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Unions vs. Coca-Cola in Colombia

Workers defy death squads

BULLETIN: Tens of thousands of Colombian students and workers marched five miles from the National University to the Simon Bolivar Plaza in downtown Bogotá Dec. 10. The demonstrators were protesting President Alvaro Uribe's plans to reorganize education and privatize Colombian industry for the benefit of transnational corporations. They also carried signs protesting Plan Colombia, Washington's program for military intervention against revolutionary guerrillas in the country.

By Rebeca Toledo
Bogotá, Colombia

As a 22-member-strong delegation from the International Action Center in the United States approached the Coca-Cola headquarters here on Dec. 5, rousing applause erupted from hundreds of protesters already gathered. Members of the delegation carried a banner that read: "The people of the U.S. demand justice for the people of Colombia. No to Coca-Cola and no to Plan Colombia."

The National Union of Food Industry Workers—Sinaltrainal—called the protest, to be held before a Tribunal Against the Violence of Coca-Cola later that same day.

The crowd chanted vigorously, "Who is paying for violence in Colombia? Coca-Cola!" and, "Why do they assassinate us when we are the hope of Latin America?"

After speeches of solidarity, the protesters moved on to the U.S. Embassy, where they were met by armed guards and riot police. Here the chants turned to: "We don't want to be a colony of the U.S., we want to be a free and sovereign Colombia" and "The workers aren't terrorists, U.S. imperialism is the terrorist."

As people headed back to their buses, shouts of "Long live international solidarity" could still be heard. The Colombians explained to the international delegates from the IAC and other parts of the world that without their presence, the protest would have been impossible. The police would have attacked and arrested the participants.

The IAC delegation had arrived the night before to attend the Tribunal Against the Violence of Coca-Cola—part of the International Conference on

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CUBA

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Transnational Corporations and Human Rights—and to meet with labor unionists, students, community leaders and human-rights workers.

Powell in Colombia same week

Ironically, U.S. Secretary of State Colin Powell had just left Bogotá when the delegates arrived. Powell had arrived Dec. 3 at a military airport here amid heavy security. Two military helicopters circled over the city while more than 50 motorcycle police officers and hundreds of soldiers were deployed to guard the route to his hotel.

Through Plan Colombia and the Andean Initiative, the U.S. government has provided well over \$1 billion in aid to Colombia since 2000—mostly in military goods to stop the strong movement for social justice in Colombia, which includes insurgency groups, labor unionists, students, campesinos, and human-rights and community leaders.

During Powell's visit he promised to pour another \$200 million into the military and police forces. There are now reportedly more U.S. troops in Colombia than there were in Central America in the 1980s.

Powell was also motivated by Washington's search for broader support in the United Nations Security Council for its planned war on Iraq. Colombia currently chairs the Security Council.

So the IAC delegation was an important show of defiance against U.S. war plans in Colombia. More than two-thirds of the U.S. delegates were unionists who serve on executive boards, negotiating committees or as shop stewards. Others were students, lawyers and anti-war activists. They were young and older, women and men, Latino, African American and white.

The tribunal was the third in a series of hearings that began July 22 in Atlanta. The second hearing was held in

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Solidarity delegation marches with Coca-Cola workers in Bogotá.

At Louisiana's Angola prison

Demand end to dungeon conditions

By Marina Drummer

An unprecedented rally took place Dec. 7 at the gates of Angola prison in Louisiana. It was to protest the conditions in which prisoners are held at notorious Camp J, Angola's extreme punishment unit. Supporters from all over the country, ranging in age from 9 to 70, attended the peaceful gathering.

Robert King Wilkerson, who spent over 30 years behind Angola's gates before being freed in February, and Chui Clark, a former prisoner who spent over a decade in the Camp J unit, rallied the crowd to protest prison living conditions and the sham review board process.

The rally was organized by the National Coalition to Free the Angola Three. It came in response to atrocities reported in daily dispatches that Angola Three political prisoner Herman Wallace has been filing from the dungeon in Camp J.

Several hundred of the 5,000 prisoners in the Louisiana State Penitentiary in Angola are held in solitary confinement. They are locked in their cells for 23-and-a-half hours a day with no access to work, education, social or religious activities. All meals are taken in their cells. Visiting is very limited; there is rarely contact.

Inmates are subjected to medical and physical neglect, and guard harassment and assault, in an environment of boredom punctuated by violence and madness.

Wallace has been subject to increased retaliation since March. That's when a state magistrate approved the furtherance of an American Civil Liberties Union civil lawsuit challenging the state's violation of the Eighth Amendment to the U.S. Con-

stitution, which bans cruel and unusual punishment.

Since that time, Wallace has been set up three times by guards and placed in the dungeon for weeks on end. Interviews with other inmates, and reports on conditions that he has managed to send from the dungeon, chronicle a horrific pattern of guard violence and abuse along with administrative corruption and irresponsibility.

All prisoners at Angola, but particularly those in Camp J, are suffering increased punishment at the hands of a prison administration bent on silencing voices of dissent and reform.

The Camp J program was meant to administer a more "humane" form of discipline to inmates. But that has been subverted. It has become the weapon of choice against inmates targeted for retaliation by all from the lowliest guard to top prison officials. The Camp J system has been used with impunity for years, especially against inmates who dare protest the conditions there.

Guards wield absolute power

The larger, more significant problem is the guards' absolute power to throw prisoners into the punishment camp for months and—unbelievably—years on end, based solely on their word. The inmates are poor, mostly African-American men who are powerless to do anything about it.

Conditions at Camp J frequently surpass some of the human-rights violations related with horror by U.S. officials describing prisons in other countries.

In a desperate effort to stop word about prison conditions in Angola from reaching the outside world, Warden Burl Cain has been instituting

new, unconstitutional restrictions and punishments. The latest tactic is a memo stating that all prisoners whose names appear on a website are subject to having their outgoing mail, as well as all legal correspondence and phone calls, checked.

Cain is also threatening limit the number of postage stamps prisoners can buy. As phone charges from Angola are exorbitant, this would effectively silence prisoners inside the 18,000-acre plantation.

Herman Wallace explains in his letters: "I'm sending you this information in case you can use it as I'm trying to expose the torture going on back here and the best way to do it is to get others to speak out about what has been done to them. I'm talking frame-ups, beatings, four-point restraints, gas shot in the face of inmates—all without provocation; abuse of punishment to keep Camp J a housing unit, simply because there is no place else to house these men. The frame-ups are sanctioned by the warden because there's no place to send these men."

A growing stream of inmates who have been freed on new evidence, including DNA testing, attests to the fact that aside from the obvious racial and economic targeting that feeds the prison system, many of these prisoners are innocent of all charges except being a poor person of color. Guilty or innocent, these are human beings who deserve better treatment than to be left in four-point restraints in paper gowns for days at a time, forced to urinate and defecate on themselves; or to be beaten and gassed; to have their glasses ripped from their faces and crushed, their property ripped up and strewn about.

The growing prison-industrial complex makes no bones about being all about punishment, but where is the line between punishment and torture?

Readers who want to express concern over the activities at Angola can write Sen. Donald Cravins of the Louisiana Black Legislative Caucus and head of the Senate Judiciary committee that has jurisdiction over the Department of Corrections: Sen. Donald Cravins, 200 West Pine St., Lafayette, LA 70501; websen@legis.state.la.us.

The writer is from the National Coalition to Free the Angola Three. □



PHOTO: RIGO 02

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SAN FRANCISCO

Sat., Dec. 14
 Anti-War Teach-In. Stop the war against Iraq. Featuring speakers and topics from a diverse group of presenters. Sponsored by International ANSWER Coalition. 7 p.m. At Horace Mann Middle School, 3351 23rd St., near Valencia. For info (415) 821-6545.

WASHINGTON, D.C.

Sat., Jan. 18
 National March on Washington, D.C. No war on Iraq. Assemble 11 a.m. at the West Side of the Capitol Building. Become a volunteer. Endorse. Help get the word out. Bring people to D.C. Send a donation to the mobilization. For info on the Web internationalANSWER.org or phone (202) 544-3389.

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False confessions and a billionaire's call for vengeance

How Central Park youth were railroaded

By Monica Moorehead
New York

On Dec. 5, Manhattan District Attorney Robert Morgenthau asked a judge to throw out the convictions of five young men in the 1989 Central Park jogger case, which had made national and international headlines. Since the original trial, defense attorneys and family members have maintained that the young men were innocent.

This announcement comes several months after Matias Reyes confessed to the beating and rape of the young white woman while she was jogging in Central Park on April 19, 1989. DNA testing and other physical evidence have corroborated the Reyes confession. Reyes, who was sexually assaulted as a youth, has also confessed to the rape of other women as well as the murder of a pregnant woman. He is currently incarcerated.

The Black and Latino youths convicted of the crime—Antron McCray, Kevin Richardson, Yusef Salaam, Raymond Santana and Kharey Wise—were between the ages of 14 and 16 when they were arrested and charged as juvenile offenders. They all served their sentences in full, ranging from seven-and-a-half to 13-and-a-half years.

None received parole—because they dared to maintain their innocence.

Before the youths were ever formally charged with assaulting the jogger, they were tried and convicted in the media. They were described in demeaning, racist terms as a “wolf pack,” “animals,” “savages on a wilding” and much more. While they were working-class youths of color, the assaulted woman happened to be an investment banker.

Ten days after their arrest, on May 1, 1989, billionaire real-estate developer Donald Trump paid \$85,000 for inflam-

matory full-page ads that ran in Newsday, the Daily News, the Post and the New York Times. The ads were headed: “Bring back the death penalty. Bring back our police.” They attacked the teenagers as “wild criminals” and concluded, “We must cease our continuous pandering to the criminal population.”

Four of the youths were convicted on their videotaped “confessions” and the fifth on the hearsay of a detective who interviewed one of them. A debate is now focused on how these “confessions” were coerced by the detectives and police, who interrogated the youths behind closed doors.

Even with this new evidence, the district attorney’s office can only recommend the dismissal of the convictions to the original judge in the case, Charles J. Tejada. Tejada is the only one with the authority to overturn the convictions of these young men tragically robbed of their youth by the racist criminal-justice system.

Glen Ridge athletes get slap on wrist

Another well-publicized rape occurred in 1989, this one in the suburbs of New Jersey. Ten white high-school football stars were charged with gang raping a 17-year-old mentally disabled white woman in a basement, using a broken-off broom and baseball bat. This came to be known as the Glen Ridge “incident.”

Only three of the accused were convicted. None did any time in prison because they were able to make bail during the appeals process. A state appeals court partially reversed the original convictions, stating that the victim had “complied with the sexual acts.” In other words, “She asked for it.”

In covering this heinous act, the media never referred to these athletes as predators or animals. The tone conveyed

was that “boys will be boys.”

Reminiscent of Scottsboro case

Rape, a horrific, dehumanizing form of violence against women, is endemic to class society, especially in an imperialist country like the United States. Every minute of every day, a woman somewhere in the country is raped because, regardless of nationality and class, women are still viewed as property and sexual objects.

Most assaults go unmentioned in the press because rape happens so frequently. Women who take their attackers to trial take a great risk because they could easily end up being degraded by prosecuting attorneys and judges.

Many progressives and communities of color have likened the Central Park case to the infamous Scottsboro case that occurred in Alabama more than 70 years ago. That case involved nine poor, African American men who were arrested and put on trial for the rape of two poor white women. These young men were convicted in a racist lynch mob atmosphere. Eventually, one of the women recanted her testimony and admitted that the cops coerced her into falsely accusing the young men of a crime they did not commit.

The cases of the Central Park jogger and the young woman in Glen Ridge are not isolated incidents of rape, as the media like to indicate. Rather they are everyday occurrences. The racist use of the rape charge is also the norm in this society, and has resulted in the lynching of thousands of men of color, especially African Americans.

The young men convicted in the Central Park jogger attack were victims of a horrible legal lynching on the part of the criminal injustice system. They should be exonerated of all these charges immediately and their families be granted full restitution for years of suffering. □



WW PHOTO: PETER COOK

From left to right: Andrew Houston, Monica Moorehead, Marquetta Peltier and Kazi Toure

No political prisoners in U.S.?

N.H. students learn of Peltier, Cuban 5

Special to Workers World
Durham, N.H.

“Think the U.S. has no political prisoners? Guess again!” This was a main theme of a forum at the University of New Hampshire on Dec. 3. The meeting highlighted the cases of the Cuban Five and American Indian Movement leader Leonard Peltier. Despite a bitterly cold evening, 75 people, including activists from Boston, attended the forum.

Marquetta Peltier, the Native activist’s daughter, gave a moving account of what it has been like to grow up without her father because he has been incarcerated for almost 27 years. She spoke about how her father was railroaded to a life sentence by the U.S. government after two FBI agents were killed on the Pine Ridge reservation back in 1975. President Bill Clinton denied Peltier clemency in 2000.

Monica Moorehead from the International Action Center spoke about the case of the Cuban Five: Fernando González, René González, Antonio Guerrero, Gerardo Hernández and Ramón Labañino. These five Cuban patriots have been sentenced to long prison sentences in the United States for monitoring the activities of terrorist Cuban counter-revolutionaries in Miami. Legal appeals have been filed

to demand a new trial outside the hugely biased Miami/Dade County area. Free the Five committees are being organized all over the country and the world, including Latin America and, just recently, by the Congress of South African Trade Unions.

Kazi Toure, a former political prisoner and well-known organizer in the struggle to free African American political prisoner Mumia Abu-Jamal, told how hundreds of political prisoners—including the MOVE 9, Sundiata Acoli and others—have been victims of a racist U.S. policy for many decades.

The meeting was organized by the Diverse Support Coalition, a broad-based student organization that “seeks to promote, educate and support multiculturalism and diversity at UNH.” Under the leadership of Puerto Rican student activist Andrew Houston, the DSC includes Alliance, a lesbian/gay/bi/trans group; the Black Student Union; Hillel, a Jewish student organization; Mosaico, a Latino student organization; the Native American Cultural Association; and the United Asian Coalition.

The question and answer period included discussion about the role of the prisons, attacks on affirmative action in New Hampshire and the need to link Bush’s war drive against Iraq with the issue of supporting political prisoners. □

In Baltimore, New York & Iraq

Guilty until proven innocent

By Deirdre Griswold

Bernard Webster of Baltimore, three New York teenagers and the country of Iraq all have something in common. They have been punished by U.S. authorities for saying they didn’t do it.

Webster was released Nov. 7 after serving 20 years in prison for a rape that DNA evidence now proves he did not commit. Webster, jailed since the age of 19, had been denied parole five times. Why did the parole board turn down this model prisoner? Because he wouldn’t say he was sorry for something that he didn’t do. You have to “repent” to get parole. If you continue to say you’re not guilty, you are punished for defying the authorities.

Three of the five teenagers convicted in the 1989 Central Park jogger case recanted their forced confessions while in prison and told parole boards they were innocent. Same story. Parole denied for not admitting to their “crime.” Now the New York district attorney’s office has moved to nullify their false convictions—but only after all of them have finished

serving their sentences.

That’s the way the capitalist injustice system works—at home and in foreign policy.

The Bush administration insists that Iraq must be punished because it says it has no weapons of mass destruction. Iraq’s claim, backed up by 12,000 pages of explanation and documentation, is grounds, according to Bush-logic, for the United States to launch a horrible war of conquest against this ancient—and oil-rich—country. No one in the corporate media seems to notice the absurdity of this position.

The similarity of these situations is not a coincidence. For people of color in the racist United States—Webster is African American, the New York youth are Latino and Black—you are guilty until proven innocent, no matter what the law books say. And for the countries that have suffered colonization and imperialism at the hands of the industrialized capitalist powers, the same bias applies. Injustice follows oppression and exploitation as surely as the dollar follows the flag. □

As billionaires demand budget cuts, NY transit workers get ready to rumble

By G. Dunkel and Deirdre Griswold
New York

Can anyone deny this is a class struggle? New York Gov. George Pataki is a multi-millionaire. New York City Mayor Michael Bloomberg is a billionaire. Together they are telling the workers of the state and city that they have to suffer cutbacks, layoffs and wage freezes because the public treasuries are going into debt.

What they don't say is that their class of super-rich bankers, businessmen and realtors have bled the city and state dry.

The workers aren't buying it. New York City faces what could be its first transit strike in 22 years because the Metropolitan Transit Authority, under Pataki's control, wants the subway and bus workers to take what amounts to a pay cut in their next contract.

So on Dec. 7, at two huge rallies at the Javits Convention Center, over 10,000 members of Transport Workers Union Local 100 unanimously authorized their union to strike if necessary. The present contract expires on Dec. 15. Striking by public employees is illegal in New York under the reactionary Taylor Law, so the resolution to strike was raised from the floor instead of by union officials.

Union president Roger Toussaint, asked by reporters afterwards if there would be a strike, said that would be up to the union's executive board.

The MTA came up with its proposals just 10 days before the contract expires. They include no wage increase in the first year but a hike of 2.4 percent in the workers' contributions to their pension plan and more for health coverage—adding up to a significant pay cut. The workers were already boiling mad over safety conditions,

TWU members have authorized a strike after the MTA called for de facto wage cuts



PHOTO: TWU LOCAL 100

with two deaths of track workers on two consecutive days.

The big business media, as usual, are trying to whip up the public against the workers, saying a strike would be their fault and would destroy the city—and Christmas. An editorial Dec. 6 in the racist New York Post called for an "arrest warrant" for Local 100 President Toussaint and fines of \$25 million a day under the Taylor Law to stop his "jihad." The more sedate New York Times on Dec. 11 threatened a strike could "destroy the union."

Billionaire Bloomberg, conveniently forgetting his chauffeured limousine, hopes to win public sympathy for his strike-breaking efforts by saying he'll bike to work if he has to.

At the same time, the politicians are telling the riders that service will have to be cut and the fares raised because times are tough. Drivers who use the bridges and tunnels run by the MTA also are told they'll

have to pay more.

The TWU has offered a plan to keep the fares down while giving the workers the raise they deserve. The only thing that will make the politicians summon the "political will" to find the money, however, is when they realize that the workers have the power to shut the city down and would use it.

Bosses use capitalist crisis as excuse to attack unions

After the bust on Wall Street, New York City's economy has been contracting for seven quarters, even before the catastrophe of 9/11. The surpluses in the city budget of the last two years have turned into huge deficits—about \$1 billion this year and a projected \$6-billion deficit for 2002.

The \$129 billion in the state pension fund in 2000 dropped to \$97 billion this Sept. 30, which is not just a blow to the state's retirees but indicates that the city

and state are going to be getting a lot less from activity on the stock exchanges, a major source of their revenue.

New York State is facing a \$2-billion shortfall this fiscal year, according to Governor Pataki's probably understated figures.

The budget crunch comes after huge tax cuts for the rich and an orgy of pumping money into corporate cronies through privatizing services.

The "war on terror" and the impending war against Iraq are also cutting into the civilian budgets. President George W. Bush himself acknowledged this when he proclaimed federal workers would not be getting their normal raises because "our national situation precludes granting larger pay increases ... at this time."

Because of statewide tax cuts for the rich, cities and counties throughout New York have had to jack up property taxes to pay for increased Medicaid costs that the state has shoved their way. Many New York counties and municipalities that had dropped the sales tax on some clothing sales have re-imposed it since they lost \$2 billion in revenue. (Associated Press, Dec. 7)

If the MTA gets away with shoving a rotten contract down the throats of the transit workers, then the bosses and their politicians will feel free to implement all the other cuts they have on the drawing board.

A train operator leaving the TWU meeting where the strike vote was taken explained, "They can't ask us ... to pay more money for pensions and health coverage, especially when the mayor is telling us we have to pay higher property taxes. What do they want us to do, live in the trains?"

That's why 10,000 transit workers were on their feet at the Javits Center, yelling "Strike! Strike!" □

The Contra gang is back

Bush packs gov't with criminals

By Heather Cottin

President George W. Bush has appointed Elliot Abrams to be the White House director of Middle Eastern affairs. This type of handpicked assignment bypasses the need for congressional approval, yet few pundits or journalists expressed consternation.

Abrams will rejoin his old friend John Poindexter, just appointed to be the national cyberspy—director of the Pentagon's Information Awareness Office, which gathers intelligence on people in the United States electronically.

Poindexter was convicted in 1990 of five felony counts of conspiracy, lying to Congress, defrauding the government and destroying evidence in the Iran-Contra scandal during the Reagan-Bush administration. He was even implicated in selling cocaine for guns for the Contras, a terrorist military force funded and trained by the United States to oust the Sandinista government in Nicaragua during the 1980s. (The Guardian [Britain], Feb. 18)

This retired Navy admiral lost his job as national security adviser under President Ronald Reagan. But the first George Bush pardoned Poindexter and several other malefactors during his last days as president.

Abrams will be a confederate of John D. Negroponte, ambassador to the United Nations. Negroponte was Reagan's am-

bassador to Honduras when Reagan's men were supporting the Contras in defiance of the Boland Amendment, a law barring such aid. Negroponte was instrumental in supporting death squads in Honduras from 1981 to 1985. He funded the CIA-trained Battalion 316, which was responsible for killings of hundreds of Honduran union leaders and civil-rights workers. (The Guardian [Australia], Oct. 31, 2001)

Abrams will also serve with Otto Reich, part of the network of Cuban exiles responsible for the Oct. 6, 1976, bombing of Cubana Flight 455, which killed 73 people. Reich ran a covert domestic propaganda campaign against the Nicaraguan government during the Reagan era. (Salon.com, Jan. 11)

Abrams: his history speaks for itself

Reaganites admired Elliot Abrams as an intellectual and a strategist. His thinking was at the core of the Reagan Doctrine. Abrams was a "hemispherist," a code word for those who opposed Marxism in the Western Hemisphere. The United States government declared war on those who dared to struggle for housing, health care, education and a decent life for their families. It was a battle against socialism.

Elliot Abrams was Reagan's assistant secretary of state for human rights and humanitarian affairs. When Reagan said that apartheid South Africa was this country's

best friend in Africa, Abrams was arranging for "humanitarian" shipments of electric shock batons to the racist government there. (Human Rights Action Center)

Abrams led the State Department's Inter-American Affairs division in the 1980s. He covered up massacres in El Salvador in the 1980s. He called the report of the massacre at El Mozote, where more than 1,000 peasants were slaughtered by U.S.-trained Salvadoran troops, "commie propaganda."

Abrams lied about cables that told the State Department that Roberto D'Aubuisson, the U.S.-backed death-squad president of El Salvador, was planning to kill Archbishop Oscar Romero. Abrams called Washington's policy in El Salvador a "fabulous achievement." (The Nation, June 2, 2001)

In the 1980s, Elliot Abrams defended U.S. aid for the government in Guatemala, which killed an estimated 200,000 Indigenous people struggling for their lives in a desperate guerrilla war.

During the Contras' rampage in Nicaragua, Abrams worked directly under Lt. Col. Oliver North. (Observer, April 21) North was running the operation against the Sandinistas out of his office in the White House basement. North illegally sold arms to Iran and used the profits to fund the Contras.

Abrams was convicted of withholding information from Congress about the Rea-

gan administration's cover-up of support for the Contras. But President George Bush pardoned Abrams on Christmas Eve in 1992, a lame-duck holiday gift.

When George W. Bush was selected president, Abrams was back in business.

In May 2001, Bush appointed Abrams senior director of the National Security Council Office of Democracy, Human Rights and International Operations. This past spring Abrams was a key figure organizing the coup that attempted to overthrow President Hugo Chávez of Venezuela. (The Observer, April 21)

So now Elliot Abrams is Bush's director of Middle East affairs.

Abrams opposed the Oslo peace negotiations between Israel and Yasser Arafat. Abrams has said U.S. policy in Israel should face the Palestinians "with force." (New Jersey Jewish News)

Elliot Abrams's ideology toward the Middle East today is consistent with his earlier support of the bloody right-wing governments in Central America that killed an estimated 350,000 peasants in a decade of U.S.-financed destruction.

The Bush administration is deepening its line in the sand in the Middle East. But at a time when the political character of the U.S. government—of, by and for the rich—is becoming clearer to masses of people in this country and around the world, the movement opposing it is also growing in strength. □

Landmark victory over racism in jeopardy

The Supreme Court & affirmative action

By Julie Fry

The Supreme Court announced Dec. 2 that it will decide whether the use of race as a factor in the admissions process at the University of Michigan Law School is constitutional. For over a decade now, students and activists have been fighting back against right-wing forces who have attacked affirmative-action programs nationwide. The court's decision could eliminate affirmative action at all U.S. public colleges and universities.

Roots of affirmative action

Affirmative-action programs are concessions won by the tremendous strength of the civil-rights movement during the 1960s and 1970s. Students held mass demonstrations and teach-ins to demand an end to the elitist, racist and sexist admission policies of school administrations.

At the University of Michigan, the Black Action Movement led a student strike that shut down the entire campus for almost a month in 1970. At the time, Black students accounted for only 2 to 3 percent of enrolled students at U of M. One of BAM's demands was to raise the enrollment rate of Black students to at least 10 percent.

Movements like the one at U of M resulted in tremendous gains for students of color, women and working-class youths across the country. For the first time they gained access to traditionally white, male and wealthy universities.

But these gains have come under attack by the ruling class.

In most of the country, primary and secondary schools remain just as segregated now. Schools that primarily serve students of color receive, on average, far less per-pupil funding than white schools. Students of color are much less likely to have access to honors or advanced-placement classes, to participate in music or art programs, or to have access to staffing, learning materials, or technology that wealthier public schools enjoy.

Wealth is one factor responsible for the unequal education system. Racist policies such as "red lining" ensure that even as people of color gain higher incomes, they are confined to segregated neighborhoods with poorer schools. "Tracking" works within primary and secondary schools to disproportionately push people of color into remedial or vocational classes.

Two years ago, a study by Harvard's Civil Rights Project found that African American students in predominately white schools were almost 10 times more likely than white students to be forced into remedial classes.

All these factors help create enormous obstacles to receiving a good education.

The University of Michigan has never lived up to its 1970 promise of 10 percent Black student enrollment. Instead, African American students compose only about 7.5 percent of U of M's undergraduate enrollment. That is a significant gain from the numbers in 1970, but still grossly out of proportion with the state's 14-percent African American population of the state. ("Disappointing Numbers," www.michigandaily.com, Nov. 18; www.census2000.gov)

African American students and faculty are also still fighting for more tenured faculty of color, the creation of an African and African American Studies department, and an end to racist harassment on campus, including white students parading in "black-face."

Behind attacks on affirmative action

The lawsuit against Michigan was initiated by the Center for Individual Rights, a racist, right-wing think-tank based in Washington, D.C. that is responsible for most of the recent anti-affirmative-action litigation. It has brought similar lawsuits against the University of Washington and University of Texas. It also defended Proposition 209, the law in California that banned affirmative action at the University of California. (www.cir-usa.org)

At the University of Texas Law School, Black student enrollment decreased by 90 percent the year after the CIR won its racist lawsuit. (www.michigandaily.com, "Other universities," Dec. 3)

Similar effects from Proposition 209 have been reported at UCLA and UC-Berkeley. Further, the few African Americans who have managed to persevere at these schools have reported a dramatic increase in racist harassment. (www.michigandaily.com, "UC becoming resegregated," Feb. 9, 2001)

Behind the CIR and the barrage of attacks on programs for the poor and oppressed throughout the 1990s are wealthy foundations and elites. They include the Bradley Foundation—infamous for its role in dismantling welfare in favor of the "workfare" system—and the Orin Foundation, which along with Bradley pulled the strings in former New York Mayor Rudolph Giuliani's campaign to eliminate the progressive open admissions system at the City University of New York.

CIR also has the help of the most racist, reactionary forces. In the Texas case, CIR was assisted by lawyer Theodore Olson, now U.S. Solicitor General, who defended Ronald Reagan during the Iran-Contra scandal, and Stacey Koon, the Los Angeles cop who brutally beat Rodney King. (Diaz, Black Issue in Higher Education, Dec. 25, 1997). In the Michigan case, CIR used former State Sen. David Jaye to help it recruit plaintiffs. Jaye, a rabidly racist politician, is known for his failed attempts to reinstate the death penalty in Michigan and to pass a state constitutional amendment banning affirmative action. (Lansing State Journal, May 25, 2001)

Groups like the CIR try to explain away the deep disparities in wealth and education in the United States through racist and anti-poor rhetoric about "merit" and the "work ethic." They dismiss the effects of hundreds of years of racism and oppression. They argue that standardized tests

like the SAT measure how "qualified" someone is to go to college, even though study after study has shown that the only thing these tests measure accurately is how much money someone has to throw into an SAT preparation class or a private tutor.

They viciously attack the programs that have given at least a few of the poor and oppressed the opportunity to get some sort of a decent education, while staying silent about the "legacy" admissions that benefit the children of rich alumni most of all. Underlying all these pretexts and lies is their desire to reserve the best education in this country for more affluent white students, to the detriment of the oppressed.

Implications of the recent decision

The upcoming decision in the University of Michigan case will be the first time the high court has looked at this issue since 1978. At that time, the Supreme Court dealt a huge blow to affirmative action in the U.C. Regents vs. Bakke ruling. The court attempted to undermine affirmative action's role as a corrective to the cumulative effects of hundreds of years of racism, using the false argument of "reverse discrimination."

This time, many fear the court will eliminate affirmative action in higher education altogether. In the lower courts, expert witnesses testified in the Michigan case that the elimination of affirmative action would result in a decrease in student of color enrollment from the current rate of 14.5 percent to an abysmal 4 percent at the law school. Similar effects are estimated for the undergraduate program. (Gratz v. Bollinger, 6th Cir. 2002)

Some time in the spring, the Supreme Court will hear oral arguments in the University of Michigan case. But the fate of affirmative action, and of access to education in this country, cannot be left to the will of the reactionary Supreme Court. All progressive and anti-racist people should organize locally and nationally to combat this attack. □

Anti-war chapter stands up to Sierra Club board

By Leslie Feinberg

Why on earth is the venerable and heavily endowed Sierra Club threatening to disband its Utah chapter?

Are they renegades who spilled an ocean of crude oil, despoiling endangered wildlife preserves? Did they net dolphins in the race for a lucrative sea harvest? Did they filibuster on behalf of gasoline-guzzling SUVs? Argue against wind and solar power?

Pooh-pooh the perilous thinning of the ozone layer? Take a chain saw to old-growth redwoods?

No, that's Dubya's "Earth Last" milieu. Here's why the heretical board members of the Sierra Club's 175-member Glen Canyon chapter in southern Utah drew the ire of the 15-member executive board of the country's oldest environmental group: They spoke out against one of the gravest threats to this planet and its populations—Pentagon war.

"War is not healthy for children and other living things," the dissident group's secretary Dan Kent explained succinctly in a recently issued statement. "It is the ulti-

mate act of environmental destruction. ... For the board to compel our silence plays right into Bush's mad world, where a nation of police, prisons, bombs, bunkers is better than lowering oneself to diplomacy to save lives."

The Utah chapter notes that back in 1981, the Sierra Club did pass an anti-war resolution, bolstered by the consensus that war brings with it dire environmental consequences.

Yet in October, when 13 former Sierra Club board members closed ranks with the Utah activists to ask for a formal statement against U.S. saber-rattling at Iraq, leaders of the 700,000-member organization instead adopted a resolution that "supports disarming Iraq of weapons of mass destruction."

Anyone honestly searching for weapons that could explode the planet into smithereens would not have to leave the confines of the continental United States.

Heaped on top of the capitulation to Washington's dogs of war was another resolution that immediately followed—this one "clarifying" the 1981 statement as having been a "broad general policy frame-



PHOTO: LE MINH TRUONG

War not dangerous to living things? Here, a mangrove swamp in South Vietnam's Mekong Delta after the U.S. sprayed it with Agent Orange.

work" that "does not authorize members, leaders or club entities to take positions on military conflicts."

The anti-war apostates characterize this tacked-on language as a gag order.

Glen Canyon board member Patrick

Diehl lambasted the national board's action as "extremely divisive," concluding, "I sincerely believe that the majority agrees with our position. I think we are expressing the general disagreement with the board's action." □

Bush's growing contradiction

How to turn inspections into

By Fred Goldstein

The administration of President George W. Bush has been displaying a combination of imperial arrogance and tactical desperation as it tries to deal with a growing political contradiction. Its political problem is how to reconcile its stated goal of eliminating alleged Iraqi weapons of mass destruction with its real policy, which it has not abandoned one iota, of "regime change." That is, overthrowing the government of Iraq and seizing the country with its oil wealth and its strategic position in the Middle East.

The Iraqis have fully unmasked this contradiction by submitting nearly 12,000 pages of documentation that supply the very information demanded by Washington, its allies and its subordinates in the UN Security Council.

The inspections process will not stop the Pentagon's drive towards war. But it poses an immediate problem for the military planners. Laying the political groundwork for the invasion through the inspections process requires that it be credible. This requires a respectable amount of time for the process to unfold in order to give all the allies and puppets of U.S. imperialism a cover for joining the war coalition.

This means that the inspections timetable, short of some provocation set up by the U.S. government, will lag behind the rapid military preparations that are in progress as troops, war materiel and com-

mand structure are moved into position for war in the Gulf.

Denouncing what they themselves devised

Washington wrote all the intrusive and provocative provisions of the inspection requirements imposed on Iraq in the belligerent UN Resolution 1441. Yet the Bush administration began to denounce its own required inspections process almost before it began—fearing above all that it might succeed in absolving the Iraqis and undermine the U.S. government frame-up of Baghdad.

Additionally, Bush feared that the process could drag on and create further political problems for Washington and the Pentagon as anti-U.S. sentiment builds around the world and the anti-war movement escalates its mobilization.

Bush, Vice President Dick Cheney and Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld all went public as the inspections began, declaring, in different words, that inspections were doubtful to hopeless. They all held to the position that Iraq was harboring weapons of mass destruction and would never admit it. When asked for proof, Washington pleaded security considerations, relying on the general demonization of Saddam Hussein and Iraq to aid its evasions.

The big business media chimed in with endless commentary claiming that the inspectors were inexperienced and understaffed, that Iraq was a big country, that the weapons were either hidden under-

ground or were on vehicles moving around so they could not be detected, and so on. A full-scale propaganda campaign was launched to discredit the inspections in advance. The purpose of this campaign was to prepare the ground for Washington to declare Iraq in "material breach" of the resolution and launch an invasion.

As the Iraqis were preparing their documentation, there was an element of political panic in the White House. Bush summoned Hans Blix, the head of the inspections team, to meet with Condoleezza Rice, his national security adviser. The purpose of the meeting was to pressure Blix into having the inspection teams "identify key Iraqi weapons scientists and spirit them out of Iraq so they can be offered asylum in exchange for disclosing where Saddam Hussein is hiding weapons of mass destruction," wrote the New York Times of Dec. 6. Blix was told to "make it a priority."

'We're not serving as a defection agency'

Blix, who is more reflective of the reluctant imperialist powers on the European continent who have little to gain by a U.S.-British war against Iraq, has a reputation to uphold and does not want to be seen as a complete stooge of the White House. He made a statement the following day that "I have said that we are not going to abduct anybody and we're not serving as a defection agency." Blix also asked the U.S. to hand over its

evidence.

Blix's defiant words were soon put to the test of deeds after the Iraqis handed over their document. He had announced that the document would be examined and sanitized by the UN agency Unmovic and then handed out to the Security Council. The council, including the U.S., voted unanimously to follow that procedure.

But, according to the Washington Post of Dec. 10, "a number of senior administration officials were said to be unhappy at Friday's decision to give the inspectors first crack at the document, as suggested by Unmovic chairman Hans Blix." On Saturday morning the U.S. ambassador to the UN, John D. Negroponte, called Colombian UN ambassador Alfonso Valdivieso "to ask that the document be shared with the council's five permanent members."

This puppet ambassador, who is the acting president of the Security Council, called together the members of the council on the orders of Secretary of State Colin Powell—who had just returned from Colombia, where he brought millions in aid to the repressive military there—and got all but the Syrians to agree. The Norwegians agreed under protest.

Having overturned the consensus by imperialist pressure, "On Sunday night, U.S. diplomats accompanied Valdivieso to Blix's office to inform him of the decision," continued the Post. U.S. officials seized the document and whisked it off to Washington to "assist" in copying and distributing it, but only to the five permanent members

Anti-war forces mobilize, gear up

By John Catalinotto

As a full-scale Pentagon military aggression against Iraq looms, heightened awareness is leading to protests across the United States.

New endorsers have joined community organizers in mobilizing for a national protest on Jan. 18 in Washington, D.C. The anti-war demonstration has been called by the International ANSWER coalition—Act Now to Stop War & End Racism—which organized the huge protests on Oct. 26.

The protesters from all over the U.S. will gather at 11 a.m. on the west side of the Capitol building for a brief opening rally. They will then march to the Washington Navy Yard to carry out a people's inspection and call for the elimination of U.S. weapons of mass destruction. Plans are also being formulated for a national gathering of youth and students in Washington that weekend.

By the second week of December there were already approximately 150 ANSWER organizing centers across the country. Quite a few are student-led.

Meanwhile, neighborhood, church, college and regional meetings and protests have been taking place as public opinion turns more sharply against the war.

A colorful protest greeted war architect Paul Wolfowitz in San Francisco on Dec. 6. Demonstrations took place throughout the country on Dec. 10, Human Rights Day.

An important initiative took place in a predominately African American and Caribbean community in the heart of Brooklyn when local residents formed the Bedford-Stuyvesant Coalition for Peace and held their first march and rally on Dec. 7. Anti-war marchers carried signs that



San Francisco protest against visit of warhawk Paul Wolfowitz

PHOTO: BERNIE FOX, IAC-SF

read "Money for reparations, not for war on Iraq" and "No war on Iraq, U.S. hands off Zimbabwe."

ANSWER co-Director Larry Holmes fired up the crowd at the rally in the First AME Zion Baptist Church. "It is communities here that will suffer if there is war. What's important is that people from the community are starting to move and to struggle to stop it."

"I was at an international meeting in Baghdad in September, and let me tell that people all over the world are looking to the United States and asking, 'Who will stop

the Bush government from making war?' There is no substitute for getting out in the street and calling your neighbors out to action, and that's what you are doing."

Other speakers included community activist Ulysses Kilgore III and Aisha al-Adawiya from Women of Islam. Veronica Nunn of Buddhists for Peace chaired the meeting, which opened with drummers and dancers from Africa's Ivory Coast.

Other upcoming activities in New York's Black community are a youth march in Harlem on Dec. 14 and a meeting at Rev. Herbert Daughtry's House of the Lord

Church in downtown Brooklyn on Dec. 15.

The prestigious Riverside Church, a progressive institution on the West Side of Harlem, was the site of a meeting of 400 people Dec. 8 to mobilize against the war on Iraq. This meeting, organized by religious figures, also gave strong support to the Jan. 18 mobilization in Washington.

Some 400 people gathered in Dag Hammarskjöld Plaza in front of the United Nations on Dec. 10 to call on Bush to use money to help the poor, not to wage war on Iraq. It was one of many protests called by United for Peace. More than 100 were arrested in civil disobedience actions at Dec. 10 protests across the country, including more than 80 at the UN demonstration.

Michigan anti-war forces show strength

More than 150 people from around Michigan gathered on Dec. 7 at Wayne State University in Detroit for a statewide anti-war organizing conference. Co-sponsored by the Michigan Emergency Committee Against War on Iraq and the Detroit chapter of ANSWER, the event drew participants from Detroit, Traverse City, Saginaw, Flint, Lansing, Grand Rapids, Adrian, Ann Arbor, Ypsilanti and other cities and suburbs.

Speakers included Abayomi Azikiwe of the Pan African News Service, Bishop Thomas Gumbleton of the Catholic Archdiocese of Detroit, and Baheejah Shakoor, a registered nurse and former reservist who refused orders to go to the first Gulf War.

Keynote speaker Brian Becker of ANSWER outlined the role of U.S. imperialism and its neocolonialist designs on Iraq and all the developing countries.

There were reports from around the state on anti-war efforts. Many had attended the

'regime change'

of the Council.

This defiant act of domination is a reflection of the anxiety in Washington over the course of events. "The Bush administration," wrote the *New York Times* on Dec. 9, "has alerted the CIA and national laboratories to be ready to go into overdrive, honing in on a few crucial Iraqi claims that the United States believes it can show to be false. But in private, administration officials concede that there is no single piece of dramatic intelligence that Iraq has continued to try to acquire nuclear, chemical and biological weapons."

A day earlier, the *Times* had written that "The hawks in the administration are nervous, some experts say." It quoted Michael McFaul, a professor of political science at Stanford University who has advised both the Bush and Clinton administrations on Russian policy: "They are nervous that [Bush] will not pull the trigger."

The hawks "thought they were in the driver's seat," added McFaul, but "now they are panicked." Why? Because, says the *Times* writer, "they agreed to drive Bush to the United Nations. Their fear is that Mr. Bush will balk at writing unilateral rules of the new international game."

The brazen attempt to force abductions on the head of the inspections team and the seizure of the Iraqi disclosure documents are all part of Washington's attempt to speed up the political frame-up of Iraq in accordance with the timing of the Pentagon's military preparations.

'You should make a crisis now'

A prolonged process of inspections is anathema to the "regime changers."

"If you think the result of the inspections process will be ambiguous, then the best time to strike is now," Kenneth Pollack, a former CIA expert on Iraq now at the Brookings Institution, was quoted as saying. (*Washington Post*, Dec. 7) "You should make a crisis now because you are not going to have any better cause for a crisis in six months. It is a fantasy to think the inspectors will come up with a smoking gun."

Meanwhile, the Pentagon has 60,000 soldiers, sailors, marines and air force, as well as about 200 warplanes, in the region around Iraq. There are 1,000 military planners in Qatar. Tons of tanks, armored vehicles, cannons and munitions are distributed around the region, in "advanced positioning" to be used by troops not yet deployed.

The Bush administration is working overtime to bribe and twist the arms of the Turkish ruling class to allow U.S. troops to set up staging areas for the vital northern front in the plan to take Baghdad. There is no other way for troops to come through the north. Furthermore, the Bush administration wants to be sure that its troops can pass quickly to seize the vast oil fields near Kirkuk in northern Iraq.

Turkey has a new government headed by the moderate Islamic party, Justice and Development. Its leader, Recep Tayyip Erdogan, has been invited to meet with Bush. Erdogan was invited by Deputy Secretary of Defense Paul Wolfowitz during his latest visit to Turkey as part of the prepara-

tions for an attack on Iraq. The Pentagon has plans to modernize Turkish airfields and ports to accommodate an invasionary force. Washington is promising Turkey \$5 billion and is fighting to get it into the European Union.

There is a debate in the ruling class right now about how long to allow the inspections process to proceed. The mainstream establishment has had the predominant influence in diplomacy since Bush decided to go to the United Nations—his war-like rhetoric notwithstanding. They convinced him to drop the line of "regime change" and substitute inspections and disarmament. This political current is inclined to let the process continue until U.S. imperialism can build a grand coalition for the conquest.

The most representative voice of this current, the *New York Times*, penned an editorial on Dec. 10 entitled "Iraq in the Dock." The *Times* declared that the process of setting the stage for war with Iraq will "emerge gradually" and brushes aside "those determined to avoid war at all cost" who may "demand more direct and irrefutable evidence than this kind of coercive inspection program is capable of producing in the face of willful Iraqi deception. But the rigorous evidentiary standards of an American courtroom do not apply here. A case for military action is likely to be made by highlighting any major discrepancies between Iraq's report and American and other findings."

Fully expecting to find these "major discrepancies," the *Times* advises that "before resorting to force, Washington and its allies must persuade other nations that Iraq's refusal to cooperate in its own disarmament leaves no acceptable alternative."

The more impetuous right-wing elements who set the stage for the war and provided the driving force are impatient to dispense with full-scale diplomacy. While both sides have different strategies, they are equally bloodthirsty for war and in an unholy bloc with the common objective of recolonizing Iraq, taking over the oil fields and pursuing total domination over the Middle East.

There is no telling which current will prevail—or whether they will merge for the war. Both the right wing and so-called "moderate" imperialists are enemies of the oppressed people and the working class everywhere.

The anti-war movement must take advantage of the present situation to expose the fraudulent maneuvers of the Bush administration, which is now saying that the last thing it wants is combat—while it feverishly prepares for war. The only way to stop the war is through mass protest and militant struggle of the broadest possible character, bringing in all layers of society who are affected by the Pentagon's war drive, from the community to the factory, from the campus to the office.

for Jan. 18

Oct. 26 national march on Washington and organized buses from Michigan.

Becker urged everyone to go to Washington on Jan. 18: "All of us need to think very strategically about how to combat racism, and how to expand the movement to include 'the war at home,' to fight all the devastating cutbacks and threats on civil rights. There is no better way to honor the real legacy of Dr. King than to continue to build a strong anti-war and anti-racist movement."

Two days earlier, about 300 people had attended a "This Means War" symposium sponsored by the student government at rural Monroe Community College, about an hour's drive south of Detroit. There were three panelists for and three against the war. David Sole from Detroit ANSWER denounced U.S. foreign policy as fueled by the drive for profits and global dominance. This drew the ire of pro-war panelist Raymond Tanter, a former member of the National Security Council and the Council on Foreign Relations.

"I want a piece of him!" Tanter yelled at Sole. "Are you going to send the death squads out for me?" Sole shouted back. "He's a CIA operative," he explained to the audience. About half the audience was anti-war and punctuated Sole's anti-imperialist perspective with applause.

University of Massachusetts

Holmes also spoke at a University of Massachusetts forum on Dec. 5 sponsored by Western Massachusetts IAC/ANSWER. Entitled "How the people's movement can stop a new war on Iraq and end racism and repression at home," it was endorsed by more than a dozen community, labor, lesbian/gay/bisexual/trans, student and women's organizations.



Anti-war march through Brooklyn's Bedford-Stuyvesant community.



WW PHOTOS: TOP, PAT CHIN



Larry Holmes speaks at U of Mass. Dec. 5

Peace groups picket U.S. Mission to United Nations on Human Rights Day.

WW PHOTO: JOHN CATALINOTTO



Organized labor representatives at the forum refuted the equal sign that the Bush administration wants to place between unions and "terrorism."

"Bush is opposing labor unions by try-

ing to threaten workers not to strike or risk their jobs. The real axis of evil is Bush, Donald Rumsfeld and John Ashcroft," said Stevan Kirschbaum of Steel Workers Local 8751.

Marta Rodriguez and friends sang revolutionary songs rich with histories of working class and oppressed people's struggles. *Kris Hamel and Bryan Pfeiffer contributed to this article.* □

Unions vs. Coca-Cola in Colombia

Continued from page 1

Brussels on Oct. 10. The tribunals were called to bring international attention to the plight of the Coca-Cola workers and all Colombians targeted for repression by the Colombian government, the paramilitaries and the transnational corporations.

Along with holding the tribunals, Sinaltrainal, the United Steel Workers and the International Labor Fund have filed a lawsuit in U.S. courts accusing Coca-Cola of using paramilitaries to intimidate and assassinate union organizers.

The conveners of the tribunal included the United Center of Colombian Workers (CUT), the General Democratic Workers Confederation (CGTD), the Campaign Against Impunity-Colombia Clamors for Justice, Sinaltrainal, the Corporation for Education and the Development and Popular Studies-National Union Institute (Ced-Ins).

The opening remarks indicted not only Coca-Cola but the Colombian state for terrorism against workers. The speaker outlined how in the past 12 years eight Coca-Cola workers have been killed, 48 have been displaced and several exiled.

In closing he said, "We don't ask for silence, instead we know that like our beloved Ché, these heroes live more than ever here in this tribunal."

Aprecio Atiz, president of the CGTD, remarked that "capitalist globalization and neoliberalism grows like a stench in the world." He declared that the rulers in Colombia today are assassins. In 2001, 240 unionists were assassinated worldwide. Two hundred of them were in Colombia.

In 2002, more than 150, especially members of the CUT, have been assassinated in Colombia.

"It is a massacre of union activists," he said. "This is a national crisis." He added that not only unionists but also campesinos and other social forces are being killed.

The standing-room-only crowd of about 500 people responded to each speaker with chants such as "Organization, unity and struggle" and "The road of justice is the road to victory."

Indigenous leader Volemin Dupre said, "We are also struggling against the transnationals for our survival, against genocide." He thanked the unionists for their support.

A Colombian senator spoke as a representative for the seven Colombian members of Congress who have signed a letter calling for the cessation of violence against unionists. He spoke strongly against the labor "reform" law that Colombian President Alvaro Uribe Vélez is trying to impose. This law would dismiss 45,000 federal workers, strip away freedoms and rights such as collective bargaining and striking, impose more taxes on workers, and freeze wages, social spending and benefits.

"We will vote against this law," the senator vowed. "And we invite all Colombians to boycott the ensuing referendum to be held in March 2003."

International delegates who addressed the tribunal said what impressed them



Boston unionists on solidarity delegation.

most was that although repression is severe in Colombia, the people continue to find new space and ways to struggle. The heroism is palpable.

There were eight international delegations. Jana Silverman from the Committee for Social Justice, which brought six people from the United States, delivered greetings from lawyers trying the case against Coca-Cola in the United States.

A Mexican delegate announced that 2003 had been declared the year in solidarity with Colombian labor unionists.

A representative from the Basque region in Spain called for more international solidarity actions. Delegates from Germany, Italy and England also addressed the crowd, as did a representative from the IAC delegation.

Sinaltrainal President Javier Correa explained that Dec. 5 had been chosen for the event because six years ago on that date Isidro Segundo Gil Gil was assassinated at his work post inside the Coca-Cola plant in Carepa del Uraba, Antioquia. Gil was a union leader in the northwestern banana region.

Bloody repression of Coca-Cola workers

Correa went over Coca-Cola's bloody history in Guatemala and India, and more recently in Venezuela. He also cited the company's discriminatory practices in Atlanta, Ga.

He recounted how the Sinaltrainal union, as a result of systematic repression, has been reduced from 5,400 to 2,300 members. Unionists' family members have been killed. Attempts have been made to kidnap the children. Paramilitary forces have left graffiti in the plants threatening unionists.

"Coca-Cola has done nothing to curb this repression. This is the situation for all trade unionists in Colombia," he said.

He explained that Coca-Cola, like other transnationals, has done much damage and contributed to the pauperization of the Colombian people by taking money out of the country over the last 100 years.

The case against Coca-Cola was then presented. Survivors of its repression spoke.

One union leader was arrested along with two others in a Coca-Cola plant and accused of terrorism. The three were held for six months; no charges were ever filed



Colombian police try to surround Sinaltrainal members.

WW PHOTO: SARA FLOWNDERS

against them. The wife of one of the three testified that after her husband's arrest, her family was stripped of all benefits, such as health care. Her daughter was harassed at school. She was allowed to see her husband only once a week; her children could see their father once a month.

"The overriding fear was that they would kill or disappear him," she said.

Another survivor told of being tortured eight years ago by paramilitaries. He said he is still unable to sleep through the night.

One of the final speakers said, "The goal of the Uribe Vélez government is to open up the country to the imperialists, wipe away trade unions so that it will be easy for them to enact the Free Trade Areas of the Americas."

The tribunal closed with the adoption of a plan of action and a political declaration.

Among the demands of Coca-Cola were that July 22 be declared a day against transnationals and violence, that the corporation publicize its crimes on its soft drink bottles, pay reparations for family victims, clean up the environment and demilitarize the work place.

The International Conference on Transnational Corporations and Human Rights was held over the next two days. There were panels on globalization, neoliberalism, public services, health and education, Indigenous rights, finance, mineral and energy, human-rights violations and, finally resistance and plans of action.

One of the key speakers was Jose Fernando Ramírez from the Commission for Peace and Human Rights of the Trade Union of Workers (USO).

IAC Co-Director Teresa Gutierrez told the conference, "It is exactly for the benefit of corporations such as Coca-Cola that the U.S. aggressively intervenes in Colombia's internal affairs with Plan Colombia, the military wing of the FTAA."

She commended the labor unionists for their courage, for being on the front lines of the struggle. She said that they gave the delegates strength and inspiration to go back to the United States to fight against Pentagon intervention in Colombia.

Sinaltrainal hosted an important meeting for the IAC delegation at its union headquarters. The hours-long meeting inspired all those attending.

It began with a presentation from a student group called Focus, based at the National University in Bogotá. The three representatives, full of energy and optimism, warmly greeted the delegates.

One of the students recounted how after the murder of Jaime Alfor Acosta Campos, a student at the University of Santander, students stepped up their protests. The students at the National University set up an encampment in the university to protect themselves against riot police and university officials. The officials responded by closing down the university on Nov. 28. After heavy protests from the students, the university reopened on Dec. 5. The students remain steadfast against privatization

plans and will be carrying out more actions on Dec. 10.

Another student impressed upon the delegation that all the money used to repress the movement in Colombia came from the United States. He said that Colombians do not want U.S. intervention and that it is a crime that arms are being bought while people are dying of hunger.

The three pledged to never stop fighting for justice, no matter what it takes.

'We are not alone'

Javier Correa summarized the meaning of the tribunals: "At first these tribunals were just a dream. What they have proved is the resistance of the national unions, the unconditional support from social groups in Colombia and international solidarity. Coca-Cola and the government had us down for dead. But we have shown that we are not alone."

This is what really worries them, Correa continued. International support especially worries them because the crimes they get away with now will become international scandals in the future.

Correa said that the tribunal helped increase consciousness because it challenged the Colombian state, demonstrating that the movement does not accept the level of terror waged with impunity against the people.

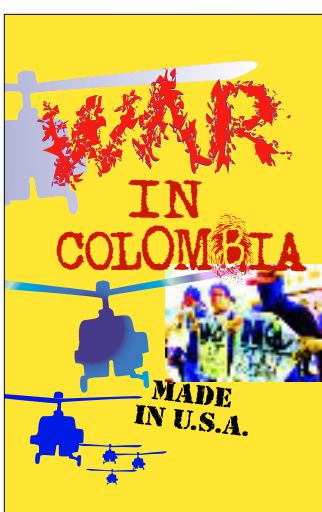
He said the most difficult struggles against the government and Coca-Cola lie ahead. "That is why we are so grateful for compañeros like you. Your solidarity makes our struggle possible." He added that next they would like to confront Nestlé—like Coca-Cola, a big enemy of the workers.

Another Sinaltrainal leader told the delegates: "We must find a different road for Colombia, because capitalism and neoliberalism are no good for Colombia or the world. Our struggle against capitalism is for the development of communities where the people decide their own futures, where the power is with the people."

He made it explicit: "For every glass of Coca-Cola that we buy, we are buying a bullet to assassinate a Colombian. We do not believe in consultation with the transnational corporations. Imperialism doesn't just want a little piece of Colombia, it wants the whole country. And it doesn't just want Colombia, it wants all of Latin America. It wants us all to kneel and continue to be exploited."

He said he is grateful to Coca-Cola in one way: It brought the delegation to Colombia. He concluded, "You have strengthened our work and helped us to continue our struggle."

Half the delegates stayed in Bogotá for several more days to meet with more activists from different sectors of the social movement. The other half returned to the United States. They vowed to step up the struggle for the people of Colombia. The IAC in New York City will hold a full report on Dec. 17 at 6:30 p.m. at 39 W.14 Street, Suite 206. For more information, call (212) 633-6646.



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Big Oil is behind it

Class struggle deepens in Venezuela

By Gloria La Riva

In July 2001, marching with thousands of supporters of Venezuelan president Hugo Chávez through the streets of Caracas, it was clear to this writer that the workers and poor ardently backed his Bolivarian revolution.

It is called Bolivarian after the great fighter, Simon Bolivar, who rallied Latin America against Spanish colonialism. It is called a revolution because the struggle is against a wealthy class that has bled the country dry and left 80 percent of the population in poverty.

Today the political struggle in Venezuela has reached a critical stage, with counter-revolutionary forces targeting the country's oil industry in an attempt to overthrow the government of Hugo Chávez.

Hour by hour the struggle is more acute and the class lines sharply drawn. Workers and the poorest of the population have been filling the streets to reject a "strike" called on Dec. 2 by oil executives, the Venezuelan business group Fedecameras, and reactionary leaders of the Venezuelan Workers Federation (CTV). Carlos Ortega, CTV secretary general, is betraying the interests of the working class by openly collaborating with corporate executives trying to overthrow Chávez.

Thousands of "Chavistas" backing the Venezuelan president surrounded television, newspaper and radio stations that have been egging on the oil stoppage. The "strike" is not a mass workers' action but more an act of sabotage against the coun-

try's most important source of revenue.

On Dec. 10, Ali Rodriguez, head of the state oil firm PDVSA and a Chávez supporter, warned that the country faced a \$6-billion charge if oil exports are delayed in December. Chávez has had to threaten a wider use of the military to take over the beleaguered oil operations.

Since the first day of the Chávez administration, the U.S. government and ruling class have brought external pressure to bear on Venezuela, similar to the destabilization campaign they led after 1970 against the Chilean government of Salvador Allende, who was also popularly elected.

Allende, a socialist, had nationalized the copper industry in Chile, which was then controlled by U.S. copper giants Anaconda and Phelps Dodge, as well as the communications conglomerate ITT, among others. This act unleashed the fury of the U.S. government, headed at that time by Richard Nixon. He and Secretary of State Henry Kissinger conspired to prevent a new revolutionary process from succeeding in Latin America.

With an economic embargo imposed on Chile by the United States, and large sections of the middle class mobilized against the progressive reforms, the CIA prepared for a coup. On the fateful day of Sept. 11, 1973, the Chilean military, headed by Gen. Augusto Pinochet, launched a fascist coup that resulted in the murder of over 20,000 young students, workers and peasants. A reign of terror was ushered in whose effects are still felt in Chile.

'Strike' orchestrated in Washington?

A similar scenario is now being attempted against Venezuela. The behind-the-scenes U.S. role in the April 11 attempted overthrow of Chávez was evident in the days after his return to office.

The current "strike" is the latest offensive undoubtedly orchestrated in Washington.

Venezuela is currently the fourth-largest supplier of oil to the U.S. The reactionary U.S. government, acting for big oil, seeks control of all the world's oil and gas sources. It sees independent economic cooperation among Latin American countries as a threat. In particular, Venezuela's economic agreements with revolutionary Cuba, including oil, have raised Washington's ire.

While the Bush administration wants to see the Chávez government ousted, it is also aware that the latest right-wing actions may set off a chain of events it could lose control of.

Losing command of the very turmoil it has unleashed may be the reason certain voices in the ruling class are calling for a "diplomatic" or electoral solution, similar to the way the Nicaraguan Sandinista government was ousted through imperialist intervention in the 1991 elections.

The U.S. is mindful that the April 11 fascist coup against Chávez was frustrated by the heroic intervention of tens of thousands of people, who restored him to office. Their spontaneous mobilization to return Chávez to the presidency was unprece-

dedent and gave the masses an understanding of their own power.

However, the U.S. tactics may change at a moment's notice. If the right wing were defeated and revolutionary power further consolidated, there is a very real danger of U.S. military intervention. Already the U.S. is pumping billions in military aid into neighboring Colombia to try to smash the guerrilla struggle there.

So far, Hugo Chávez has strongly rejected the counter-revolution's demand for an early referendum in February on his presidency. At first the right-wing opposition demanded a non-binding February referendum on his rule, but it has escalated its demand to a binding vote.

Since his election by an overwhelming majority, the Chávez government has instituted many progressive economic and social measures, including land reform, improved health, housing, education and a new pro-worker constitution. His administration has struggled to empower the people through the setting up of defense groups called Bolivarian social circles. A new labor formation, the Fuerza Bolivariana de Trabajadores, has arisen.

Latin America is witnessing a continent-wide revival of popular struggles against economic destitution brought on by neoliberal policies and repression dictated by imperialism. From Brazil to Ecuador to Argentina, action is accompanying a rising consciousness. The Bolivarian revolutionary struggle in Venezuela is part of that great wave of change. □

Mass rally, international conference

Cuba a hotbed of anti-imperialism

By Alicia Jrapko
Havana, Cuba

Two important events in November showed the high morale of the Cuban people and their country's leading role in the struggle against imperialist globalization.

The first was a mass mobilization on Nov. 18 against the Cuban Adjustment Act, passed by the U.S. Congress in 1966. It encourages Cubans to risk their lives on the open sea by offering them almost automatic residency if they reach the United States.

More than 150,000 people gathered here in Havana to protest this law, which promotes perilous and illegal emigration.

This law's political nature becomes obvious when it is compared to the treatment people from Haiti face. People fleeing Haiti, the poorest country in the Western Hemisphere, often do not even receive a hearing if they get to the United States. They are more likely to be locked up at the Krome Detention Center in Florida and flown back to Haiti in shackles.

The Cuban Adjustment Act has nothing to do with human rights and everything to do with attempts to destabilize the Cuban Revolution. At the protest here a fourth-grade "pioneer" from Santiago de Cuba loudly told the crowd, "There is no greater terrorism than to wish that Cuban children will die in the waves of the sea."

Plane hijacked to U.S.

The timing of this demonstration coincided with yet another act of hostility against Cuba. Once again, in violation of international laws and bilateral agreements with Cuba, a hijacked plane was allowed to land in the United States.

If the plane had come from any other country, this would have been considered an act of terrorism. It likely would have been turned around or even shot down.

The irony of this new act of aggression is that one of the passengers on the stolen aircraft had twice applied for a visa at the U.S. Interests Section in Havana. Washington denied his application both times. But when he hijacked a plane and flew illegally to the States, risking his life and the lives of others in the plane, including children, he was received with open arms.

The Cuban government requested that the United States immediately return the plane and deport the eight passengers. Instead, Washington granted legal residency to all the Cubans.

To further aggravate the situation, on Dec. 5 Circuit Court Judge Allen Postman



WW PHOTO: BILL HACKWELL

Cuban children are proud of their country and its heroes imprisoned by U.S. imperialism.

ordered the seizure and sale of the aircraft to help pay off a \$27.1 million settlement awarded to the ex-wife of a Cuban accused of being a double agent.

Conference against FTAA

While this latest shameful episode perpetrated by the U.S. government against Cuba was unfolding, more than 1,000 people from 41 Latin American, North Amer-

ican and European countries arrived in Havana to participate in the Second Hemispheric Meeting of Struggle Against the Free Trade Area of the Americas.

This event showed growing opposition to neoliberal economic policies implemented in Latin America almost three decades ago that have created nothing but misery and devastation for the great ma-

Continued on page 10

UAL crash— was it sabotage?

The Bush administration continues to accelerate its brutal attack against the labor movement. Driven by its mounting campaign to trigger a war against the Iraqi people, this clique of warmongers has added the unions at United Airlines to its growing hit list.

It all began following a threat from the corporation that unless the unions gave the company over \$5.4 billion in wages and other concessions, UAL would be forced to enter Chapter 11 bankruptcy. It was a cruel hoax, a conspiracy to get concessions from the unions. And it got them.

All the while, the Bush administration had other ideas. Their plan was to deny a \$1.8-billion loan guarantee and force UAL into bankruptcy to weaken the three major unions—the pilots, the machinists and the flight attendants.

How is it possible that United Airlines Corp., the second-largest airline in the world, is now in Chapter 11 bankruptcy? It was only three years ago that the company was rolling in money. Fortune magazine named UAL one of the 10 best companies to invest in. UAL is a behemoth with airline routes that cover the globe. It has financial arrangements with 14 international airlines and suppliers in a consortium called the Star Alliance.

It was mismanagement, CEO greed, brutal competition and overproduction that overtook this giant airline. During the boom years, management bought too many planes, expanded beyond market capacity, and created a capitalist crisis of overproduction. Now hundreds of planes are parked in the desert while thousands of workers lose their jobs.

UAL had to be bailed out. Congress had created the Airline Transportation Stabilization Board, with a \$10-billion appropriation, to assist airlines following 9/11. It is run by two Bush appointees—one from the Department of Transportation, the other

from the Treasury—along with a governor from the powerful bankers' bank, the Federal Reserve.

They did the hatchet job. They denied the loan and forced UAL into Chapter 11 bankruptcy. The Bush strategy has been clear. Tearing up labor contracts, laying off workers and driving down wages are the order of the day. The bankruptcy court, with its secrecy and its control by Wall Street bankers and other creditors, is the best way to achieve these objectives.

These plans expand far beyond UAL. The effect is industry-wide. American Airlines, Continental, Delta and Northwestern are all calling for their unions and workers to accept concessions to compete with UAL in bankruptcy.

But the workers should not have to pay for CEO greed and UAL mismanagement. When the company hired CEO Glenn Tilton, who cried that he needed deep concessions from the unions, he had just signed a contract giving him a signing bonus of \$3 million, a salary of nearly \$1 million, bonuses equal to twice his salary for "services," and a golden parachute of millions when he retires.

This is unacceptable. It is up to the 80,000 workers at United Airlines to fight for their jobs and take back what is rightfully theirs. They create the value of the company, but Wall Street, the banks, investors and CEOs steal the profits generated by their labor. In bankruptcy court, UAL workers and their unions can fight for their jobs, contracts and wages, but also can assert their ownership rights—they actually own 55 percent of the company. This unity of the workers would be felt throughout the entire airline industry and shake up Wall Street. The airlines do not belong to the banks and corporate CEOs. The real owners are the workers who built them. □

Trent Lott & Jim Crow

Mississippi Republican Sen. Trent Lott has proffered a belated apology for his "poor choice of words" at the birthday party of Sen. Strom Thurmond. These amends focus on semantics. The truth is, he saluted Jim Crow in his toast to the 100-year-old politician from South Carolina.

Lott had waxed eloquent about Thurmond's 1948 run for the Oval Office. "I want to say this about my state: When Strom Thurmond ran for president, we voted for him. We're proud of it. And if the rest of the country had followed our lead, we wouldn't have had all these problems over all these years, either."

Thurmond ran on a platform with one plank: racist segregation. He was the States Rights Democratic candidate. "States' rights" has been the cry of slave masters and segregationists since the Civil War.

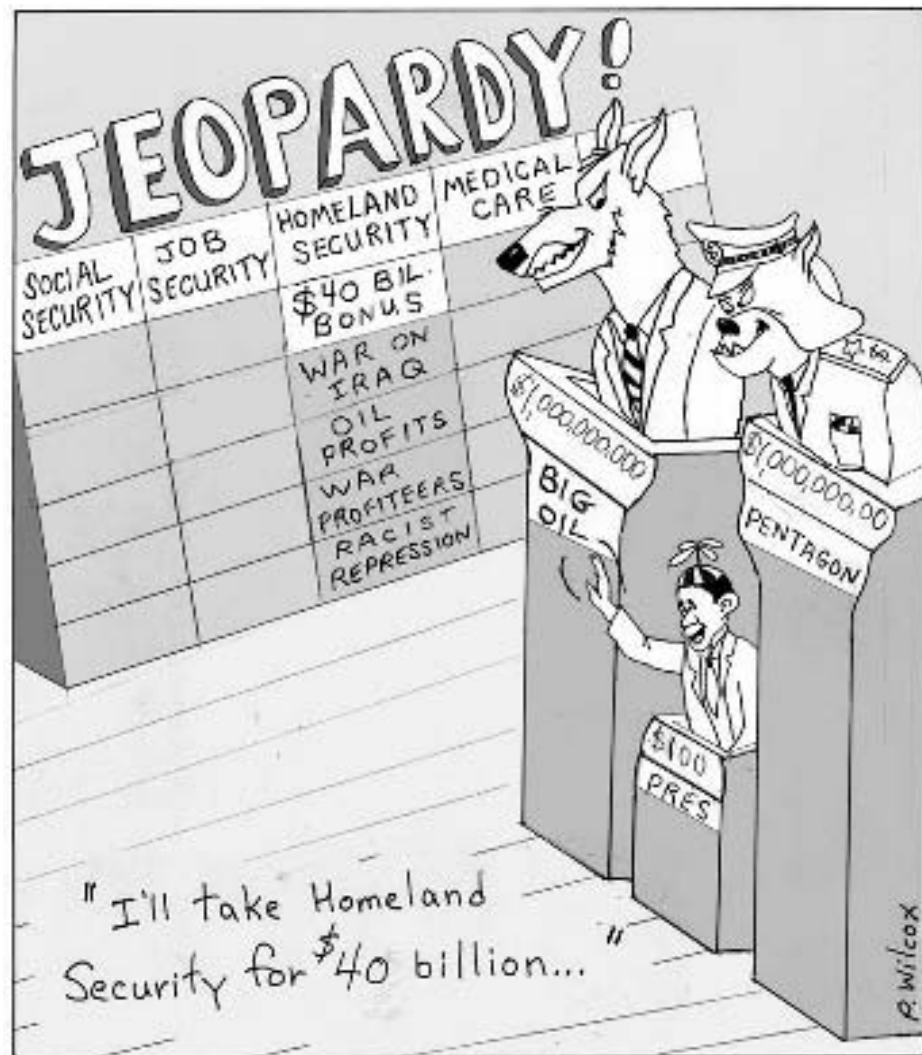
Lott knows that. During the 1990s he was up to his hips in the Council of Conservative Citizens—the heir to the Klan-like White Citizens Council. In fact, he told their members they stood "for the right principles and the right philosophy."

So the real question is, what did Lott

mean that "we" wouldn't have all these problems if Thurmond had been elected commander in chief?

That water fountains and public toilets should still carry apartheid labels? That without the mighty Civil Rights movement the Republicans wouldn't have to dirty their hands burying affirmative action and re-segregating the educational system? That without the Voting Rights Act it wouldn't have been necessary to invalidate Black Florida voters to steal the election for Dubya?

Hopeful Democrat Al Gore expressed consternation over Lott's remarks. But his party was originally Strom Thurmond's home, and has been complicit in the erosion of civil rights and affirmative action won through the mass struggle. And Gore was part of Clinton's team when they abolished the pittance subsistence of welfare, plunging millions of women and children deeper into poverty. Tom Daschle, Democratic leader in the Senate, at first "accepted" Lott's apology, trying to belittle the whole incident. That it hasn't gone away is testament to the vitality of the movement that exists outside these capitalist parties. □



Cuba hotbed of anti-imperialism

Continued from page 9

majority of people.

Making the meeting especially important is the failure of the North America Free Trade Agreement, which was the predecessor of FTAA. After eight years of implementation, this agreement among Mexico, the United States and Canada has left 60 million Mexicans in conditions of extreme poverty.

Leonel González, secretary of international relations of the Confederation of Cuban Workers, opened the meeting. Cuban President Fidel Castro and Political Bureau members Carlos Lage, Ricardo Alarcón, Pedro Ross and Felipe Perez Roque also participated.

Oswaldo Martínez, director of the Center of Investigations of the World Economy, asked in his opening remarks: "How could it be hidden that under neoliberal policies, Latin America has achieved a sad worldwide championship as the region of greatest inequality and injustice in the distribution of wealth?"

"How could it be hidden that in Argentina, with its great capacity for food production, we see, since the application of neoliberalism, children undernourished and dying in the exact conditions of those in the Nazi concentration camps?"

The conference took on a special air because of recent electoral developments that brought left-leaning Luis Inacio "Lula" da Silva and Lucio Gutierrez to the presidencies in Brazil and Ecuador, respectively.

Evo Morales, the popular Indigenous leader of Bolivian coca-growing peasants known as "cocaleros," was a keynote speaker on the first evening. He had come close to winning the presidency but lost in a runoff due to pressures from the U.S. government, whose ambassador in La Paz publicly threatened to stop U.S. aid to Bolivia if Morales won.

"It is time that the Latin American peoples freed themselves from injustice and inequality and that they demand that the natural resources return to the hands of the Latin Americans," he said.

In a major address, Cuban National Assembly President Ricardo Alarcón spoke about the importance of the struggle to free the Cuban Five, who are incarcerated in U.S. prisons. The wives and mothers of the five Cubans were present during his

talk. He stated his certainty that "this cause will continue having the solidarity, the understanding, and the support of those who believe in freedom and aspire to the justice of our peoples."

He added, "The united struggle of our peoples can achieve independence and true democracy, and we will be capable of conquering all the justices." He ended with a quote from Lula da Silva: "The powerful can destroy the roses but they will never stop the spring."

During an emotional speech that lasted more than three hours, President Fidel Castro told the fervent audience that the struggle against the FTAA started first when thousands of North Americans fought the battle of Seattle against the World Trade Organization, the parent of FTAA. He reminded everyone that U.S. President George W. Bush's father initiated the FTAA in 1991 in a meeting in Miami with Latin American presidents behind the people's backs. Then, on May 1, 2001, the Cuban president launched the idea of rejecting the annexation of the region and calling for plebiscites to see if the people agree with the implementation of the FTAA.

President Castro then highlighted the courage of the people of Brazil, who called a plebiscite, and the resistance of the people of Venezuela. He called on all participants to unite in order to defeat this U.S. project of annexation and recolonization.

After four days of discussion, a final declaration of the Second Hemispheric Meeting of Struggle Against the FTAA made a call to all peoples of the Americas: "The lives of our peoples and the independence of our nations are at stake: to fight against the FTAA is to fight against annexation and misery." The participants also unanimously called for the immediate release of the five Cuban political prisoners imprisoned in the United States.

This event foreshadowed significant battles to come in the struggle for a better world and against imperialism, with its so-called war on terrorism. The participants prepared to return to their countries with much enthusiasm, remembering the prophetic words of one of the greatest Cuban heroes, José Martí: "The time has come for Spanish America to declare its second independence." □

White House rejects 1.3 million petitions

So. Koreans take protest over girls' deaths to D.C.

By Sharon Ayling
Washington, D.C.

Police broke up a peaceful demonstration in front of the White House on Dec. 7. People were protesting the deaths of two Korean schoolgirls run over by a U.S. armored vehicle earlier this year.

The protesters were attempting to deliver petitions signed by 1.3 million Koreans. A delegation from South Korea had brought the petitions halfway around the world.

The petitions demand that President George W. Bush publicly apologize for the girls' deaths, turn over jurisdiction in the case to Korean courts, and revise the Status of Forces Agreement that governs U.S. military forces in South Korea. SOFA gives the U.S. military legal jurisdiction when U.S. soldiers commit crimes against Koreans.

As protesters stood before the White House gate carrying boxes of petitions and trying to negotiate with White House security forces, they were encircled by dozens of police on foot, bicycles and motorcycles. Yelling that the demonstrators were taking up too much sidewalk, the police started shoving the protesters away from the gate, first with their hands and then with clubs.

When the group firmly asserted its right to deliver the petitions, the police roughly pushed several people to the ground.

Several police officers surrounded Sukjong Hong, a 24-year-old New York City schoolteacher. They handcuffed and arrested her, and charged her with three felony counts of assaulting a police officer. The charges were later reduced to misdemeanors.

The White House had refused to take the petitions the day before too. The earlier



WW PHOTO: SHARON AYLING

Delegation in front of White House. Fan-shaped sign was written in blood.

denial prompted the Rev. Han Sang Ryul, the delegation's leader, to cut his hand and write "national people's sovereignty" on a banner with his own blood to show the Korean people's determination for justice. Then, in record cold weather, the delegation held an all-night vigil outside the White House.

At the demonstration on Dec. 7, Han read an "Open Letter to the American People" that reads in part:

"We ask, 'Where is America going these days? What is its government doing?'"

Currently armed with expansionist mil-

itarism and neoliberal economic policy, the United States is exploiting people and destroying the world. We cannot help but categorize the Bush government as 'government of bombing, for bombing and by bombing.' ...

"There is one thing the U.S. government and people must realize: there are volatile and strong anti-U.S. sentiments looming in South Korea right now. The U.S. government has added fuel to this fire by lying to the Korean people, by acquitting the two soldiers responsible for the girls' deaths and by the insincere and indirect apology by President Bush to the Korean people. We Koreans are deeply offended and we are mobilizing now to claim our national sovereignty and dignity."

Members of the delegation, which represented the Pan-Korean Committee for the Two Girls Killed by U.S. Armored Vehicle, vowed they would collect millions more signatures and continue to struggle until they win justice for Shin Hyo-Son and Shim Mi-Sun.

The protesters then marched through Washington streets chanting, "U.S. troops out of Korea," to the beat of Korean drums.

Solidarity for the delegation was organized by the Congress for Korean Reunification, Nodutdol for Korean Community Development, the Korea Truth Commission, and the International Action Center. □

So. Korean delegation in L.A.

Not even a sudden change of venue could deter the cry for justice of a delegation from South Korea. The group had come to the U.S. to protest the killing of two schoolgirls by a U.S. military tank last June and the subsequent acquittal of the soldiers involved in a U.S. military court. When the meeting hall for a Dec. 9 solidarity forum was unexpectedly cancelled by the administration of Los Angeles's Loyola Law School, the organizers of the event—One Korea LA Forum and One Korea Congress of Southern California, among others—scrambled for a new venue. A candlelight vigil was held in a parking lot across the street from the law school and was covered by numerous Korean and Los Angeles media outlets. This was followed by an unexpected march west of the school to a Korean restaurant, where the delegation made its presentation before a crowd of 200 people.

—Adrian Garcia

Is U.S. preparing for 'regime change' in Haiti?

By G. Dunkel

Tensions are still high in Haiti after protests and strife in early December called by the opposition Convergence movement.

In many cities, particularly Gonaïves, clashes went on for days. People were killed and houses burned on both sides. The police seem to have generally sided with the Lavalas movement of President Jean-Bertrand Aristide.

The Convergence is a conglomeration of supporters of the Duvalier family and their paramilitaries, the Tonton Macoutes, former Army officers, landlords and Haiti's bourgeoisie. It had to pull back when its supporters stayed away from the demonstrations after many of them turned violent.

A widespread rumor in the Haitian press is that the Convergence is financed by the International Republican Institute and some right-wing organizations. The Associated Press and the Miami Herald have confirmed that the U.S. is giving 20,000 M-16 rifles to the Dominican Republic, which shares the island of Hispaniola with Haiti. It is also sending troops to the DR on a "humanitarian" training mission early in 2003.

The leader of the National Popular Party (PPN), Benjamin Dupuy, called on the people to stay away from the demonstrations called by the Macoute-bourgeois coalition. The PPN leader denounced a plot to create chaos in the country, hatched by opposition politicians and former soldiers, which would provide an opening for the U.S., operating with the support of the Dominican army, to intervene and perform a quick "regime change" in Haiti. □

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WW PHOTO: PAT CHIN

La niña Milivy de cinco años muere lejos de su hogar

Por Berta Joubert-Ceci
Filadelfia

Después de batallar contra el cáncer la mayor parte de su corta vida, la niña de cinco años, Milivy Adams Calderón murió en el Hospital de Niños de Filadelfia el 17 de noviembre. Ella estaba lejos de su hogar en Vieques, Puerto Rico, donde los jóvenes y viejos llorando a la pequeña quien se convertiría en un símbolo de víctimas de la agresión militar de los Estados Unidos.

Durante sus primeros años de vida, Milivy pasó por dos trasplantes de médula y intensos tratamientos de quimioterapia. En su última semana, los doctores concluyeron que su pequeño cuerpo no podría soportar más tratamientos.

Cuando ella dejó a Vieques para recibir tratamiento médico en Filadelfia, los activistas establecieron un campamento al frente de la entrada a la base García, lugar de los ejercicios militares en Vieques. Las actividades de este campamento es en honor a los niños; la gente colectó fondos para enviar a la familia de Milivy para los gastos médicos.

En un mensaje del Comité de Rescate y

Desarrollo de Vieques, el vocero Ismael Guadalupe dice: "Milivy se convirtió en un símbolo de la lucha de Vieques. Hemos visto esto demostrado durante estos días de sufrimiento cuando la gente ha energéticamente expresado su rechazo a la Marina de los Estados Unidos en Vieques.

La gente de Vieques está convencida de que la contaminación ambiental creada por la Marina estadounidense es responsable por los altos incidentes de cáncer y la alta tasa de muerte. Ambas cosas han sido marcadas en este momento de dolor y pérdida causada por la muerte de Milivy. Ella es la niña símbolo de Vieques.

"Milivy, como muchos otros han muerto de cáncer en Vieques, nunca visitaron la zona de práctica. Nunca tocaron la tierra en el lado este de Vieques. Nunca trabajaron con metales pesados que son ahora abundante en el área.

"La muerte de Milivy da un mensaje claro, y es que debemos detener las muertes causadas por esta contaminación. La muerte de Milivy nos lleva a reflexionar sobre nuestro propio futuro. No debemos permitir que la Marina deje a Vieques sin primero limpiar la tierra que ha contaminado.

El Pentágono insiste que escuelas entregue nombre de estudiantes

Por Matthew L. Swartz
Buffalo, N.Y.

Las fuerzas armadas de los Estados Unidos han llevado más allá sus tácticas de reclutamiento recientemente.

Con la aceptación de la nueva ley de educación—"Ni un niño olvidado"—la administración de Bush está amenazando revocar los fondos federales de las escuelas si están no entregan la demografía de los estudiantes al Pentágono. Esta información incluye, dirección y número telefónico de los estudiantes, generalmente una información privilegiada.

Los oficiales de los Estados Unidos se quejan de que un 15% de las escuelas son un "problema". En otras palabras, los administradores de las escuelas no quieren entregar tal información al ejército, aún cuando esto significa el riesgo de perder los fondos federales que se necesitan tan desesperadamente.

Los administradores de las escuelas superiores están proveyendo estos nombres a las fuerzas armadas y los reclutantes militares ponen sus puestos de reclutamiento cerca de estas escuelas.

Los derechos de los estudiantes están siendo arrollados bajo la excusa de ofrecer a estos jóvenes una oportunidad de "viajar por el mundo" y "dinero para el colegio". Lo que el ejército no les dice a estos estudiantes es que ellos recibirán bajos salarios por el privilegio de ir al otro lado del mundo y matar niños de su misma edad. Mientras tanto Wall Street se tomará los beneficios.

El Secretario de la Defensa, Donald Rumsfeld y el Secretario de la Educación, Rod Paige, enviaron una carta el mes pasado diciendo que ellos están "presentando oportunidades militares a nuestros jóvenes para que ellos las consideren." De

hecho, estos soldados pueden ser comandados como las tropas que estuvieron en Afganistán, para violar las leyes internacionales y tratados y exponerse así mismos a juicios por crímenes de guerra.

El Ejército les dice a los jóvenes que ellos irán allá a llevar la "democracia" y "deshacerse de armas de destrucción masiva de los países que ellos invaden. Democracia, esto viniendo de una administración que se robó las últimas elecciones ignorando a los votantes de raza Negra. Esto de una potencia imperialista que tiene el más grande arsenal de armas de destrucción masiva en el planeta.

Recientemente un helicóptero, Blackhawk, hizo una aparición durante una celebración en la Escuela Superior John F. Kennedy en Plainview, Long Island en Nueva York.

Un estudiante de último año, Ben Mayer, dijo a Mundo Obrero: "Yo no vi la necesidad de esto. Ni hizo ningún daño, pero no tenía necesidad de estar allí como parte de la precesión del juego de fútbol."

¿Cuánto poder un director de escuela o un consejo estudiantil pueden tener para poder pedir al Ejército que envíaran una nave de armas? ¿A caso no es mucho más probable que el Ejército contactara a la escuela?

Lo que es claro es que tan solo la cifra de estudiantes que atendieron la protesta histórica del 26 de octubre contra la guerra significa algo. Estudiantes de la escuela superior y colegiales están en contra de esta guerra del Pentágono a pesar de las tácticas invasoras de reclutamiento.

Cifras aún más grandes se esperan que protesten si los Estados Unidos atacan a Irak o si el alto comando decreta un llamado de reclutamiento. □

"Milivy no ha muerto hoy, ella continúa viviendo en nuestros corazones como el ejemplo de nuestra lucha sin igual, como David y Goliat, contra la Marina de los Estados Unidos. Debemos recordar que otros podrían morir si no exigimos de aquellos responsables por la contaminación de nuestra tierra la limpien.

"Nuestra consigna debe ser: ¡Limpien y se van!" dijo Guadalupe.

La tasa de cáncer en Vieques es 27% más alta que en el resto de Puerto Rico. La tasa de diabetes, alta presión sanguínea y muchos otras enfermedades son también más altas.

Se ha demostrado que los fuertes estruendos de las bombas causa enfermedades cardo vasculares llamada "Enfermedad Vibroacústica" En un estudio comparativo, hecho bajo guías científicas estrictas por la Escuela de Medicina de Ponce en 53 pescadores de Vieques y 42 de Ponce, se encontró que un 79% de los Viequeses tienen el pericardium inflamada, la membrana que cubre el corazón, el 75% tienen la válvula aórtica más ancha. Estos son los indicadores de futuras enfermedades del corazón.

Sin embargo el gobierno de los Estados Unidos y la Marina se rehusan a validar estos descubrimientos o tomar cualquier responsabilidad. De hecho los Estados



Unidos han solo respondido con mentiras, irrespeto y más amenazas de bombas. Muchos estudios de salud están siendo conducidos en Puerto Rico y en los Estados Unidos sobre el efecto de las bombas en la salud de la población. Las prácticas militares están supuestas a parar temporalmente hasta que todos los resultados fuera evaluados.

Para evadir los resultados de los estudios, la Marina pagó al Hospital Universitario John Hopkins \$46.000 para evaluar no el estudio de Ponce, sin los datos proveídos por la Marina. Como consecuencia, los oficiales del John Hopkins declararon que no hay peligro de salud por las bombas. La Marina de Estados Unidos usaron estas declaraciones para justificar el comienzo de las prácticas.

La muerte de Milivy llega a un momento crucial en la lucha contra la presencia de la Marina en Vieques. En octubre el Departamento de la Defensa de los Estados Unidos admitió que había conducido una guerra química y biológica en Vieques. Alaska, Hawaii, Florida, Canadá, las Islas Marciales y Bretaña.

El químico trioctyl de fosfato fue rociado sobre tropas en la zona de práctica en Vieques en mayo de 1969. El CRDV dijo que esta sustancia puede dañar la piel, ojos y sistema respiratorio y se sabe que causa cáncer en animales. El CRDV ha exigido de los Estados Unidos, bajo el Acta de Libertad de Información, una divulgación completa del uso en Vieques de armas químicas y el cese inmediato de las prácticas. □

Soldado que se rehúsa a servir en Irak, es dado de alta

Por John Catalinotto

Hay veces cuando un gran movimiento de millones de personas que pueden cambiar el rumbo de la historia comienza con las acciones de unos pocos individuos o hasta una sola persona. Aquellos que tratan de detener la guerra que la administración de Bush está insistente a lanzar contra Irak pueden tener esperanzas de que el Privado Wilfredo Torres sea uno de los individuos cuyas acciones abra las puertas.

El Privado Torres ha decidido a rehusar servicio en el Golfo. Un grupo llamado Soldado Ciudadano de Tod Ensign ha apoyado y defendido su posición.

El Privado Torres tomó parte en una reunión de veteranos en la ciudad de Nueva York un día antes del Día de los Veteranos, el 10 de noviembre. Él habló en una conferencia de prensa en Washington al día siguiente. Allí él explicó que él se había enlistado en el Ejército para "servir a mi país y porque se me prometió estudios universitarios y entrenamiento de cocinero."

Después de describir varios problemas que él tuvo con sus instructores de entrenamiento, él dijo que había abandonado al Ejército un año antes. Él dijo después que por un desacuerdo con la política extran-

jera de los Estados Unidos, él se rehusaba a ser enviado al Golfo. Él también dijo que "por lo que he escuchado últimamente, nuestro gobierno ha hecho un trabajo muy pobre en cuido de los veteranos que sirvieron en el Golfo y Vietnam quienes están enfermos por haber servido."

Mundo Obrero preguntó a Tod Ensign, el director de Soldado Ciudadano, que pasó con el Privado Torres. El parece haber regresado al Ejército. El estaba en el Fuerte Knox con otros 60 soldados que habían abandonado al ejército. Mientras que el Privado Torres estuvo allí, él recibió una propuesta de entrevista por el periódico Rolling Stone.

El comando de la base parece haber pensado que sería mejor deshacerse del problema rápidamente y al día siguiente el Privado Torres recibió una orden de descarga "menos de honorable."

Para la gente en el movimiento anti guerra, el Privado Torres ha tomado un paso más que honorable, valiente. Su historia es común con muchos otros en las fuerzas armadas y si en este última capítulo de expande a lo largo y ancho del ejército antes de la invasión contra Irak, su repuesta puede convertirse en algo común. □