C. labor action

In late June, labor activists from around the country gathered at the George Meany Center in Silver Spring, Md., for the 22nd annual Great Labor Arts Exchange. Conference participants included progressive labor organizers and artists who are committed to using creative means to build worker solidarity.

This year's conference was attended by "hillbillies" whose goal is to organize the South; members of unions including the Musicians, Teachers, Farm Workers, Government Employees, Hotel and Restaurant Employees, Theatrical and Stage Employees, Auto Workers, Teamsters, Newspaper Guild/Communications Workers, Service Employees, Food and Commercial Workers, Letter Carriers and Asbestos Workers; members of the AFL-CIO's lesbian, gay, bi and trans constituency group Pride at Work; progressive theater-arts companies; and many others. The conference featured workshops, lectures, the sharing of songs, skits, information and activism.

On June 20, participants traveled to Washington to join a rally at the Bureau of National Affairs, a publishing company where workers are in the midst of intense contract negotiations. A bus donated by the Teamsters carried the spirited artists to the site. There they performed street theater, songs and chants, demanding a fair settlement.

A second bus, commandeered by Josh Williams, president of the Central Labor Council, converged on the swelling rally. That night the BNA settled with the Newspaper Guild, giving the workers an increase in wages with full retroactivity.

One of the buses also traveled across town to Catholic University. The Service Employees union is trying to organize the workers on that campus. The university had tried unsuccessfully to block a planned "street heat" demonstration, claiming that it would be disruptive to campus life.

The conference ended the night of June 20 with a public concert that was shown over the Internet at the AFL-CIO Web site via live simulcast. —Pam Parker

Cleveland living wage victory

For two years, the Living Wage Coalition has been pushing the Cleveland City Council to pass a living-wage ordinance. At 11 p.m. on June 19—during the council's last meeting before the summer recess—the ordinance finally passed. The vote was unanimous.

Living-wage supporters had packed the city council chambers many times. June 19 was no exception. Hundreds of unionists and community activists filled the hall. They waited for hours for the council members to finish their committee meeting and take a vote on the wage bill.

Under the new ordinance, employers that contract with or receive tax breaks from the city must pay workers at least \$8.20 an hour beginning Jan. 1, 2001. The minimum wage will rise to \$8.70 on Oct. 1, 2001, and to \$9.20 on Oct. 1, 2002. Subsequent raises will be based on inflation.

Although these figures are less than the labor/religious/community coalition's original demand—\$10 an hour with mandatory health benefits—establishing a living-wage ordinance in Cleveland is a significant victory for workers. The labor movement is celebrating.

A corporate alliance called the Greater Cleveland Growth Association had mobilized ruling-class opposition to the living wage. The Cleveland Plain Dealer also applied pressure to stop the ordinance. The newspaper ran hostile editorials leading up to the city council vote—but did not even cover the vote once it took place.

One week before the Cleveland victory, the city council in Toledo, Ohio, also passed a living-wage ordinance. Activists plan to continue the fight for a living wage in cities throughout Ohio. Dozens of cities in states across the country now have such laws, strengthening the fight to drastically increase the minimum wage for all the millions of low-paid workers in this country. —Martha Grevatt

NEW YORK FORUM

Koreans expose U.S. war crimes



Speakers at New York forum on U.S. war crimes in Korea June 24. From left: Rev. Kiyul Chung; Ryu Kumsoo, south Korean chapter, Korean Truth Commission; Berta Joubert-Ceci,

International Action Center; Gae Il Hwang; Sun-joon Kim; Gae Ri-tin, representative of Han Chong Ryun (student union); Kim Hae Sook, National Alliance for Democracy and Reunification in Korea; Cho Hyon Gi, executive committee, Kyung Sang Province Task Force on U.S. War Crimes.

WW PHOTO: DEIRDRE SINNOTT

By Scott Scheffer
New York

Gae Il Hwang and Sun-joon Kim, two south Korean men, were attacked by the U.S. military when they were children during the Korean War.

They stayed silent for 50 years for fear of reprisals. In June they traveled to the United States to tell their stories.

Joined by several other south Koreans—all leading activists in the growing movement to oust the 37,000 U.S. troops in south Korea—they spoke at a special June 24 forum on U.S. war crimes against the Korean people. The forum took place at the United Nations Church Center in New York.

The day before, the men spoke at a news conference in Washington and a rally near the White House. All these events were timed to coincide with the anniversary of the June 1950 outbreak of the Korean War.

The largely Korean American audience at the New York forum was silent as the men told how the Pentagon attacks had affected their lives. Both had been among big groups of civilians the U.S. military targeted in the early days of the 1950-1953 war.

Gae Il Hwang lost an eye to shrapnel at age 7. Sun-joon Kim lost his left arm to a bomb dropped by a U.S. plane.

Since late last year, when the story of the U.S. attack at the village of No Gun-ri appeared in the big-business media, evidence of some 60 such attacks has surfaced.

Deirdre Griswold, editor of Workers World newspaper, also spoke at the June 24 forum. She was part of the International Delegation to Investigate U.S. War Crimes in Korea that traveled to south Korea in May.

Griswold told of meeting survivors of U.S. attacks throughout south Korea. She described sites of mass killings and executions of political prisoners.

Griswold said the purpose of U.S. military dominance in Asia and elsewhere is to "protect a world

order in which there is a greater polarization than ever before in human history between billionaires and those who don't have a handful of rice."

Berta Joubert-Ceci, a Puerto Rican activist and a member of the International Action Center, spoke about the struggle to get the U.S. Navy out of Vieques, the Puerto Rican island used as a U.S. military practice range. The world recently learned that Korea has its own Vieques, when damage from an errant U.S. bomb at the tiny island of Maehyang spurred protests.

Over the years nine people have been killed at Maehyang. The latest incident has renewed the Korean people's determination to drive the U.S. troops out.

The forum was organized by the Fiftieth Anniversary Committee to End the Korean War, which includes the Congress for Korean Reunification, International Action Center, Korean American National Coordinating Council, Veterans for Peace/NYC, and Nodutdol for Korean Community Development.

The forum was co-sponsored by the Korea Truth Commission to Investigate U.S. Military Attacks on Civilians, which was founded in Beijing in May. The KTC includes representatives from the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (socialist north Korea), the south Korean progressive movement and overseas Koreans.

The south Korean delegation was invited by the Rev. Kiyul Chung, secretary general of the KTC. Chung was the primary organizer of the news conference and rally in Washington and of the international delegation that toured south Korea in May.

At the forum he asked that "we come together again in June of 2001, for a tribunal of U.S. war crimes against the Korean people."

Brian Becker of the IAC called for a rally on July 27, Korea's Armistice Day. "Let's not end this meeting today by simply remembering all this important testimony, but instead let's take what we've learned into the streets," he said.

Protesters demand withdrawal of 37,000 U.S. troops from south Korea on 50th anniversary of Korean War. Washington, June 23.

WW PHOTO: BERTA JOUBERT-CECI



Roundtable on U.S. prisons

Mumia activists speak on Cuban TV

By Gloria La Riva
Havana, Cuba

During Shaka Sankofa's heroic struggle before his execution, people around the world demanded a halt to his murder. Nowhere was the consciousness about this case higher than here in Cuba.

For almost a week Cuba transmitted the news of Sankofa's struggle and the crime of the U.S. "justice" system to the domestic population and internationally in a series of roundtable television programs, supplemented by Cuban radio and newspapers.

The first of these two-hour-long roundtable discussions on U.S. prisons and the death penalty was aired on June 19. It featured U.S. activists who are leading the fight for Mumia Abu-Jamal and who organized to stop Sankofa's execution.

Since the airing of that show, the complete transcript has been published. Two million copies were distributed in Cuba. The program was broadcast internationally in several languages by satellite. It was also sent to every Cuban embassy around the world.

The HBO documentary on Mumia Abu-Jamal, "Case for a Reasonable Doubt," was aired on Cuban national television, which reaches the entire island, the night before this historic roundtable.

Participating in the roundtable were Pam Africa of MOVE and the International Concerned Family and Friends of Mumia Abu-Jamal; Mumia attorney Leonard Weinglass; Workers World Party presidential candidate Monica Moorehead; attorney Lennox Hinds; Rosemari Mealy, attorney and manager of WBAI Pacifica radio; Gloria Rubac of the Texas Death Penalty Abolition Movement, and Gloria La Riva of the International Action Center.

Anniversary of Rosenberg execution

Moderator Randy Alonzo reminded the audience that June 19 was also the 47th anniversary of the execution of Ethel and Julius Rosenberg, "victims of the Cold War and the U.S. legal system."

Viewers saw a video segment of "Case for a Reasonable Doubt" with Mumia speaking.

The situation in Philadelphia was described by Pam Africa, who has lived in that city all her life. She told how Mumia had exposed police crimes after Frank Rizzo, earlier a notorious police chief, became mayor. The Rizzo administration carried out a virtual war on Black and Latino Philadelphians.

Africa said, "During that time, a young Black man by the name of Cornell Warren, coming home from work, was handcuffed with his hands behind his back, taken behind the African American museum, deliberately shot in the back of the head."

"Winston X. Hood, another Black man, was beaten savagely and then shot. None of the police officers ever did a day in jail. Mumia's desire was to expose this."

Rosemari Mealy, Mumia's friend during their teenage years as Black Panther members in Philadelphia, talked of the police attack on their party. "The Rizzo regime, working in collusion with the FBI, organized a concerted attack against the Black Panther Party and razed our organization."

"Mumia Abu-Jamal emerged at 15 years old as a leader of the Black Panther Party in Philadelphia, and this infuriated the police department ... to the point that we can go to the FBI files, where he is identified as a threat that had to be stopped."

Weinglass on the politics factor

Leonard Weinglass, lead attorney for Mumia, laid out the legal scenario and the tremendous obstacles in the system that are denying Abu-Jamal his right to a new trial.

"In the system itself, politics, in most cases, is a factor. The district attorney who ordered a death case for Mumia became the mayor of the city of Philadelphia. Now he is the national chairman of the Democratic Party. Had he decided not to prosecute Mumia, he would not have become the mayor, he would not be the chairman of the Democratic Party. ...

"We have filed 29 separate claims that call for a new trial for Mumia. Any one of those claims should give Mumia a new trial, and we are waiting now to hear from this judge. ... We are convinced his innocence will be clearly shown. But we have a problem. In 1996 the law was changed [the federal Anti-terrorism and Effective Death Penalty Act, signed by Clinton], and it was changed in a way that makes Mumia's appeal, even in the federal courts, very difficult."

The roundtable participants emphasized that the solidarity movement and mobilizations throughout the U.S. and the world will be the critical factor that forces justice in the courts for Abu-Jamal. Pam Africa told of the breadth and width of organizations and protests on every continent for him.

One of the coordinators of the Mumia support movement—Jeff Mackler of Mobilization for Mumia—spoke by telephone on his visit with Abu-Jamal days earlier.

The case of Shaka Sankofa, who was to be executed by the state of Texas on June 22, was given major prominence in this program and on all Cuban media in the following days.

Cubans hear of Sankofa case

Gloria Rubac, longtime activist in the Texas death penalty abolition struggle, explained to the Cuban audience that "Shaka is from Houston, Texas, which is in Harris County. Houston has executed so many people that if it were a state it would be third behind Texas and then Virginia with the highest number of executions."

"In Shaka's case there was no evidence, except this one woman who claims to have seen him. There was no blood, there was no fingerprint, there was no confession, there was no hair, nothing put him at this crime—except one woman who mistakenly said it was Shaka who committed the crime."

"No court has ever heard the new evidence, heard the six witnesses who all give a very similar description of the killer, and it's not a description that matches Shaka Sankofa."

From the moment that Sankofa's case was conveyed to the Cuban people on television that night, he became a major national figure.

Lennox Hinds, well-known attorney and Rutgers law professor, spoke of the repressive character of the U.S. legal system against the masses, especially people of color. "If we look at the case of Mumia Abu-Jamal, we actually see someone who is an example of the racist and political application of the law. In the United States there is the perception of justice which confuses many. ...

"But from the very inception of the United States of America, in the very fab-

Cuban Supreme Court President Rubén Remigio, sitting center, meets with U.S. delegates before roundtable discussion on Mumia Abu-Jamal and Shaka Sankofa. Pictured, clockwise from left: Pam Africa, Buck Africa, Lennox Hinds, Leonard Weinglass, Gloria La Riva, Monica Moorehead, Remigio, Rosemari Mealy.

WW PHOTO



ric of the country, we see racism at play." Hinds brought up the cases of other political prisoners—Leonard Peltier, Sundiata Acoli, Monda We Langa and Sekou Odinga, among others.

La Riva described the California prison system, the largest in the world with 168,000 prisoners. She also spoke of the massive corruption and brutality against Black and Latino people by the Los Angeles Police Department. Many of those victims of police brutality end up wrongfully convicted, and in maximum-security facilities like Pelican Bay State Prison.

Monica Moorehead, national coordinator of Millions for Mumia and WWP's presidential candidate, spoke on the racist, anti-worker nature of the prison-industrial complex. "There are two million people in U.S. federal, state and local prisons. ... That means that 25 percent of the world's incarcerated people are in the United States."

"Who's behind the growth of the prison-industrial complex? It's mainly Wall Street firms and banks that finance the construction of private prisons," she said.

Mumia's solidarity with other oppressed

Moorehead spoke of Abu-Jamal's many acts of solidarity with struggles of the oppressed around the world, from refusing to be interviewed by ABC TV during the lockdown-strike of the

workers there, to speaking out against the prison-industrial complex. "That is why we feel that the United States government, along with the ruling class that props it up, wants Mumia silenced." Her speech was extensively covered in the daily Granma national newspaper.

Mumia Abu-Jamal prepared a solidarity statement to Cuba that he recorded in Spanish for the show. The audience was moved to hear him speak in Spanish to millions of Cuban people, who need no convincing that the U.S. system of capitalism is grinding down the masses of workers through racism, poverty and exploitation.

Since the show, Cuba has continued with extensive news coverage of Sankofa's life history, his politicization in prison, and his heroic call for justice as he was being murdered.

President Fidel detailed the facts of Sankofa's innocence in a letter to 400,000 Cuban people attending a rally for Elián González in Holguín province on June 24. He paid tribute to Sankofa's courage in the face of such savagery by Texas. (See accompanying article.)

Cuba's national revolutionary media is doing more than educate the Cuban masses about the system of repression in the United States. Cuban media, mass organizations and the Cuban leadership are actively taking a stand on behalf of the most oppressed in U.S. society, especially Black people who are victims of legalized lynching.



FIDEL on SHAKA

'Executed simply for being Black'

Reprinted from the June 24 edition of Granma International.

Fidel recalled that in the hardest days of the battle for Elián's liberation, the support of the U.S. people as a whole rose to 70 percent, "which should not and will not be forgotten." Within that support, which he described as "decisive and admirable," he noted that 90 percent of African Americans defended the rights of the child and his father.

In that context, he referred to the execution in Texas of Shaka Sankofa, who, he said, "was murdered." Subsequently, the Cuban president noted that independently of the legal infractions attributed to Shaka with great emphasis by his executioners when he was a marginalized adolescent living in conditions of poverty and racial discrimination, "what is unquestionable is that he was sentenced to death for an alleged homicide when still

a minor, without any consideration or compassion whatsoever, and without his guilt even having been proven."

Fidel went on to affirm: "Everything done to him is in contradiction with universally accepted legal doctrines and principles."

After his comments on the irregularities committed with Sankofa, the Cuban leader stated that "it is generally believed in the United States and throughout the world that he was sentenced to death and executed simply for being Black," on top of "the monstrous deed of subjecting him for 19 years to the funeral chapel or what is more bluntly known as death row."

Fidel emphasized that "Shaka Sankofa has shown the world the bitter fruit of a social system where differences between the richest and the poorest are infinite and where individualism, egotism, consumerism, a generalized use of firearms and violence reign as a philosophical foundation."

HUNTSVILLE, TEXAS

Sankofa, protesters fight legal lynching to last minute

By Richard Becker
Huntsville, Texas

At 8:49 p.m. Central Daylight Time on June 22, poison injected into his veins by a Texas prison doctor stopped the heart of Shaka Sankofa. He fought until the very end.

Strapped to a gurney, Sankofa gave a stirring speech that ended only with his last breath.

Sankofa is dead, legally lynched by Gov. George W. Bush and the state of Texas. But through his heroic and determined struggle in the last days of his life, he dealt a mighty blow to the racist death penalty.

Sankofa is dead. But his revolutionary spirit lives on.

In 1981 Shaka Sankofa, then known as Gary Graham, was convicted of murder and sentenced to death. He was condemned after a two-day legal proceeding so corrupt and farcical that it could not be accurately called a trial—even by bourgeois legal standards.

Graham, a 17-year-old African American, was accused of killing Bobby Lambert, a reputed drug dealer who was white. Graham's conviction rested entirely on the testimony of one eyewitness who viewed the killing from 35 to 40 feet away, through a car windshield, at night.

His court-paid lawyer, Ronald G. Mock, failed to call any witnesses, although there were two at the time who said they were sure the shooter was not Graham. Nor did Mock introduce a ballistics test that showed that Graham's gun could not have fired the bullet that killed Lambert.

In the June 11 New York Times, Mock boasted of having more of his clients end up on death row than any other lawyer in the United States. His role was to speed up the death march for the poor and overwhelmingly African American and Latino clients the state of Texas lavishly paid him to represent.

Five times before, Texas authorities had set execution dates for Sankofa. Each time, his new lawyers and public pressure had won a stay and a new appeal.

But never in the nearly two decades after his original conviction was Sankofa granted a new, real trial.

In early May, the U.S. Supreme Court refused to hear his final appeal. The Texas Department of Corrections immediately set June 22 as the execution date.

With no appeals left it appeared almost certain that the sentence would be car-

ried out. But supporters in Texas, including the Texas Death Penalty Abolition Movement, Nation of Islam, SHAPE Community Center, National Black United Front, New Black Panther Party and others went into high gear.

They demanded that Bush and his appointed Board of Pardons and Paroles grant Sankofa clemency and a new trial. The International Action Center/Millions for Mumia sent out a call to hold National Days of Protest on June 16-20.

Sankofa himself vowed to resist to the end—as had his comrade Ponchai “Kamau” Wilkerson, who was executed in March.

Struggle outside death house

The Texas Board of Pardons and Paroles had scheduled the announcement of its recommendations in Sankofa's case for noon on June 22—just six hours before the time set for his execution.

By that time, 300 anti-death penalty demonstrators had assembled outside the red brick prison in Huntsville, about 70 miles north of Houston. Several dozen media trucks were parked in an adjacent lot.

Hundreds of state, county and city cops, along with the infamous Texas Rangers, surrounded the area. On the other side of the prison, a heavy police guard protected about 20 Ku Klux Klan members wearing white robes and carrying Confederate flags and pro-death-penalty signs.

Noon came and went without an announcement from the board. Then, at 1:45 p.m., longtime Sankofa supporter Ashanti Chimurenga spoke to the crowd. “The Texas Board of Pardons and Paroles has denied all relief and clemency,” she reported.

The board had not met. Its members simply faxed in their ballots to a central office in Austin.

They voted 12 to five against clemency, 14 to three against a 120-day reprieve to investigate, and 17 to zero against a conditional pardon.

The execution was set to be carried out in just a few hours. Family members, friends and supporters were stunned, many in tears. But no one was ready to give up.

Despite her evident pain, Sankofa's stepmother, Elnora Graham, told reporters and supporters: “He's a very strong man. And he's still alive. He's still alive.”

A little after 2 p.m., a powerful rally began along the high barricades set up less than 25 yards from the prison wall. It was co-chaired by Gloria Rubac, a leader of the Texas Death Penalty Abolition Movement,

and Anthony Freddie of the Shaka Sankofa/Gary Graham Justice Coalition.

Rubac, who met with Sankofa and other death-row inmates many times, denounced “the slavery that exists today inside the Texas prisons.”

“Bush the father slaughtered the people in Iraq,” Rubac continued. “Now George W. is slaughtering the people inside the Texas prisons.”

“We have to end prison slavery in Texas. We have to stop the Texas death machine.”

Quanell X of the New Black Muslim Movement said: “We are not here to appeal to the conscience of George W. Bush. There is no point to that. We are here to appeal to the Black family.”

Conrad Worril, chair of the National Black United Front in Chicago, termed Texas “a part of the new Confederacy. ... It is George W. Bush and the Texas Board of Pardons and Paroles who are on trial here today.”

Larry Holmes, a national leader of the International Action Center and Millions for Mumia, said that “the real murderer is not inside here in some cell but in the governor's mansion in Austin.”

“If they have the arrogance to go through with this assassination, it will be a freedom fighter who is martyred here today.”

At one point, a group of youths and other activists rushed the line of police and prison guards outside the death house. Some broke through and ran toward the building. Eight people were arrested.

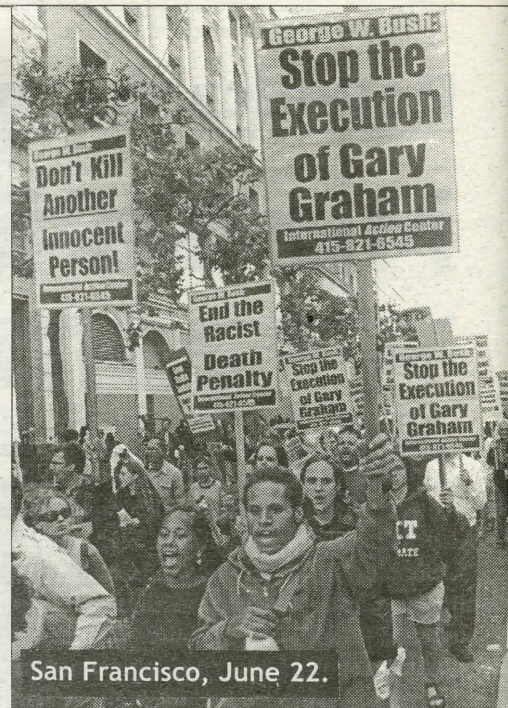
Minister Robert Muhammad of the Nation of Islam, Sankofa's spiritual advisor, emerged from the prison a little before 4 p.m. He told the crowd that Sankofa had said that “the board decision comes as no surprise.”

Muhammad said: “Shaka knows that this struggle is much bigger than him as an individual. It is the struggle to end the racist, anti-poor death penalty.”

He quoted Sankofa as saying: “Death is a complement to life. The only way you can avoid dying is by not being born. But what the enemy tries to do is to make death something to fear.”

“Non-cooperation with evil is an obligation like cooperation with righteousness is an obligation.”

Muhammad explained that Sankofa “refuses to accept a last meal because it would be to accept injustice.” He called Sankofa “one of the strongest people I've ever met,” and said that “he does not seem desperate or even anxious.”



San Francisco, June 22.

WW PHOTO: BILL HACKWELL

Around the same time, it was announced that Sankofa's lawyers, Jack Zimmerman and Richard Burr, had made last-ditch appeals to the Texas Court of Appeals and the U.S. Supreme Court.

The Texas high court quickly turned it down. At 5:30 p.m. came the news that the U.S. Supreme Court had refused to hear the appeal by a vote of five to four.

The multinational crowd outside the prison grew, swelling to as many as 1,000 between 4 p.m. and 6 p.m. After the announcement of the Supreme Court decision, the organizers led a march to the downtown Huntsville area, which was closed down that day, and into the Black community.

The New Black Panther Party staged an armed demonstration of support for Sankofa. About 200 people, mostly African American, joined the march.

A little before 6 p.m., the execution witnesses—including Sankofa supporters the Rev. Jesse Jackson, the Rev. Al Sharpton, Bianca Jagger of Amnesty International, and Minister Muhammad—entered the Walls death unit.

Outside, Larry Holmes led the demonstration in chanting, “Shaka Sankofa, live like him—dare to struggle, dare to win.”

The end seemed near.

Then came another announcement. Lawyers Burr and Zimmerman had filed an unusual civil action based on the deprivation of Sankofa's constitutional rights. If the issues it raised could not be resolved by midnight, an automatic 30-day stay of execution would have to be granted.

But at about 8 p.m., word came that the civil action, too, had been thrown out.

In the last minutes of his life, as Sankofa spoke his final words, the demonstrators joined in chanting, “Long live Shaka Sankofa.”

With great sadness and deep anger, the demonstrators marched out or slowly dispersed.

Deep divisions in ruling class

The acceleration of the movement to stop

Continued on page 9

Demonstrations nationwide oppose Tex

By Greg Butterfield

Anti-racist activists and death-penalty opponents stayed in the streets up till the moment of Gary Graham/Shaka Sankofa's June 22 execution. They were determined to do everything possible to prevent the state-sanctioned killing of Sankofa, who had been on death row since the age of 17. After news came of his death, they continued to demonstrate, hoping to lay the basis for a broader, more militant movement to abolish death row.

New York-area activists held a 10-hour demonstration against the execution. The protest started at noon outside “Bush for President” headquarters in Manhattan with a picket line of 200.

Throughout the day, dozens of youths and community activists kept the picket going, transforming a stretch of Madison Avenue into a big street meeting on Sankofa's case and the death penalty.

After 5 p.m. the protest swelled to several hundred demonstrators. Led by an International Action Center banner reading “Stop the execution,” they marched across rush-hour 42nd Street to Times Square. At the intersection of 42nd Street and Broadway, 11 death-penalty foes blocked traffic while supporters chanted on either side of the street. They were arrested and held in jail overnight, some for more than 30 hours.

The angry protest continued after Sankofa's death was announced. Chants of “Avenge Shaka, free Mumia” told of

the protesters' determination to continue the militant resistance to racism and legal lynching that Sankofa had shown before his execution.

There were also arrests in San Francisco, where 18 people locked arms and stood in the intersection of Seventh and Mission streets, tying up traffic for 20 minutes during the evening rush hour. Other demonstrators cheered them on.

Alicia Jrapko and Gloria La Riva of the International Action Center were among those arrested. As she was being dragged off by cops, La Riva told a reporter, “George Bush is committing an open, premeditated act of murder.”

In Detroit, 60 protesters joined a group of hunger strikers for a last-ditch demon-

stration. They marched together through busy intersections chanting, “Remember Shaka, free Mumia! End the death penalty now!”

The hunger strikers included labor, religious and community activists. One of them, Auto Workers Local 2334 President David Sole, said the group spent every day that week camped out in front of the City Council offices, leafleting, petitioning and holding street meetings. Every night they faxed hundreds of signatures to Bush and the Texas Board of Pardons and Paroles demanding the execution be stopped.

In Mumia Abu-Jamal's hometown of Philadelphia, dozens of protesters gathered at the Clothespin statue across from City Hall to leaflet during the evening

Socialist candidates condemn 'state-sanctioned murder'

The following statement was issued by Monica Moorehead and Gloria La Riva, Workers World Party presidential and vice-presidential candidates, after the June 22 execution of Gary Graham/Shaka Sankofa.

The execution of Shaka Sankofa, formerly known as Gary Graham, stands as a grim reminder that there is a racist war taking place in this country against poor people of color. This state-sanctioned murder of an innocent man has been condemned by human-rights activists worldwide, including Commandante Fidel Castro of Cuba. Archbishop Desmond Tutu of South Africa called for the end of the death penalty in the United States in light of Shaka's murder.

A top United Nations official, Mary Robinson, also denounced the execution. "The overwhelming international consensus that the death penalty shall not apply to juvenile offenders stems from the recognition that young persons lack maturity and judgment and thus cannot be expected to be fully responsible for their actions," she said.

For the UN commissioner on human rights to take a public stance against the policies of the U.S. government is quite remarkable. This indicates that the United States is isolating itself more and more from the rest of the world, including its allies, on this issue.

Shaka was executed not because he was guilty of a murder that took place in 1981. Like millions of others, Shaka's "crimes" were that he was young, African American, poor and therefore at the mercy of the semi-slavery-like mentality of the Texas courts at the time of his conviction at the age of 17.

Whatever mistakes he committed during his youth should be understood within the context of "crimes of survival." Under the capitalist system, if you are not white, straight and rich, you are dehumanized by the criminal justice system from the U.S. Supreme Court on down.

This is a continuation of the Supreme Court's Dred Scott decision of 1857. That decision legally declared that African slaves were "three-fifths human" and therefore could be denied their full constitutional rights to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.

The other "crime" that Shaka was guilty of was becoming a revolutionary during his 19 years of incarceration. Just as Malcolm Little became Malcolm X while imprisoned, Shaka Sankofa chose his righteous name to reflect his growing political consciousness.

In Texas, you can learn very quickly which side of the class struggle to be on due to the vicious, racist nature of the prisons and the capitalist system in general.

Legal lynching

The legal lynching of Shaka holds many lessons for the workers and the oppressed. One immediate lesson is that poor people, especially those of color, cannot expect to receive any kind of real justice because of poorly trained defense lawyers, the lack of adequate legal counsel for indigent defendants and, of course, racism.

Ruling-class dynasties like the Kennedys, Rockefellers and DuPonts never set foot on death row because they can buy high-priced, slick lawyers and bribe prosecutors and judges to get them off with at most a slap on the wrist.

A comprehensive study done by Columbia University on the application of the death penalty in the United States underscores the fact that there is a 68-percent error rate for convictions in capital punishment cases.

Shaka's execution helps to expose the undemocratic nature of the Texas criminal justice system. Look at how the 18-member Texas Board of Pardons and Paroles determined Shaka Sankofa's fate.

Did they hold an emergency session to discuss his case? Did they hold a public hearing as one Texas state legislator suggested? They did none of these things.

This secretive board—appointed by Gov. "Death," George W. Bush and each paid \$80,000 a year—faxed in their decisions.

Would anyone want her or his fate determined by a faxed vote? Can any ordinary person in the state of Texas name all the members of this powerful board?

Can anyone in a high position of authority making a huge salary make a rational decision when a poor Black person's life is at stake?

And what about the undemocratic nature of the U.S. Supreme Court's intervention? They voted five to four against a stay of execution for Shaka. Can anyone in his or her right mind believe that this is constitutional even under bourgeois law?

A CNN viewer commented on the night of Shaka's death that a vote so close should indicate there is a case of reasonable doubt as to Shaka's guilt.

The bottom line is that the execution of Shaka Sankofa is a result of the anti-poor

and racist use of the death penalty. The death penalty, under capitalism, serves the interests of the rich and the powerful, while at the same time it terrorizes the poor, the oppressed and those like Mumia Abu-Jamal who speak out against injustice.

Moratoriums on the death penalty, like the one instituted in Illinois, are progressive steps forward. A moratorium is certainly needed in Texas to bring a halt to the genocidal murders.

But moratoriums alone are not enough. They are only temporary, stop-gap measures. It is not enough for governors and state legislatures to intervene on this question because many of the politicians who are for moratoriums are also unequivocally for the death penalty. They view the moratorium as a vehicle for buying some time in order to "fix the problem" of executing the wrongfully convicted. This includes passing legislation that will institute DNA testing.

Every time an execution takes place, it reinforces and strengthens the ruling-class argument that the repressive state apparatus is the "only" deterrent to "crime." But statistics show that the death penalty does not serve as a deterrent to crime. In fact, those states that use the death penalty have on average twice as many murders as states that do not use the death penalty, according to Amnesty International.

Instead of spending millions of dollars to execute the poor, the money could be spent on job training, education and drug rehabilitation on demand, especially for young people in working-class and oppressed communities.

If town meetings on the death penalty were held all over the country, a great majority of the people could be won over to this alternative program.

A wake-up call

Shaka's life could not be saved. Why not? The masses did not intervene in an organized and forceful way to stop it.

This is partially due to the lack of working-class leadership on this question. The labor movement, the women's movement, and the social democrats failed to take up this struggle, with a few notable exceptions.

This fact, however, does not mean that Shaka died in vain. The U.S. population and the whole world received a wake-up call on

how the death penalty is carried out in such a callous and biased manner as the battle to save Shaka's life was played out in the mass media.

The masses are beginning to call into question the legality of the death penalty, even if it is from a moral point of view. And it was important that the masses saw the political movement fight back against the execution in the hundreds in front of the Huntsville death house.

Over time, the ruling class's decision to kill Shaka will prove to be a gross miscalculation on their part.

In the long run, the death penalty under capitalism must be abolished. Like police brutality, it is an example that class rule exists within the United States—that a tiny minority of millionaires and billionaires will do everything in their power to instill ideological passivity and sow divisions within the majority, the multinational working class, in order to hang on to their capitalist profit system.

The political movement must continue to assert itself as the leadership of the anti-death-penalty movement in an independent manner, and not rely on so-called liberal bourgeois figures to define the struggle. Our communist election campaign is devoting itself to help do agitational outreach to our class on this pivotal issue in order to deepen class consciousness and bring the masses into the arena of struggle.

The next big battleground on the death penalty will surely be the struggle to win a new trial for Mumia Abu-Jamal. His case is linked to the overall struggle to end the death penalty, police brutality and all forms of racist repression.

We had the distinct pleasure of interviewing Shaka Sankofa four years ago during our 1996 election campaign, along with other Texas death-row inmates like Ponchai "Kamau" Wilkerson, who was executed this past March.

Although we were afforded just a short time to visit with Shaka by the prison authorities, it became abundantly clear that he was a staunch revolutionary who was more concerned about the plight of Black and oppressed peoples than his own individual case.

If his life had to be sacrificed, he wanted it to be for advancing the struggle for social change. As he said just seconds before his life was so barbarically taken, "You can kill a revolutionary, but you can't kill the revolution."

Long live the spirit of Shaka Sankofa! For Shaka, free Mumia! Abolish the racist death penalty!



Shaka's execution

Many passersby stopped to ask questions about Shaka Sankofa's case or express support.

Later on, a mobile street rally against the execution marched on South Broad Street and then 12 blocks down South Street. It lasted late into the evening. Many homeless youths joined the march.

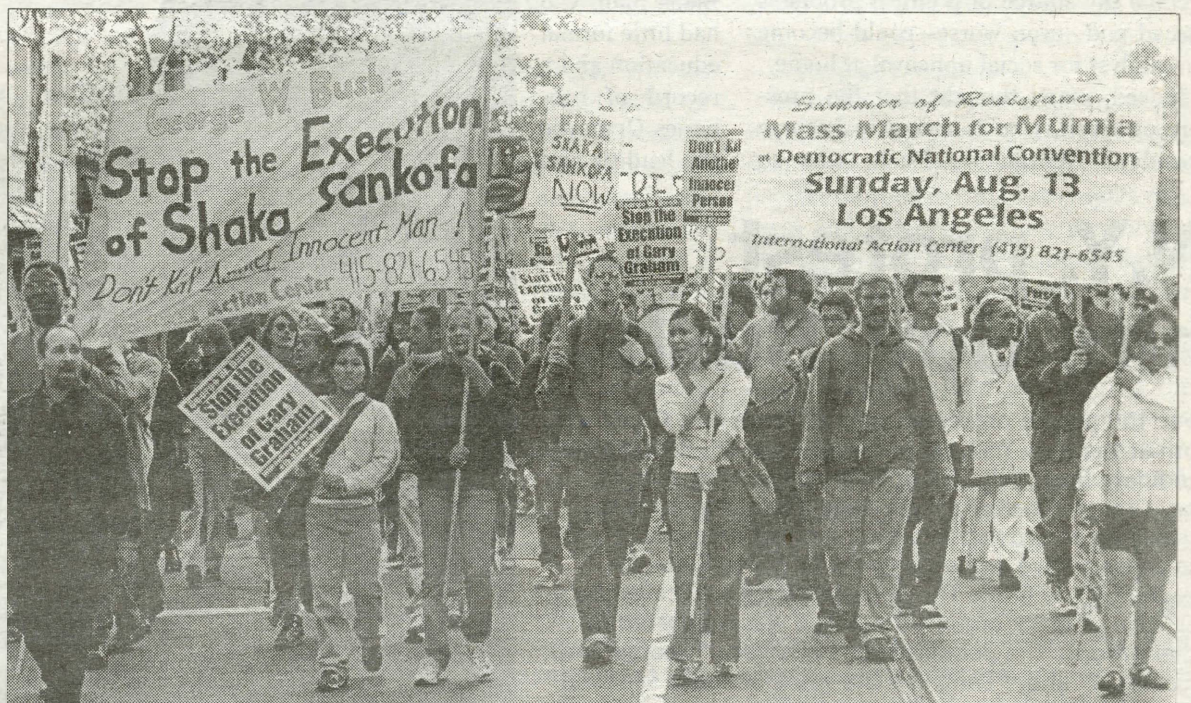
About 100 people rallied outside the Republican National Headquarters in Washington, organized by the Ad-Hoc Coalition to Stop the Execution of Shaka Sankofa.

One demonstrator read a list of the 134 people previously executed under Governor Bush. The crowd responded with chants of "present!" Others read the last statements of some of those prisoners, including those

who maintained their innocence and those who urged people to continue the struggle.

Protests were also held in Austin, Texas, Northampton, Mass., and many other cities.

With reports from David Sole in Detroit, Betsy Piette and Joe Piette in Philadelphia, Bill Hackwell in San Francisco, and Malcolm Cummins in Washington.



San Francisco, June 22

WW PHOTO: BILL HACKWELL

SHAKA'S WILL

End the racist death penalty 'by any means necessary'

By Larry Holmes

Never before have the ruling class's most influential media organs—all the major television networks, magazines, and daily newspapers from coast to coast—given the degree and the kind of coverage to a scheduled execution as they did to Shaka Sankofa's (Gary Graham).

For once it appeared that the mainstream media—which lies, hides and distorts the truth—was admitting that Sankofa's trial, conviction and sentence epitomized all that is unjust, flawed, and racist about the death penalty in the United States.

Along with an unprecedented three editorials calling on Gov. George W. Bush to halt the execution of Sankofa, the New York Times ran several lengthy front-page articles on the case. This included one that exposed Sankofa's court-appointed defense lawyer as a notorious hack for the judge and prosecution.

CNN's "Burden of Proof" co-host Greta Van Susteren went to Texas to do a prison interview with Sankofa. She asked out loud on her program how he could be condemned to die on the testimony of one witness who claims to have seen the nighttime murder and murderer of Bobby Lambert 19 years ago in a dimly lit parking lot from a distance of 40 feet?

An ABC "Nightline" host asked why a jury never heard the testimony of at least four other witnesses who saw somebody else kill Lambert—and also asked how someone could be convicted and sentenced to death without physical evidence linking him to the murder, and with ballistics tests that contradicted guilt.

The Chicago Tribune ran a long expose of the Texas death penalty machine. The article cited Sankofa's case as typical of how Black and Latino defendants get bad defense lawyers, quick trials, paltry sums to defend their lives, judges politically inclined or pressured to sentence everyone in sight to death, and perfunctory appeals that routinely suppress evidence and uphold death sentences.

Newsweek and Time magazines told everyone paying attention that Sankofa was legally a minor—just 17 years old—when convicted.

Clearly, some mighty important people in the ruling class had concluded that U.S. death machine, led by Texas, was killing too many people too quickly, had become the source of political problems abroad and—even worse—could become the catalyst for social upheaval at home.

Indeed, many thought that the pressure on Bush, who is trying to become President George W. Bush, was so

intense that surely he would stop the execution. Surprise! He did no such thing.

Bush's advisors and billionaire backers sent him the message that the racist ruling class, its politicians, courts, and jailers did not bring the death penalty back in 1976 in order to surrender it now: Kill Sankofa.

Bush may have been at the head of the lynch mob but he was not alone on execution day. Along with the so-called Texas Board of Parole and Pardons, which voted 14 to three by fax to rubber stamp the murder, the U.S. Supreme Court gave the go-ahead to kill, albeit by a split vote.

'Rise up, fight back!'

There is a lesson here for those who were certain that there was simply no way Texas would carry out Sankofa's execution with all the evidence of innocence, of a frame-up and with the whole world watching.

What's the lesson? You are doomed if you rely on the bourgeoisie to fight your battles.

If at some point along the line the masses of people don't intervene in a struggle like this one, we are left to the mercy of the few who own most of the wealth and control the system. And worse—we learn nothing of our own power.

Once the media realized that all the attention they had given to Sankofa's case was not going to stop the lynching, they accommodated themselves to it. The day after Sankofa's execution, neither the New York Times nor the Los Angeles Times or any big newspaper printed on their front page in screaming headlines "Bush murdered an innocent man!"

How important was the battle to save Sankofa's life in the scheme of things? A dumb question? Not really.

Other than some outstanding exceptions, the progressive forces in the United States generally passed on this fight. Perhaps that is because the anti-death-penalty struggle has only begun to gain ground as a genuine mass movement.

Maybe there are some in the civil-rights movement who were reluctant to embrace the plight of a poor Black man who had little formal education and a record of robberies. Or maybe the leaders and

movers in organized labor, amongst the youth and all the other movements were too preoccupied with other issues to fight for Sankofa's life.

No doubt some who consider themselves leaders were simply complacent, whether or not they admit it or even realize it.

Whatever the case, what happened in Texas on June 22 was no small event, peripheral to other social and economic issues that appear to directly affect more people than the death penalty does.

The day after Sankofa's murder, Cuban President Fidel Castro commented, "It is generally believed in the United States, and throughout the world that he [Sankofa] was convicted and executed simply for being Black."

Fidel Castro's words in reaction to Sankofa's execution begin to put things in proper perspective.

Castro knows who is on death row and who is not. And he knows the history of how the capitalist system has employed deliberate and very public acts of violence like lynchings—both legally sanctioned and otherwise—in its efforts to terrorize Black, Latino, Native and other oppressed people into submission.

Sankofa's execution was about racism.

Moreover, because of the extraordinary media attention his execution attracted, at a time when the death penalty is being hotly debated, and in the state governed by the biggest executioner in the country who happens to be running for president, Sankofa's struggle eclipsed all other issues, all other struggles. His execution came to personify the breadth, the scope, the essence and horror

of racism in the United States.

'Keep fighting, save Mumia!'

No doubt many people are deeply concerned about how Sankofa's execution will affect the outcome of death-row political prisoner Mumia Abu Jamal's struggle. Indeed, if they can kill Sankofa, what will stop them from killing Mumia?

In part the answer to this question is that Sankofa died to save Mumia.

How Sankofa dealt with his execution is most instructive to those who want to end the racist death penalty and the class interest that it serves. We need not offer ourselves as martyrs—a matter Sankofa had no choice in. But we need to heed his example and fight to end the death penalty as Sankofa said in his final words—"by any means necessary."

Sankofa fought his executioners with the last breath in his body. The battle wounds visible on his body, and the use of leather and Velcro straps and handcuffs to restrain him on the death gurney, were all signs of the fight he waged to send a signal to us.

His message is as clear and strong as the way he lived and died: "Keep fighting, save Mumia, stop the death machine."

The problem with the struggle against the death penalty is not its numerical weakness. The fact of the matter is that the anti-death-penalty movement is growing both stronger and more militant. The actions in cities across the country and the unprecedented 1,000-strong demonstration outside the death chamber in Huntsville, Texas, on June 22 are testament to this.

The crisis is as it has always been—one of leadership. It is left to the most radical and revolutionary forces to ensure that Sankofa was not martyred in vain. Those of us who know better and are ready, willing and able must be the kindling that keeps the spark created by Sankofa alive—until its flames envelop greater and more decisive numbers of people.

To their credit, the Rev. Jesse Jackson, the Rev. Al Sharpton and a small handful of Black leaders were in Huntsville on June 22.

Jackson, who at Sankofa's request witnessed his execution, said publicly that he wept uncontrollably as he watched the poison smother the life out of Sankofa. Indeed one can only imagine how helpless he must have felt watching what he later called a "state-sponsored murder."

Maybe Sankofa's invited witnesses would have felt a little better if they had put their bodies in front of the doors to the death chamber, until the guards and goons were forced to carry them out in handcuffs.

And once outside, as they were being led off to prison, they could have shouted to the crowd and the media: "Shaka said: Rise up, fight back!"

What's needed now? Just last year the people shut down Seattle. In April the people shook the International Monetary Fund and World Bank meetings.

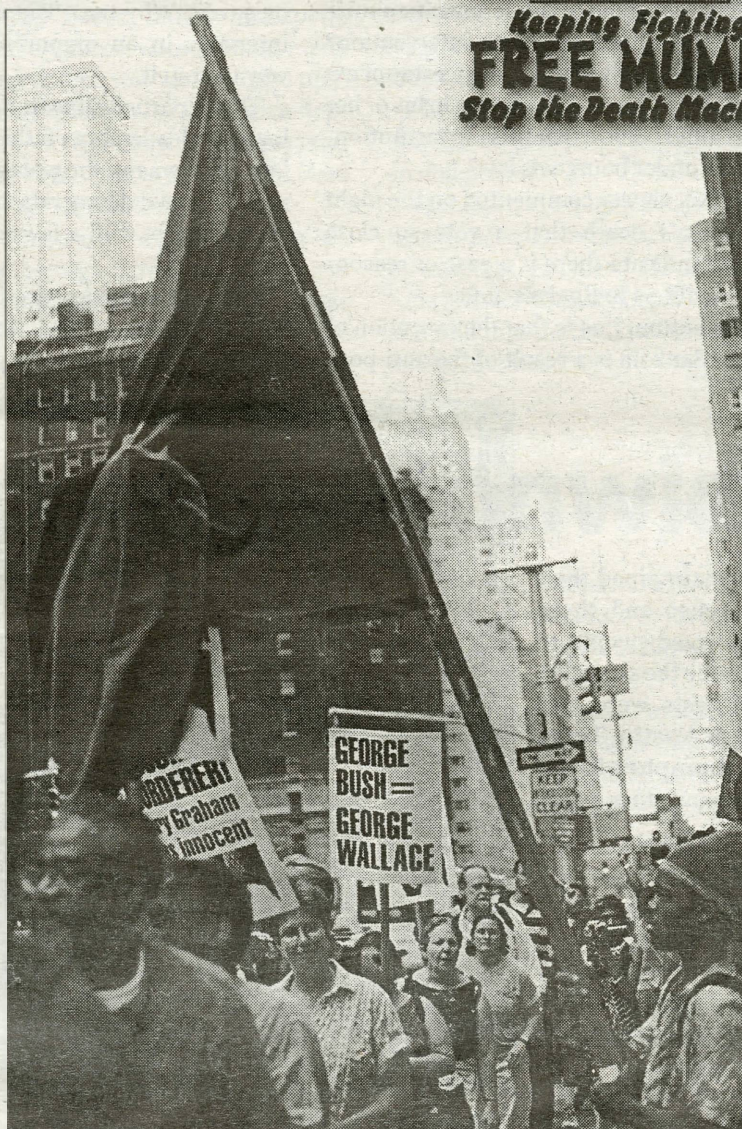
Now it's time to rock Philadelphia and Los Angeles at the Republican and Democratic conventions—to demand an end to the death penalty, to stop racism, to free Mumia Abu-Jamal and to avenge Shaka Sankofa.



N.Y. protest hits Gov. Bush

Over 150 people protested against Texas Gov. George W. Bush at the New York Hilton Hotel June 26. Presidential candidate Bush, who presided over the execution of Gary Graham/Shaka Sankofa June 22, was in town to receive an award for "promoting racial harmony" from the conservative group Congress Of Racial Equality headed by Roy Innis. The demonstration was called by a coalition of Black organizations and was supported by other groups. The demonstrators chanted, "George Bush, murderer!" and, "Long live the spirit of Shaka Sankofa!"

IAC PHOTO: QAUSSU THWAITES



Shaka's last statement

'You can kill a revolutionary but you can't stop the revolution'

I would like to say that I did not kill Bobby Lambert. That I'm an innocent Black man that is being murdered. This is a lynching that is happening in America tonight. There's overwhelming and compelling evidence of my defense that has never been heard in any court of America. What is happening here is an outrage for any civilized country. To anybody anywhere to look at what's happening here is wrong.

I thank all of the people that have rallied to my cause. They've been standing in support of me. Who have finished with me.

I say to Mr. Lambert's family, I did not kill Bobby Lambert. You are pursuing the execution of an innocent man.

I want to express my sincere thanks to all of y'all. We must continue to move forward and do everything we can to outlaw legal lynching in America. We must continue to stay strong all around the world, and people must come together to stop the systematic killing of poor and innocent Black people. We must continue to stand together in unity and to demand a moratorium on all executions.

We must not let this murder/lynching be forgotten tonight, my brothers. We must take it to the nation. We must keep our faith. We must go forward. We recognize that many leaders have died. Malcolm X, Martin Luther King, and others who stood up for what was right. They stood up for what was just. We must, you must brothers, that's why I have called you today. You must carry on that condition. What is here is just a lynching that is taking place. But they're going to keep on lynching us for the next 100 years, if you do not carry on that tradition, and that period of resistance. We will prevail.

We may lose this battle, but we will win the war. This death, this lynching will be avenged. It will be avenged, it must be avenged. The people must avenge this murder. So my brothers, all of y'all stay strong, continue to move forward.

Know that I love all of you. I love the peo-

ple, I love all of you for your blessing, strength, for your courage, for your dignity, the way you have come here tonight, and the way you have protested and kept this nation together. Keep moving forward, my brothers. Slavery couldn't stop us. The lynching couldn't stop us in the South. This lynching will not stop us tonight. We will go forward. Our destiny in this country is freedom and liberation. We will gain our freedom and liberation by any means necessary. By any means necessary, we keep marching forward.

I love you, Mr. Jackson. Bianca, make sure that the state does not get my body. Make sure that we get my name as Shaka Sankofa. My name is not Gary Graham. Make sure that it is properly presented on my grave. Shaka Sankofa.

I died fighting for what I believe in. I died fighting for what was just and what was right. I did not kill Bobby Lambert, and the truth is going to come out. It will be brought out.

'Get those videotapes'

I want you to take this thing off into international court, Mr. Robert Muhammad and all y'all. I want you, I want to get my family and take this down to international court and file a lawsuit. Get all the videotapes of all the beatings. They have beat me up in the back. They have beat me up at the unit over there. Get all the videotapes supporting that lawsuit. And make the public exposed to the genocide and this brutality, and let the world see what is really happening here behind closed doors. Let the world see the barbarity and injustice of what is really happening here. You must get those videotapes. You must make it exposed, this injustice, to the world. You must continue to demand a moratorium on all executions. We must move forward, Minister Robert Muhammad.

Ashanti Chimurenga, I love you for standing with me, my sister. You are a strong warrior queen. You will continue to

be strong in everything that you do. Believe in yourself, you must hold your head up, in the spirit of Winnie Mandela, in the spirit of Nelson Mandela. Y'all must move forward. We will stop this lynching.

Rev. Al Sharpton, I love you, my brother.

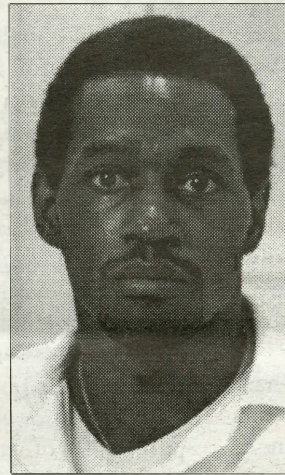
Bianca Jagger, I love all of you. Y'all make sure that we continue to stand together.

Rev. Jesse Jackson, know that this murder, this lynching will not be forgotten. I love you, too, my brother. This is genocide in America. This is what happens to Black men when they stand up and protest for what is right and just. We refuse to compromise, we refuse to surrender the dignity for what we know is right. But we will move on, we have been strong in the past. We will continue to be strong as a people. You can kill a revolutionary, but you cannot stop the revolution. The revolution will go on. The people will carry the revolution on. You are the people that must carry that revolutionary on, in order to liberate our children from this genocide and for what is happening here in America tonight.

What has happened for the last 100 or so years in America. This is the part of the genocide, this is part of the African holocaust, that we as Black people have endured in America. But we shall overcome, we will continue with this. We will continue, we will gain our freedom and liberation, by any means necessary. Stay strong. They cannot kill us. We will move forward.

To my sons, to my daughters, all of you. I love all of you. You have been wonderful. Keep your heads up. Keep moving forward. Keep united. Maintain the love and unity in the community.

And know that victory is assured. Victory for the people will be assured. We will



gain our freedom and liberation in this country. We will gain it and we will do it by any means necessary.

'We are going to end the death penalty'

We will keep marching. March on Black people. Keep your heads high. March on. All y'all leaders. March on. Take your message to the people. Preach the moratorium for all executions. We're gonna stop, we are going to end the death

penalty in this country. We are going to end it all across this world.

Push forward people. And know that what y'all are doing is right. What y'all are doing is just. This is nothing more than pure and simple murder. This is what is happening tonight in America. Nothing more than state-sanctioned murders, state-sanctioned lynching, right here in America, and right here tonight. This is what is happening, my brothers. Nothing less.

They know I'm innocent. They've got the facts to prove it. They know I'm innocent. But they cannot acknowledge my innocence, because to do so would be to publicly admit their guilt. This is something these racist people will never do.

We must remember brothers, this is what we're faced with. You must take this endeavor forward. You must stay strong. You must continue to hold your heads up, and to be there. And I love you, too, my brother. All of you who are standing with me in solidarity. We will prevail. We will keep marching.

Keep marching Black people, Black power. Keep marching Black people, Black power. Keep marching Black people. Keep marching Black people. They are killing me tonight. They are murdering me tonight.

Transcript released by the Texas Department of Corrections.

Sankofa, protesters fight legal lynching

Continued from page 6

Sankofa's execution and end the death penalty in the weeks before his death brought to the surface deep divisions within the U.S. ruling class.

This latest development came only a few months after Illinois Gov. George Ryan was forced to declare a moratorium on executions in that state because 13 innocent people had been released from death row.

Suddenly, the TV screens and editorial pages of leading capitalist media outlets—the New York Times, CNN, Washington Post, Chicago Tribune, ABC, etc.—were filled with calls to stop Shaka Sankofa's execution, grant him a new trial, and, in some cases, suspend the death penalty.

A widely reported study of all death sentences in the U.S. between 1973-1995 by Columbia University showed that 68 percent were overturned due to legal flaws, and that many of those retried were found innocent.

What accounts for this surge of opposition to the death penalty from some of the biggest corporate media? Certainly it can't be attributed to any moral outrage. They are corporations after all. No, it has to do with the reality that the rising tide of executions here undercuts the U.S. role as the pre-

tended champion of human rights and democracy around the world.

Nearly all of the closest U.S. allies have eliminated the death penalty, while at home the pace of executions is speeding up. And it's clear that those sent to the death house are exclusively poor and overwhelmingly people of color.

Many of Washington's allies, including the European Union, condemned the United States for this latest execution, in large part because Gary Graham/Shaka Sankofa was a minor in 1981. Executing a person for a crime committed while under age 18 years is a violation of international law.

Another factor in the emerging bourgeois opposition to the death penalty is fear that the rash of legal lynchings will spur rebellions in the nationally oppressed communities.

Execution carried out despite growing opposition

In the days after the execution, condemnation was widespread.

The June 23 Italian daily *Il Manifesto* carried a big picture of Bush on its front page with the headline "The executioner doesn't

let up." Many other newspapers around the world condemned the execution.

A German legislator, Sabine Leutheusser-Schnarrenberger, said: "The U.S. presents itself as the world police defending human rights, and on the other side it carries out the death penalty."

UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Mary Robinson, who had called for a stay of execution, said that it "ran counter to widely accepted international principles."

In the United States, demonstrations and disruptions of Bush's campaign activities took place coast to coast for a week before June 22. In Texas, the active movement against the death penalty, especially in the African American community, grew to a level not previously seen.

Dozens were arrested during these protests. As the clock ticked down to the execution June 22, 18 people were arrested at a militant protest in San Francisco and 11 more in New York.

But despite strong opposition from within their own ranks, the decision of the U.S. rulers and their state was to go ahead with the legal lynching of Shaka Sankofa. They oppose granting anything that the op-

pressed could view as a concession or even a slight relaxation of repression. They are afraid that this could raise expectations and encourage the struggle.

The prison system and the death penalty are weapons of state-sponsored terrorism, which have been greatly expanded over the past two decades.

The ruling class and its state have always turned first to greater violence and repression when confronted with new and rising popular movements, in an attempt to crush them and demoralize their proponents. This has been true in the United States in regard to the civil-rights, labor, anti-war and other struggles.

It is only when those movements grew, became stronger and proved that they weren't going away that the ruling class was forced to make some concessions.

In the final analysis, the state killed Shaka Sankofa because the movement wasn't strong enough to stop them. The best way to truly honor Sankofa and to assure that his valiant sacrifice was not in vain is to build a movement so powerful that it can stop the state murder of Mumia Abu-Jamal, halt all executions and abolish the racist death penalty once and for all.

editorial

Free at last!

Their long nightmare is over. Elián González and his family—Juan Miguel, Nercy and Hianny—are home in Cuba.

The right-wing anti-communists in Miami who held the child captive for months were fully defeated. And the policies associated with them also suffered a blow.

Almost at the same time Elián and his family were flying home to freedom in Cuba, the U.S. Congress was agreeing to lift part of the severe blockade on trade with Cuba that has been in place for four decades. If enacted, this would be the first time since the Cuban Revolution that any anti-Cuba legislation has been lifted.

The bill passed by the U.S. House of Representatives is far from a complete lifting of the blockade, and it includes new restrictions on travel to Cuba. But it is nonetheless a concession that the blockade has failed to undermine the Cuban Revolution.

Never before has the strength of the Cuban Revolution been so clearly displayed on the television screens of the United States. The mass outpourings of support for Elián's freedom throughout Cuba showed clearly that the island is not a dictatorship of a small clique, but rather a "dictatorship" of the working class.

Endless attempts were made to bribe Elián and his family while they were here in the United States in order to get them to stay. But the bribes were rejected. Nothing the U.S. government could offer could possibly replace the real quality of life that they have in Cuba, Juan Miguel told the world.

This was probably a revelation to many in the U.S., who have been fed 40 years of anti-communist propaganda by the U.S. government and media.

Cuba, in fact, is a wonderful country, as the increasing number of visitors from the U.S. are telling their friends upon their return.

Most of Cuba's worst problems are brought on by the severe blockade enforced by the U.S. government. The blockade is not just a trade embargo, which would be damaging enough. The blockade is four decades of organized terror against that country—bombings, economic sabotage and political pressure designed to isolate Cuba.

While the return of Elián and his family is a victory for the Cuban people and their supporters in the United States and around the world, the U.S. government's war on Cuba is not over. After 40 years, the U.S. government may be admitting that the blockade has failed. But they have not given up

on their goal of overthrowing Cuban socialism.

It should not be forgotten that it was the Clinton administration and the Immigration and Naturalization Service that initially kidnapped Elián, refusing to return the child to his father in Cuba as required by international law. Instead they turned him over to anti-communist counter-revolutionaries in Miami.

When the Clinton administration and Attorney General Janet Reno finally took action, it was not for the boy's sake, nor out of any concern for parental or other human rights. It was the months of mass protests in Cuba, demonstrations in the United States and other countries, and overwhelming U.S. public opinion that prompted them to finally take action.

The kidnapping of Elián had become a problem for the Clinton administration's foreign policy. The Miami counter-revolutionaries, whose influence even within the Cuban community has been fading, were interfering with U.S. imperialism's international relations. This became intolerable.

The extreme-right Cuban American National Foundation, Brothers to the Rescue and others are the ones who were calling the shots for the Miami González family. CANF President Jorge Mas, Brothers to the Rescue thug-in-chief José Basulto, and other right-wing leaders constantly surrounded the child. These are the forces that are directly tied to terrorist acts against the people of Cuba, usually carried out under the direction of the Central Intelligence Agency.

These anti-Cuba terrorists are also the most adamant supporters of the U.S. blockade, showing that they care nothing about Elián and the other children of Cuba. The blockade deprives millions of Cuban children of food, medicine and other necessities. For them, Elián was just a pawn to revive their declining power and influence. But instead of achieving this goal, they have been exposed and weakened.

Elián and his family's freedom is a great victory. Any partial lifting of the U.S. blockade of Cuba is also a welcome victory. The solidarity movement in the U.S. should seize on these victories and the new understanding of Cuba that has spread across the U.S. to fight for a full lifting of the blockade.

After all, Congress is only talking about lifting a small part of the blockade. And Washington has not given up on its policy of overthrowing socialism in Cuba.

As Iraqi casualties mount U.S. gov't reps are booed, disrupted

By Sarah Sloan

About 300 Iraqis—over 200 of them civilians—have been killed and more than 800 wounded over the last 18 months by U.S. and British bombings, according to Lt. Gen. Yassin Jassem, a spokesperson for Iraq's air defense command.

These figures, cited in the June 16 Washington Post, are also backed up by a recent United Nations survey on civilian casualties in Iraq.

Since December 1998, when the United States and Britain pounded Iraq around the clock for four days, Baghdad has been protesting the so-called no-flight zones that the two imperialist powers imposed unilaterally.

These zones cover most of northern and southern Iraq. They deny Iraqis—but not others—the right to fly over two-thirds of their own air space. Since December 1998, the United States and Britain have been bombing Iraq in these zones, sometimes on a daily basis.

The bombing campaign of Dec. 16-19, 1998, led to protests all over the world, especially in the Middle East and northern Africa. Big anti-war demonstrations also took place in the United States. Since then, this form of warfare, like sanctions, has gone largely unnoticed in the capitalist media even as the bombings continued to terrorize the Iraqi population.

The Iraqi air defense command says that more than 21,600 U.S. and British warplanes have flown into Iraq's air space since December 1998. There has been a bombing or missile attack an average of once every three days and a civilian death every other day.

The Pentagon admits to have flown more than 280,000 sorties since the United States and Britain imposed the "no-flight zones" in 1991.

Butler predicts another crisis

One of those who has enthusiastically carried out U.S. strategy against Iraq is former UN "weapons inspector" Richard Butler.

Butler was recently in Australia to promote his new book "Saddam Defiant—The Threat of Weapons of Mass Destruction, and the Crisis of Global Security" at a literary lunch. There he predicted, "We'll probably have another Iraqi crisis on our hands" in the next six weeks, the Age of Melbourne reported June 23.

The United Nations is preparing a new inspection agency to begin making demands to enter Iraq in August. The previous agency, the United Nations Special Commission or UNSCOM, made over 9,000 inspections throughout Iraq without discovering any significant violations. UNSCOM has since been exposed as having connections to the CIA, which Iraq had charged all along.

The weapons inspection regime has been used as a justification to continue the deadly sanctions, which have killed over 1 million people. Aug. 9 will be the 10th anniversary of the imposition of the sanctions.

As Butler spoke, protesters demonstrated against the sanctions and the continued bombing.

Protests disrupt gov't reps

Just a month ago protests disrupted U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright's speech at the University of California at Berkeley's commencement ceremony, where she received an honorary degree. Every few seconds a protester rose to denounce Albright as a war criminal. When that person was ejected, another would stand up.

Anti-war and anti-imperialist activists again gave Albright the greeting she deserved at Northeastern University in Boston. Demonstrators from all over New England avoided a police ban on amplified sound by rotating those operating the sound systems so they could continue to feign ignorance of the rule.

With this tactic, they managed to keep a strong rally going outside, where they told the thousands in attendance about the over 1 million people killed by the sanctions on Iraq that Albright promotes. They also exposed the massive U.S. aid to Colombia that is funding the Pentagon's war against the liberation movement in that country.

The progressive activists got quite an opportunity to address the crowd, since Albright began her speech while over 1,000 audience members were still outside, waiting to go through metal detectors and be searched before they were allowed to enter.

At least 12 activists were able to get tickets from sympathetic people attending the demonstration. As Albright spoke and received her honorary degree, protesters unfurled four banners condemning the sanctions on Iraq and U.S. military aid to Colombia.

Under Secretary of State Thomas Pickering, the third-ranking State Department official, had the nerve to speak in support of the sanctions against Iraq at an annual convention of the American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee. He was disrupted by the audience, who booed, banged their plates and spoke against the murderous sanctions policy.

The Iowa Coalition to End War Crimes Against Iraq held an action at which 22 people formed a human blockade across the entrance to the Iowa Air National Guard headquarters. For a few minutes, they disrupted normal operations for the military. They drew attention to the Guard's preparation for its fourth trip to Turkey, where its troops participate in bombing sorties over the "no-flight zones."

All 22 demonstrators were arrested and several spent the night at the Polk County jail.

Battle of

Continued from page 1

Several people have been kept in jail for refusing to post bail.

The brass knew that some protesters were hidden in the target area. But they started bombing anyway.

In fact, there was a calculated move by the U.S. forces to deceive the people of Vieques and endanger their safety.

On the morning of June 25 the Navy posted an announcement in the ferry terminal. It alerted fishers and the public that bombing exercises would resume the following day.

But just a few hours later, children ran scared and houses trembled when the bombs fell and explosions broke the yearlong peace in Vieques.

The Pentagon said these exercises were needed for the aircraft carrier group USS Washington, with its 16 ships, 80 combat planes and 15,000 troops before it is deployed in the Persian Gulf.

But the truth is the military brass feel they must flex their muscles. They don't want the world to think that a few hundred Puerto Ricans, representing the majority of the population, can stop Pentagon business as usual.

This imperialist arrogance hasn't deterred

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After U.S. Senate vote

Colombian revolutionaries vow to confront aggression

By Andy McNerney

The U.S. Senate took a giant step toward all-out war in Colombia on June 21.

The Senate voted 94 to five for a billion-dollar package of military aid for the Colombian government. The package is part of a much bigger \$7.5 billion "Plan Colombia" that is being orchestrated by the U.S. government.

The reaction from Colombia was swift and defiant. "If the people of Colombia are threatened, we will confront the aggression," warned Simon Trinidad, spokesperson for the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia-People's Army (FARC-EP).

"The Plan Colombia will raise more Manuel Marulandas," Trinidad said. Manuel Marulanda, popularly known as "Tirofijo"—Sureshot—is the legendary leader of the FARC-EP.

The Colombian Communist Party issued a June 23 statement opposing the aid. "The approval of the Plan Colombia by the United States Congress shows that a new chapter of military intervention in Colombia is unfolding," the CCP's Executive Committee wrote. The party called for a national mobilization against the Plan Colombia.

Before the Senate vote, 60 Colombian labor, human-rights and community groups signed a declaration to the international community opposing the Plan Colombia. "We reject the Plan Colombia because it uses an authoritarian concept of national security exclusively based on a strategy against narcotics," the statement explained.

"It will lead to the escalation of the social and armed conflict. It fails to provide real solutions to drug trafficking. It attacks the Indigenous populations by destroying their culture and way of life."

U.S. war package

The \$932 million approved by the Senate is primarily designed to bolster the Colombian armed forces. The package now needs to be reconciled with the \$1.7 billion package approved by the House of Representatives.

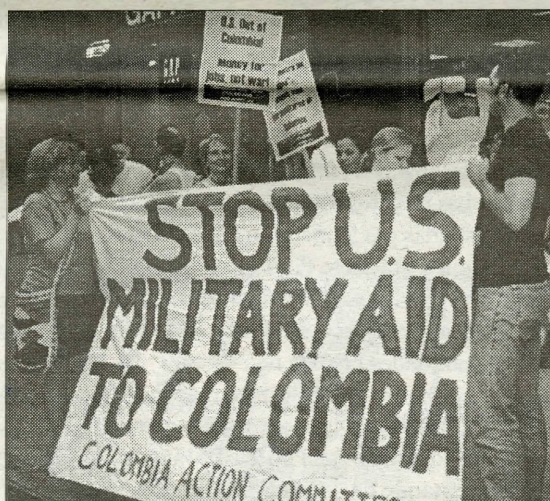
The final package—attached to a bigger appropriations package whose passage is all but assured—is expected to total at least \$1.3 billion.

The centerpiece is an armada of 60 combat helicopters. The House package includes 30 Huey II attack helicopters and 30 advanced Blackhawk helicopters; the Senate package provides 60 Hueys.

The package also provides funds for training three elite counter-insurgency battalions, expanding the number of Special Forces "advisers" beyond the 200-300 that the Pentagon admits are already there. These battalions are supposed to lead a "push into the south," referring to the FARC-EP's stronghold.

The Plan Colombia is marketed in the United States as part of the "war on drugs." But any analysis of the aid package and the current situation in Colombia reveals that this is for public consumption only.

The package is actually aimed at Colombia's powerful insurgencies, the FARC-EP and the National Liberation Army (ELN).



Colombia Action Committee and other opponents of U.S. intervention in Colombia protest outside Senator Chuck Schumer's office in New York June 26.

WW PHOTOS: ANNE PRUDEN

Military aid has skyrocketed from around \$50 million in 1998 to over \$1 billion—a 20-fold increase in just two years. Colombia is now the third biggest recipient of U.S. military aid in the world.

Study after study shows that drug traffickers in Colombia maintain close connections to both the Colombian Armed Forces and the political elite there. They have no independent armed forces.

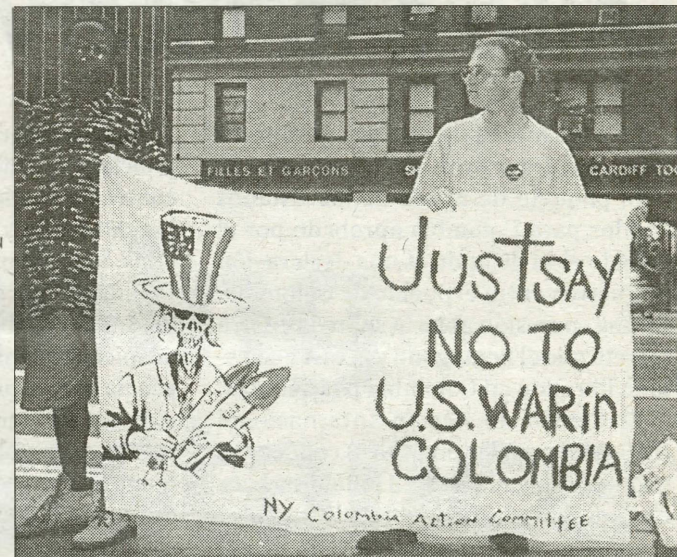
Ruling-class crisis deepens

The massive aid package is designed to prop up Colombia's weak and notoriously corrupt ruling class. This regime is currently facing depression-level economic conditions as well as an unprecedented political and military challenge from both the armed insurgencies and the mass movement.

Unemployment in Colombia is officially over 20 percent; in many areas it is over 50 percent. The Colombian peso has lost over half its value against the dollar in the last year alone.

After a string of military defeats at the hands of the insurgencies, the government of President Andres Pastrana has been forced to the table for talks with the FARC-EP. For the last 18 months, Pastrana has ceded a five-municipality "demilitarized zone" to the FARC-EP so that talks can be carried out.

The talks have featured a series of "Public Audiences," in which Colombians from



around the country can travel to the zone and make proposals for how they would address the problems facing Colombia. These meetings have often become popular speak-outs against the government's economic policies that capitulate to the demands of the International Monetary Fund.

In the past two years, unions have led a series of general strikes against Pastrana's economic policies. Peasants have staged blockades of highways. In June, residents of the Chocó province staged a general strike to protest the government's neglect of the region.

Few believe that the Plan Colombia can resolve this deep crisis. "The U.S. aid is going to trigger a total crisis and stimulate the war," political analyst Alejo Vargas told USA Today on June 23.

The package does signal a new level of struggle—a sign that U.S. imperialism will not stand by quietly while its representatives in Bogota are in trouble. Now U.S. diplomats are twisting arms in Europe to approve more aid at a high-level ministerial meeting in Spain in July.

As opposition to the aid mounts in Colombia, Colombians will surely be looking to the progressive movement in the United States for allies and for solidarity.

Vieques

the people's will to resist. It has actually enhanced the solidarity.

For example, the general population of prisoners is showing solidarity with the arrested activists.

Since they are unable to join the incursions into the restricted areas, many prisoners have written "Navy out" and "Free Vieques" on huge banners made by knotting together several white prison sheets and hung them out the windows.

When demonstrators are jailed, the prisoners treat them in the gentlest way, trying to make them feel as comfortable as possible during their stay.

All community, political and labor organizations fighting the U.S. Navy presence are in a state of high alert. While the incursions into restricted areas continue, these organizations are also regrouping, carrying out demonstrations and discussing plans of action.

Their message has been consistent: "These arrests do not deter us. We will get the Navy out."

They are putting those words into action, as shown by the infiltration into the restricted zone June 27 by 100 members of the Puerto Rican Independence Party.

FORMER AMBASSADOR:

'Don't believe lies about Haitian elections'

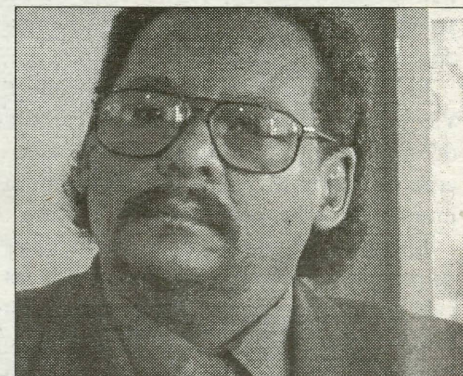
Former Haitian Ambassador-at-large Ben Dupuy and former Consul to New York Guy Ferdinand addressed the media and the public at the United Nations June 26. The two denounced inaccuracies and violence-baiting by the U.S.-dominated UN, Organization of American States and big-business media concerning the senate elections held in Haiti in May.

Dupuy blasted the leaders of these organizations for violating their own rules prohibiting intervention in the internal affairs of other nations. The Lavalas Party of former Haitian President Jean-Bertrand Aristide won the popular majority of senate votes at the polls May 21. The OAS, with help from Reuters and the Associated Press, launched an attack against Haitian electoral officials, falsely claiming that vote-counting procedures were in "defiance" of an OAS injunction.



Ben Dupuy

Dupuy said, "Our electoral law is very clear as to how disputes are to be handled and by whom, and it is clearly not by the OAS or the Associated Press or Reuters." Dupuy emphasized that the sovereignty of Haiti is at issue and that as a sovereign nation, Haiti has the right to determine its own destiny.



Guy Ferdinand

PVN PHOTOS: JOHNNIE STEVENS

Ferdinand and Dupuy also took the opportunity to make a statement about Shaka Sankofa, saying, "We were horrified by ... the Supreme Court's decision to not hear the case of ... the almost surely innocent man who was executed by Gov. George W. Bush's state of Texas last Thursday."

— Gery Armsby

Declaración de guerra contra pueblo Colombiano

¡Alto a la intervención de E.U. en Colombia!

Lo siguiente es un informe del Centro de Acción Internacional:

El paquete de ayuda de los Estados Unidos para Colombia aprobado por el Senado el 21 de junio es una declaración de guerra contra el pueblo de Colombia. Es una confesión abierta sobre la guerra secreta que el Pentágono y la CIA han estado librando en Colombia por décadas.

El Centro de Acción Internacional (IAC por las siglas en Inglés) condena el paquete de ayuda de \$1,3 billones y hace un llamado al Presidente Clinton y al Pentágono para que paren toda ayuda militar a Colombia. Llamamos a todos los activistas a unirse a la protesta contra esta ayuda en sus comunidades.

“Los militares colombianos y las policías están librando una guerra sucia contra los sindicatos, organizaciones de los campesinos, los estudiantes y todos ellos luchando por cambio social de Colombia”, acusó Teresa Gutiérrez líder del IAC. “El gobierno de los EE.UU. está auspiciando una guerra de contrainsurgencia bajo el pretexto de un guerra fin-gida contra el narcotráfico”.

“No es ninguna sorpresa que el paquete de ayuda fue aprobado en un solo día antes de que Shaka Sankofa fuese ejecutado en Texas”, dijo Gutiérrez. “La política del gobierno de los EE.UU. es de exportar su represión brutal de la gente pobre y trabajadora a todos los países

del mundo donde puede”.

Colombia es ya el país tercer recipiente más grande del mundo de ayuda militar. Hasta 300 soldados de las Fuerzas Especiales de los EE.UU. están en tierra colombiana.

El reportero del periódico NY Daily News Juan González recientemente expuso el papel jugado por las Fuerzas Especiales de los EE.UU. en una de las masacres peores en la historia reciente de Colombia, la masacre de 1997 de Mapiripan. Esto confirma lo que grupos como Human Rights Watch han identificado como un modelo repetido varias veces: el gobierno de los EE.UU. ha ayudado a organizar a las Fuerzas Armadas

de Colombia así como las fuerzas paramilitares irregulares para atacar a todos ellos a los que se consideran aliados de los movimientos revolucionarios allí.

“El incremento más reciente de la ayuda militar es otro paso en el camino hacia la intervención abierta de los EE.UU. en Colombia”, dijo codirectora del IAC Sara Flounders. “Los generales del Pentágono y los empresarios de Wall Street se han vuelto en tan arrogantes que han olvidado la lección de Vietnam: la lucha de un pueblo por la justicia social no se puede aplastar con bombas y armas de tecnología avanzada”.

¡No más Guerras de Vietnam!

Hipocresía sobre ataques en el Parque Central

¿Desde cuando la NYPD & Giuliani consideran a las mujeres?

Por Rebeca Toledo
Nueva York

Los alarmantes ataques del 11 de junio contra 45 mujeres por grupos de jóvenes en el Parque Central de Nueva York se han convertido en una situación de doble gane para el Departamento de Policía de Nueva York, la administración del Alcalde Rudolph Giuliani y todo el sistema racista y sexista.

Primero, ellos instigaron de manera racista una reacción contra el histórico desfile Puertorriqueño que tomó lugar un poco antes en ese mismo día. Y después, ellos pudieron presentar una cara de consideración por las violaciones contra la mujeres.

¿Desde cuando la NYPD considera a las mujeres? El 11 de junio, mujeres reportaron que los policías se quedaron parados y observando mientras las mujeres era atacadas. ¿Y, puede a caso, el Alcalde Giuliani decir que a el le preocupa la violencia contra las mujeres? ¿A caso el sacar a mujeres y niños de la beneficencia pública a una pobreza extrema llamada “workfare” no es una violencia contra las mujeres?

¿Entonces porqué los policías, el alcalde y la prensa jugaron ese papel para llamar la atención pública a los ataques del 11 de junio? Estos utilizaron lo que pasó en un intento de desacreditar y socavar el significado político del Desfile Puertorriqueño de este año.

El desfile de este año fue dedicado a Vieques y a Don Pedro Albizu Campos, líder del movimiento pro independencia moderno en Puerto Rico. Fue una abrumadora muestra de apoyo por la lucha en Vieques.

El desfile con una fuerza de dos millones de participantes se convirtió en una de las más grandes manifestaciones hasta la fecha contra el uso continuo por la Marina de los Estados Unidos de una pequeña isla para prácticas de tiro.

La multitud aplaudió profusamente ante la estatua de Don Pedro. Ellos gritaron sin parar, “Vieques sí, Marina, no.” Los letreros pidiendo la “Paz por Vieques” y “Marina fuera” encuadraban la ruta de la marcha.

Durante el Desfile Puertorriqueño y después, los policía y el sistema enseñaron sus verdaderos colores. Habían 4.000 policía en patrulla en el desfile. El 10 por ciento de la

fuerza policial total.

El día anterior, la ruta a lo largo de la Quinta Avenida, fue literalmente cercada. El control de la multitud durante el desfile era tan estricto como en otros años que los espectadores no podían ni moverse.

Los espectadores fueron encerrados en un área de 45 cuerdas a lo largo de la Quinta Avenida. Este año el desfile fue acortado por el cabildeo de opulentos residentes de la Quinta Avenida con objeciones a la música.

El espíritu anti imperialismo yanqui del desfile es de gran preocupación para la clase gobernante de allí.

Por eso no debe tomarse como sorpresa que a la alcaldía se le haya dado la libertad de desacreditar al desfile.

Aunque lo policía no hicieron nada para detener los ataques cuando sucedían, después estos lanzaron una masiva campaña contra los muchachos Latinos y Africo-americanos—sin importar que ellos hubieran estado envuelto en los ataques o no.

Lo que se necesita

Las actitudes anti mujer inculcadas en todos los muchachos por la clase gobernante y sus medios de difusión debe ser combativa.

Nacionalmente una de cada cuatro mujeres serán víctimas de violación sexual o atentado en su vida. Y cuando una de estas mujeres llegan a las cortes judiciales, estas solo le dan una regaña a los ofensores.

Veamos por ejemplo a horrible caso de 1989 cuando muchachos blanco atletas de una escuela superior en Glen Ridge, NJ, quienes violaron sexualmente a una estudiante quien tenía inhibiciones mentales leves. Ellos la penetraron con un palo de escoba y un bate de béisbol.

No hubo inmediatas fotografías de los atletas con \$12.000 dólares de recompensa ofrecidos por la policía. No hubieron lamentos de oficiales del ayuntamiento por los arrestos de los ofensores.

No. Pasaron meses antes que algo fuera hecho en este opulento suburbio. Y el resultado fue de que los líderes fueron declarados culpables de asalto sexual en primer grado, y el juez les dio menos de dos años de cárcel.

Esta es la naturaleza de los policías en un estado burgués. Ellos no están aquí para proteger a las mujeres o a los observadores

en el desfile. Es todo lo contrario. Los policías están aquí para reprimir a las mujeres, la gente de color y a los obreros. Están aquí para proteger a la propiedad privada de la clase gobernante y mantener las cosas como están.

Por eso es deplorable el escuchar a algunos líderes de la comunidad llamar por una cooperación con el NYPD para acorralar a los jóvenes Latinos y Africo-americanos. Las mujeres están con mucho derecho hastiadas por la inacción de la policía durante los ataques. Pero el pedirle a la policía a que tome la violencia contra las mujeres en serio tomando más acción en las comunidades no es la respuesta.

Abner Louima no necesitaba mas acción policial. Amadou Diallo de seguro que no podría cooperar más. Patrick Dorismond estaba tratando de obedecer las leyes. Aún así ellos sufrieron su muerte o tortura a manos de la NYPD.

Lo que se necesita en esta situación es

control por la comunidad. Que las comunidades oprimidas deben calar sus propios destinos.

Estos jóvenes si violaron a las mujeres y mostraron su irrespeto total por ellas. Las mujeres latinas puertorriqueñas son las que deberían de castigarlos. La mujeres latinas deberían de tener reuniones y hacerles saber que la violencia contra las mujeres no será tolerada.

Así es como lo hacen en la Cuba socialista. Los tribunales populares, basados en las comunidades, son una parte integral del sistema judicial de Cuba. Ellos tienen reuniones para gobernar sobre las ofensas y castigos. Ya sea que el castigo sea la reeducación u otra cosa, es el pueblo el que decide.

Esto es lo que se necesita. Las mujeres en general no pueden contar con los policías capitalistas y las cortes judiciales por justicia. Con las latinas unidas, podemos decir más pronto a lo policía y las cortes que no necesitamos su ingerencia.

Acciones nacionales dicen a Bush: “¡Alto a las ejecuciones!”

Por Saul Kanowitz
Palo Alto, California

Protestas interrumpen recaudación de fondo para Bush

Alzando las pancartas que leían “¡Alto a la ejecución de Gary Graham!” y “Gobernador Bush; no mates a otro hombre inocente,” dos personas interrumpieron el evento de recaudación de fondos de \$1000 por persona, para Bush en el hotel Crown Plaza Hotel en Palo Alto, California, el 19 el junio.

Afuera más de 200 personas protestaron la ejecución programada para el 22 de junio del prisionero Shaka Sankofa en la celda de los condenados de Texas.

Al aproximarse la carroza de Bush a la entrada al hotel, los manifestantes comenzaron a corear: “¿Qué queremos? ¡Un nuevo juicio para Shaka! ¿Cuándo, ¡ya!” el coro principal que se hoyó du-

rante la protesta fue, “No maten a otro hombre inocente, un nuevo juicio para Gary Graham.”

Nancy Mitchell de San Francisco y Coleen Lamp de Belmont, California, ambas partidarias del Centro Acción Internacional fueron expulsadas del hotel después de la interrupción. Ellas se unieron a la protesta en la calle.

Lamp explicó: “yo comencé a corear, “Alto a la ejecución de Gary Graham,” al momento que [Bush] era presentado. Yo sé que el siente la fuerza y la voluntad de la gente de parar la ejecución.”

Mitchell dijo: “La ejecución de Gary Graham está a solo tres días. George Bush: ahora es el momento. No mates a otra persona inocente.”

Los oradores del mitin incluyeron a representantes de Servicios Legales para los Prisioneros con Niños, el Centro de Acción Internacional y la Campaña para Dar Fin a la Pena de Muerte.